



Baylor Law School Veterans Clinic: Overview, Partnerships, and Initiatives

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What was the motivation?

Jerry Blanchard, USAF, Vietnam Veteran

Antonio Guarnieri, Army Air Corps, WWII

Paul Fuselier, USAF, 1989-1993

The Vision & Our Goals

In 2010, State Bar President Terry Tottenham began the initiative “Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans.” The Baylor Law School Veterans Clinic is a direct product of Terry Tottenham’s initiative.

The Goals for the Clinic are:

- Provide legal services to the veterans in our community and make the services accessible
- Encourage law students to engage in meaningful community service
- Encourage law students to appreciate the value of pro bono legal work
- Engage local attorneys in both a mentoring relationship with students while encouraging them to give back to the community as well through pro bono legal representation



How it Started

The Veterans Clinic is the first clinical program at Baylor Law School.

The clinic was created to operate as a monthly legal advice clinic with ongoing representation provided inhouse at the law school or by local volunteer attorneys.

After a few months we were able to partner with the Heart of Texas Veterans One Stop to use space for the monthly clinic.

Funding was provided through grants from the Texas Access to Justice Foundation and the Texas Bar Foundation.

The clinic was operated by a full-time faculty member and part-time administrative assistant who was either a current law student or recent graduate.





Current Clinic Structure

We now have a full-time staff attorney and a full-time paralegal.

The clinic is a hybrid legal advice clinic and pro bono referral program.

Every month except for July and August, the clinic is held at the local Heart of Texas Veterans One Stop

Law students sign up to volunteer along with local attorneys and Baylor faculty

The law students visit with the veteran to gather the basic information on their legal issue.

The student then visits with an attorney volunteer to go over their notes and discuss the issue.

The attorney and student go back in with the veteran and the attorney provides legal advice and counsel.



Most Common Types of Cases

Debt & Consumer Protection

- Debt Collection
- Loans
- Contracts/Warranties
- Unfair & Deceptive Practices
- Other Consumer Issues

Family Law

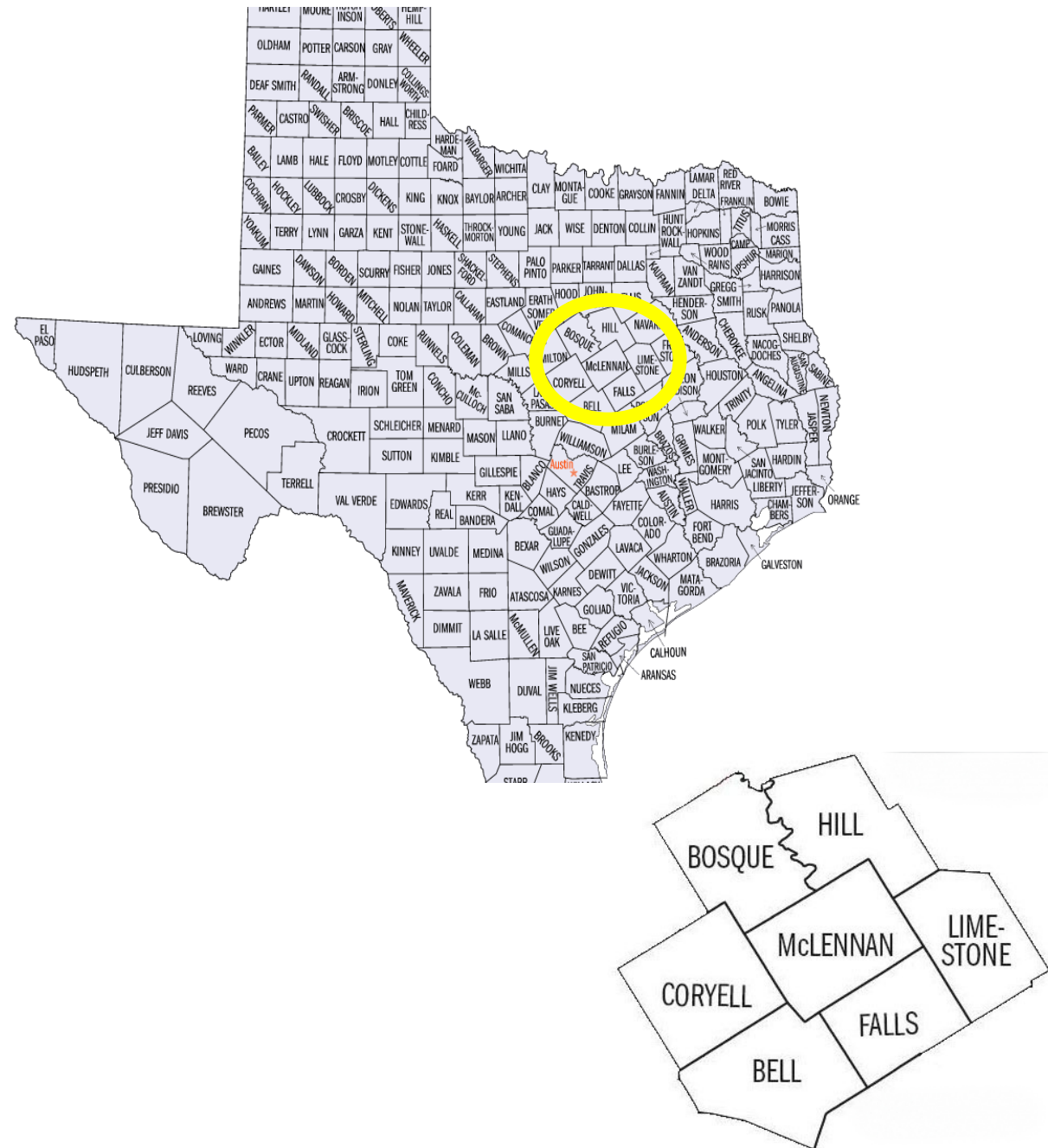
- Adoption
- Custody
- Divorce
- Termination of Parental Rights
- Child Support
- Paternity
- Other Family Law issues

Housing

- Subsidized Housing
- Landlord Tenant
- Real Property
- Homeownership
- Foreclosure

Who We Help

- Since 2012, we have served 2,669 Veterans and their spouses in McLennan County & surrounding counties (Bell, Bosque, Coryell, Falls, Hill, Limestone)
- Veterans who are at 200% of the poverty line or below per our grant funding requirements are eligible for services beyond legal advice.



Our Volunteers

Since 2012:

- Over 400 law students have volunteered
- Over 100 attorneys have volunteered at the advice and counsel clinics and/or taken on representation of clients.



Partnerships

Local Bar



Advocates of the Year



Partnerships

Heart of Texas
Veterans One Stop

Heart of Texas Veterans One Stop

Serving veterans in Central Texas

- A veteran-serving program of the **Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network**
- Stakeholder partners include:
 - McLennan County Veterans Service Office
 - Texas Veterans Commission
 - Military Veteran Peer Network
 - VFW & American Legion
 - Baylor Law School Veterans Clinic
- Host of our legal advice clinics since 2012

Behavioral Health Network (BHN)

- The local mental health authority for a six-county region, BHN serves the residents of Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, and McLennan counties.
- BHN provides services to individuals with behavioral health issues, to include substance use disorders, as well as those with developmental disabilities.
- BHN is the fifth largest healthcare provider in the region.

Initiatives with Veterans One Stop

Veterans Treatment Court

- With Veterans One Stop partners, spearheaded the effort to establish a Veterans Treatment Court in McLennan County
- Presented to county commissioners in 2018; county funded court, which launched in 2019
- Prioritizes treatment over punishment for veterans whose service gave rise to alleged criminality
- Founding Judge Gary Coley; Current Judge Rob Swanton

Waco Veterans Advisory Board

- With Veterans One Stop partners, assisted City of Waco in creating an advisory board made up of local veterans to advise city on veterans issues
- Authorized in 2022; first meeting held 2023
- Created veterans banner program honoring our local veterans each year in November in downtown Waco

Successful initiatives

Treatment Court Graduation



Banner Program





Partnerships

**Texas Access to Justice
Foundation**

Texas Access to Justice Foundation

Grant funding since 2012

- Thanks to Veterans Clinic founder Professor Bridget Fuselier's steadfast leadership, the Texas Access to Justice Foundation has awarded our program **\$714,728.00 in grant funds since 2012**
- Funds pay a portion of clinic staff salaries and for furniture and equipment as needed



A hand holding a pen over a document, with a pair of glasses and a coffee cup in the background.

**This was
just the
start of
what was to
come at
Baylor Law
School...**

Legal Clinics at Baylor Law School

Pro Bono Clinics

- Entrepreneurship Clinic
- Estate Planning Clinic
- Family Law Clinic
- IP Law Clinic
- Trial Advocacy Clinic
- Veterans Clinic



What began as an annual event to celebrate Veterans Day grew to an ongoing year-round Estate Planning Clinic serving Veterans and First Responders.

We provide basic wills, healthcare powers of attorney, durable powers of attorney, and other essential planning documents.

This clinic is under the supervision of Professors Josh Borderud and Tom Featherston. Students draft the documents, and Professor Featherston provides feedback so that the students can learn while providing a valuable service to the community.

Students and Baylor Law School staff members assist with serving as witnesses for the will execution.

We have helped more than 580 veterans and first responders with estate planning since we began tracking in 2016.



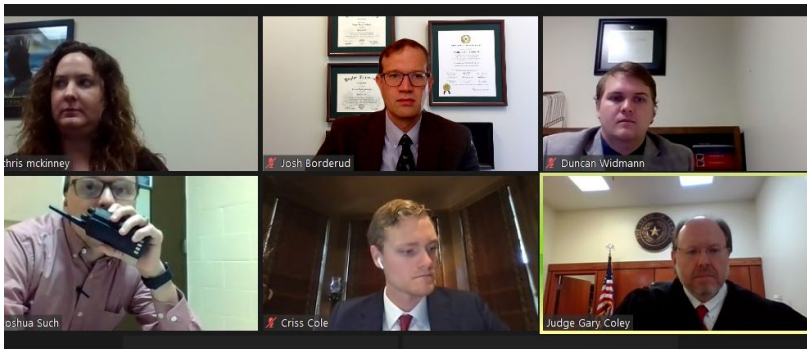
Estate Planning Clinic



Family Law Clinic

- Launched in October 2024 by Professor Stephanie Tang with district courts of McLennan County
- Serves self-represented residents of McLennan County in divorce and custody proceedings
- Primarily offers monthly legal advice clinics and form drafting
- Served 52 people in 2024-2025

2/4/20XX



Juvenile Clinic

- Launched in August 2017 in the McLennan County Juvenile Court
- By appointment of court, students represent children in juvenile detention hearings
- Students obtain supervised practice cards
- Over 800 children represented since 2017

2 / 4 / 20XX

Baylor Law Has Been Recognized with Eleven *Pro Bono* Awards in the Last Ten Years

SANDRA DAY
O'CONNOR
AWARD

American Inns
of Court
2020

LAW SCHOOL
PRO BONO
COORDINATOR
AWARD

State Bar of Texas
2019

LAW STUDENT
PRO BONO
AWARD

Texas Access to
Justice Commission
2012 • 2018

TERRY LEE
GRANTHAM
MEMORIAL
AWARD

Texas Bar Foundation
2018

COLONEL
BRYAN S.
SPENCER AWARD

State Bar of Texas
Military and Veterans
Law Section
2017

LAW SCHOOL
COMMITMENT TO
SERVICE AWARD

Texas Access to Justice
Commission
2010 • 2016

ABA *PRO*
BONO PUBLICO
AWARD

American Bar
Association
2015

ABA PUBLIC
INTEREST
AWARD

American Bar
Association
2014

W. FRANK
NEWTON
AWARD

State Bar of Texas
2014

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To learn more about our clinics go to:

<https://law.baylor.edu/why-baylor-law/academics/experiential-learning/legal-clinics>

Thank you