



President's Column

Yo, Dallas Criminal Practitioners – We've Got You!

BY BILL MATEJA

I get that most criminal practitioners scratch their heads wondering whether the Dallas Bar is there for them. Over the years, the Dallas Bar has tried a number of things to make the DBA more accessible to criminal practitioners, but most efforts have fallen flat. This has left both criminal practitioners and Dallas Bar leaders alike disappointed, frustrated, and dismayed. And, it's left me wondering "what can I do as DBA President to make sure the Dallas Bar is there for you—criminal practitioners?"

Let me be crystal clear! I'm committed to making a difference for criminal practitioners, and I've been working hard with the DBA Board and a team of dedicated bar leaders that I've nicknamed my criminal "kitchen cabinet," all of whom are mentioned at different points below, to develop an exciting and winning course for our future together, namely:

DBA Criminal Law Section

Under the leadership of **Philip Linder**, **Messina Madson**, and others, our Criminal Law Section has upped its game. The first six months of the year are chock-full of rock solid programming. Take February's program on Crimmigration, which was heavily attended with more than 120 in-person and Zoom attendees. On tap in the coming months is: March 28, 2024—Recent Amendments to the United States Sentencing Guidelines; April 25, 2024—Preserving Error for Appeal; and May 23, 2024—Expunctions and Petitions to Seal.

DBA's Partnership with DCDLA

The Dallas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association does an equally good job with its criminal law programming and makes it easy for lawyers to not have to leave Frank Crowley to get this training through its monthly lunch hour CLEs. Through its president, **Stephanie Alvarado**, and board members such as **Tifanee Baker**, DCDLA is allowing our Criminal Law Section to promote its programs to DBA members, and DCDLA is doing the same with our Section's programs. Members of both associations now have two ways to get superb training. Last April, DCDLA's then president, **Doug Huff**, DBA Criminal Justice head, **Mike Besser**, **Eddie Loy**, and I tag-teamed to pull together a first-ever DCDLA/DBA "Criminalpalooza" program that featured an interview of U.S. Attorney **Leigha Simonton**, an SEC/USAO update on cyber/crypto enforcement and a panel discussion of lessons learned and ethical considerations from the January 6 Oathkeepers trial in Washington, D.C. We had over 150 attendees at the ADM. DCDLA and the DBA Criminal Law Section and DCDLA are teaming up this October 18 to hold an all-afternoon CLE and reception focused on the intersection of Immigration and Criminal Law at the Arts District Mansion as well as a joint Holiday Party in December.

DBA Bench Bar Conference – Criminal Track – September 19-20, 2024

This year's Bench Bar Conference will include parallel civil and criminal programming. DCDLA is incorporating its normal Bench Bar training into the Conference. Likewise, Dallas County District Attorney **John Creuzot** has confirmed his Office, through Deputy Administrator, **Lauren Black**, will conduct ADA training at the Conference. I'm hopeful that most of the judges from Frank Crowley will be in attendance and that many of them will speak. This year's Conference will be close—but not too close—as we're holding it on

the shores of Lake Ray Hubbard at the surprisingly terrific Hilton Lakefront in Rockwall. I promise the Conference will be more affordable than ever with reduced rates for judges. Fun too!

Criminal Trial Lawyers/Jurists of the Year

Speaking of the Bench Bar Conference, I'm pleased to announce that we'll be awarding DBA Trial Lawyer of the Year awards to multiple prosecutors and criminal defense lawyers. Jurist of the Year will go to a criminal judge. All of this will take place at a reception and dinner right on the Lake. And, if you simply want to come for the reception and dinner because, for example, you have a friend getting an award or just want to hang out with lawyer friends and party at the Lake, no problem—come! It's a short 30-minute drive.

How About A Judge's Mural at Frank Crowley?

Civil litigators walking into George Allen get to see their favorite judges on a mural as they walk in via the parking garage. Why not the same for criminal practitioners? The DBA's Courthouse Committee is working toward that end and I hope to see it come to fruition in the coming months.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Is Coming to the ADM!

Circle April 11 on your calendars—from sun up to sun down—because the State Bar of Texas' Criminal Justice Section, in partnership with the DBA, the State Bar's Appellate Section and the UNT and SMU law schools, is hosting the Court of Criminal Appeals here in Big-D at the Arts District Mansion! Thanks to the efforts of Judge **Audrey Moorehead**, **Rob Cañas**, Justice **Bill Whitehill**, and others, the CCA will hear oral arguments at the ADM starting at 9:00 a.m. (preceded by a continental breakfast). After its morning oral argument, the Court will lunch with area law students (and any interested attorney), participate in 3 hours of afternoon CLE open to all lawyers and stay for a reception honoring the judiciary. In that vein, all criminal judges in Dallas County and contiguous counties have been invited. Importantly, every criminal practitioner is invited for this reception which is sponsored not only by the bar groups listed above but also Greenberg Traurig, Kastl Law, and the Gallian Law Firm. This should be 2024's premier event in Dallas for criminal practitioners.

As you can see, criminal practitioners, we're bringing the Dallas Bar to you! Join us and encourage those who aren't DBA members to join and participate. Know that I fully recognize DBA presidents come and go, but we've simply made too much progress and tapped into too many mutually beneficial synergies for this to be a one-year thing.

One last thing—why should criminal practitioners not only be members of the DBA, but also active members? To answer that question, I've asked my friend and Dallas County District Attorney **John Creuzot** to tell you why in an open letter to the Bar. You can read it on page 17 of this April Headnotes. Hear him out. Judge Creuzot is a long-time DBA champion who, early in his career, understood its value proposition and who maximized the potential that the DBA provides lawyers, just as it can provide you. And after you read Judge Creuzot's letter to the Dallas Bar, take a look at what his office is doing with its terrific Wellness Program on the Headnotes page facing his letter.

Again, criminal practitioners, we've got you—it's time to Get Back to the Dallas Bar!

Bill



HEADNOTES

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JOIN US AT THE ADM

CRIMINAL LAW PROGRAM

Featuring Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Oral Arguments
Thursday, April 11, 9:00-5:00 p.m.

Program schedule:

- 8:00: Continental Breakfast
- 9:00: Court of Criminal Appeals Oral Arguments
- 11:30: Luncheon
- 12:30: CLE Registration
- 1:00: 3-Hour CLE Program
- 4:00: Reception

Presented by the State Bar of Texas Criminal Justice Section
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UNT College of Law, and SMU Dedman School of Law.

