

**COLLABORATIVE LAW SECTION SUMMER NEWSLETTER**

Dear Collaborative Law Section Member:

Your Section Council is pleased to distribute to you our final Collaborative Law Section Newsletter for the 2014-15 bar year.

It has been a privilege to serve you as Chair of the Collaborative Law Section this bar year. Many of you have dedicated much time and energy to the Section's activities this year, including the Pro Bono Project and the Local Bar Project, and it has been a pleasure to work with all of you to promote the use of Collaborative Law in Texas.

Please plan to join us for the Section's Annual Meeting on June 18 at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting in San Antonio! We have a very dynamic program planned with the LGBT Law Section that you won't want to miss, plus an update on the UCLA and an opportunity to vote for and give your suggestions for the new bar year to your incoming Section Council! More details are in the newsletter.

We hope that you find this newsletter informative and valuable. Thank you and please contact us with your feedback and suggestions for future Section newsletters and activities!

Sincerely,

Anne Shuttee, Chair  
Collaborative Law Section  
State Bar of Texas

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Reminder – Join us for the Collaborative Law Section program during the SBOT 2015 Annual Meeting!

On Thursday, June 18, starting at 1:30 pm, we will be co-presenting with the LGBT Law Section a very interesting program at the Annual Meeting entitled “**Coming Out – of the Litigation Closet: How Collaborative Law Can Minimize Damage in Same-Sex Breakups**”. The presentation will include insights from a client panel as well as collaborative and non-collaborative attorneys about the differences between Collaborative Law and litigation in cases involving families and same-sex couples. Speakers include Jack Emmott, Diana Ferrar, Karen Langsley, Julie Quaid, Shelly Skeen, Adam Seidel, and Micki Grimland.

This program will be followed by an update on the **status of the UCLA in Texas and elsewhere**, featuring speakers Larry Maxwell and Harry Munsinger.

Hotel space will be tight during the Annual Meeting due to other conferences scheduled at the same time, so make your reservations now!

For more details and to register, check the SBOT [Annual Meeting website](#).

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Elect your new Section Council at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Collaborative Law Section!

The outgoing Section Council has nominated the following attorneys for election as your officers and directors in the 2015-16 bar year:

- Chair: Sherrie Abney, Carrollton
- Vice-Chair: Harry Munsinger, San Antonio
- Vice-President (Civil): Kerri Ranney, Austin
- Vice-President (Family): Julie Quaid, Dallas
- Secretary: Laura Schlenker, Dallas
- Treasurer: Ruth Rickard, The Colony
- Director (term expires 2018): Lori Kern, Houston

Additional nominations for these positions can be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting, after which the election will be held and your newly elected Council Members seated.

Continuing to serve on your council next year will be incumbent Directors Luemara Wagner of Austin (term expires 2016) and David Calkins of Dallas (term expires 2017). You will also have as ex officio members your immediate past chair, Anne Shuttee, and the additional ex-officio members the incoming Chair appoints to serve on the Council during the upcoming bar year.

Join us for the Section's Annual Meeting starting at 3:45 pm on June 18 (immediately after our CLE programs conclude), vote on candidates for the new Section Council, and participate with your newly elected Council Members in a discussion about ideas for 2015-16!

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Check out our new Section Website!

With help from design professionals at the State Bar of Texas, we have launched an entirely new website for our Section, containing lots of valuable information such as information on articles and books on Collaborative Law, links to other Collaborative Law websites, news about upcoming Collaborative Law CLE programs, contact information for members of the Section Council, and more!

Make [our page](#) one of your go-to sites and be sure to let your Section Council know of any suggestions you may have for improvement!

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### Update on Local Bar Project

During this bar year, our Section Council sent letters to almost 200 local bar associations around the State offering to provide a CLE speaker on Collaborative Law at one of their upcoming meetings.

So far the Section has scheduled or given presentations on Collaborative Law to local bar associations in Nacogdoches, Corsicana, Athens, Stephenville, North Dallas, Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, Beaumont, Cleburne, Huntsville, Marble Falls, and New Braunfels, and requests for speakers are continuing to roll in!

If you would like to join our Speakers List, please contact the Chair of the Collaborative Law Section to add your name to the list. Also, please encourage the bar associations with which you are affiliated to invite a speaker from our Section to do a presentation on Collaborative Law! We anticipate continuing this project into the new bar year, and hope to do a number of presentations to additional bar associations in 2015-16.

*Remember, people can't take advantage of Collaborative Law if they've never heard of it, so it's our job to spread the word and help educate both the public and members of the bar about the benefits of the collaborative dispute resolution process.*

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### Update on Pro Bono Collaborative Law Pilot Project

The Section's Pro Bono Committee, led by Jack H. Emmott III, is working closely with veteran collaborative lawyer Norma Trusch and Houston Volunteer Lawyers Executive Director Alicia Ruben Gomez on a pilot program through which low-income clients in Houston are offered the opportunity to use collaborative law to resolve disputes in family cases. The clients complete forms that the Collaborative Law Institute of Texas has generously licensed for this purpose, and collaborative pro bono attorneys, several trained by Norma Trusch, are representing the parties in three two-hour collaborative negotiations.

The pilot project now has two pro bono collaborative cases underway, and we anticipate that the first will be concluded by August 1 and the second within a few months. In addition to Jack, the volunteer collaborative lawyers representing the parties in these two cases include Andrew Lehman, Brad Morris, and Stephanie Sommerlatte. Pro bono MHP Faith Wilson is facilitating one of the two cases. The parties are pleased to be participating in this pilot project and are very thankful to have the opportunity to use a resolution process that has not been readily available to low income legal consumers.

In recognition of their hard work and contributions to this innovative pro bono program, the Section is also proud to announce that on June 9, Jack Emmott and Norma Trush were presented with the HVL's "Trailblazer Award".

Stay tuned for further news about this terrific pro bono project, which may expand to other areas of Texas in the upcoming bar year!

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#### Update on the Texas version of the UCLA

In 2011, the Texas Legislature enacted the Texas Collaborative Family Law Act, relating to matters arising under the Family code. Rep. Bill Zedlar of Arlington introduced the Texas version of the Uniform Collaborative Law Act in the 2015 Session of the Legislature, but the Session ended before it was passed out of committee.

If approved, the Act would have extended the benefits and protections of the UCLA to Texas residents who wish to use the collaborative process to resolve disputes in areas of the law other than family law matters (which will continue to be governed by the Collaborative Family Law Act.)

Proponents of the Act anticipate seeking to reintroduce it in the next legislative session in 2017. For more information, contact [Lawrence R. Maxwell, Jr.](#), at or (214) 739-8900.

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#### Upcoming Collaborative Law Trainings Co-Sponsored by the Section

After the Annual Meeting concludes in June (see details above), the Section will co-sponsor the **11<sup>th</sup> Annual Civil Collaborative Law Conference** scheduled for September 16-18, 2015, in Dallas. It will begin with an optional one-day training on in the basics of the process, followed by a two-day conference with both classroom instruction and interactive role-play involving a hypothetical medical error claim. Featured speakers include Diann Seigel and Aida Havel of the Integrated Accountability and Collaborative Transparency Program in North Carolina and Nebraska College of Law Professor Kristen Blankley, among others. You can obtain more information and download a brochure and registration form at our [Events](#) page.

Looking for more CLE programs on Collaborative Law? Check our Events page regularly for news and updates on seminars and conferences that our Section sponsors or co-sponsors!

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Our statewide Collaborative Law Section is working to expand the use of collaborative law throughout Texas, in all areas of practice. Send us your ideas and let us know how we can help you and other Texas collaborative lawyers!

From the Officers and Council Members of the State Bar of Texas Collaborative Law Section