President's Message: A Strong Organization of Loyal Members and Volunteers - By Bobby Mims

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The TCDLA membership exceeds 3,200 criminal defense lawyers with members in practically every county in Texas. Each year TCDLA sponsors more than 50 seminars to train lawyers in the latest trial tactics and cases and statutory law. TCDLA, with the assistance of a grant from the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, trained over 5,300 lawyers statewide. TCDLA seeks to give its members the training to provide the best criminal defense representation possible for the unfortunate accused.

TCDLA relies upon the volunteer service of its loyal members. At each seminar there are course directors who are selected for their special expertise to design the curriculum, obtain the speakers, and promote the seminar. These seminars are set in locations that hopefully give a reasonable opportunity to members practicing in all areas of Texas to obtain continuing education. Additionally, these seminars are periodically redesigned to implement new developments in the law and to address new issues. An attempt is made to make each of these seminars both timely and relevant. Much work goes into the planning and implementing of these seminars. The greater portion of the work is done by our professional staff and course directors. There is always a tension between the need to provide the highest quality training and holding down expenses. The revenue realized from these seminars is used to provide services to the membership and keep dues as low as possible. It is vital to the financial health of TCDLA to operate as economically efficiently as possible while fulfilling the mission of the organization.

The course directors and speakers are all volunteers who give up their valuable time to TCDLA and its members. These are some of the best lawyers in the country recognized for their expertise. These course directors have undertaken a special responsibility to the membership and to the organization by designing a curriculum that is timely. Course directors must change periodically to give effect to new ideas and provide fresh outlooks for our seminars. With each new set of course directors comes new speakers to present on timely topics from a different perspective.

Presently, the most dynamic changes are in the DWI training. The emphasis is now on blood training to give members the latest and best training in how to provide representation on blood draw cases. TCDLA is blessed with some of the best DWI defense lawyers in the country. For more than 10 years, TCDLA and the National College of DUI Defense (NCDD) have jointly sponsored the Mastering Scientific Evidence (MSE) seminar. Recently the leadership of both organizations met and negotiated a long-term agreement to continue the relationship between the organizations and to continue the seminar until at least 2017. The MSE seminar has been held in New Orleans for the last several years and is attended by DWI lawyers from all over the U.S. and Canada. The MSE is the brain child of Troy McKinney, who serves as its course
director with TCDLA Past President Gary Trichter. The MSE seminar provides state-of-the-art DWI defense training and is an example of the skill and expertise of these course directors.

In Texas, TCDLA has added an additional training seminar to be known as the Lone Star DWI seminar, which is scheduled to initially be held in Austin in July 2014. The Lone Star seminar will emphasize blood training and has scheduled as speakers the brightest DWI defense lawyers who have actually tried and won blood test cases. This seminar will become the fourth annual seminar dedicated solely to DWI defense. TCDLA will continue to sponsor the advanced DWI law seminars known as Top Gun DWI in Houston, the DWI Defense Project in Arlington, and the Stuart Kinard Memorial Advanced DWI Seminar in San Antonio.

Not everyone has the skill and the expertise to serve as a course director. However, it is vital to the continuing development of the organization and to the program of continuing education to develop new speakers, new course directors, and to give opportunities to younger members with the skill to also become speakers, course directors, and leaders. It is commendable that some loyal course directors have set aside personal desires and stepped aside with good grace to give others an opportunity to serve the organization. TCDLA members owe a special debt of gratitude to these course directors who have made these seminars the best in the nation. The next time you see one of these excellent lawyers, please personally thank them for their service, their dedication and their loyalty to their 3,200 sisters and brothers in the finest criminal defense organization anywhere.

Bobby Mims
President

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