

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SECTION 2009-2010

The Criminal Justice Section of the State Bar of Texas is made up of 3158 defense lawyers, prosecutors and judges throughout the state. We have grown by over 500 members in the last year. Our governing council for this year has been, Craig Jett of Dallas, Chair, District Attorney Bill Turner of Bryan, Chair Elect, Hon. Rose Guerra-Reyna of Edinburg, Vice-Chair, Hon. Larry Gist of Beaumont, Past Chair, Jack Strickland of Fort Worth, Treasurer, and council members, Hon. Doug Skemp of Dallas, Alan Steele of Fort Worth, District Attorney Rosemary Lehmborg of Austin, David Botsford of Austin, Assistant District Attorney Alana Minton of Fort Worth, and Hon. Maria A. Salas-Mendoza of El Paso. Our council had endeavored to work for the benefit of all parts of the criminal justice system.

We started the year by awarding 29 scholarships to lawyers to attend the State Bar Advanced Criminal Law Course in Dallas. The State Bar staff redesigned a more functional and useful website for our members. The website includes section news, articles on criminal law topics, CLE scheduling, links to other criminal law organizations and a section for summaries of interesting cases. In conjunction with the website, we have begun to send to our members, by email, monthly case summaries, that we have titled Interesting Cases. We sent to each member of our section two laminated "cheat sheets" on the Texas Rules of Evidence and lesser included offenses. These "cheat sheets" are a great reference tool for the lawyer or judge in trial. We are looking forward to the State Bar Convention where we will offer a CLE program on criminal law.

In addition to trying to benefit Texas lawyers who practice criminal law, we have also reached out beyond the legal community. We have updated the State Bar's Criminal Justice Pamphlet that provides valuable information to the lay public about the criminal justice system. The pamphlet was updated by Rockwall County District Attorney Kenda Culpepper and her assistants. We extend many thanks to them. In response to the terrible devastation caused by the earthquake in Haiti, the Criminal Justice Section donated \$20,000.00 to the Bush/Clinton Relief Fund for Haiti.

We could not have accomplished all of the foregoing without the able assistance of Sections Department Project Manager Tracey Nuckols, Administrative Assistant Yolanda Ramirez Odom and Web Designer Lilly Hewgley. We extend our gratitude to them for their assistance.