



### From the Corner: Summer time = exercise time



Summer may be the right time for some of us to begin the habit of daily exercise. School's out, days are longer, and schedules may be somewhat relaxed so that we are better able to find the extra ten to 30 minutes we need each day to start an exercise routine.

We all know the benefits of regular physical activity: controlling weight, enhancing mood, boosting energy, combating illness, reducing stress, increasing focus, and generally contributing to our overall wellness and a more enjoyable lifestyle.

When we are happier, healthier, more focused, and more productive, the Office of the Harris County Attorney benefits along with the clients we serve. Taking care of ourselves is a necessary component of creating the best public law office in the United States as we work together to be of service to all according to law.

Harris County offers the [Healthy Actions Medical Plan](#) that encourages us to participate in various wellness programs and will reward us for developing daily exercise routines. [Harris County also offers wellness classes to get employees moving.](#) Classes operate on a first-come basis as space permits.

Summer, winter, fall, or spring; any of these are good times to start exercising for your good and the good of the people of Harris County. — Vince



### Go for the Gold Challenge

Take a virtual trip to Rio de Janeiro in a new team challenge from Live Health Harris County. Every week team members will explore a different stadium in the Go For The Gold Village, each with various activity suggestions. For every 30 minutes of activity, contestants earn one point. Weekly newsletters, bonus questions, and interactive challenges are part of the fun. The challenge begins July 10 and ends September 3. Every participant gets a free t-shirt and those who earn 100 points receive credit on the Healthy Actions Medical Plan. Sign in and sign up at the [Live Healthy Portal](#).

### County not liable in \$12 million ADA case

A federal jury found Harris County was not responsible for injuries sustained by a suicidal high school student who shot himself while in a constable's patrol car in 2012. Deputies had been summoned to Northshore High School to help secure the seventeen year old who was acting irrationally and had threatened suicide. The officers carried the struggling man to their patrol car and locked him in the back seat.

The man, Deavyn Gordon, sought \$12 million in damages from the County claiming that deputies failed to provide reasonable accommodations as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act for his alleged disability of clinical bipolar depression.

After a trial that began May 16 and ended June 15 with a 28-day break in testimony, jurors found that county law enforcement officers did not know Mr. Gordon had a disability as defined by the ADA.

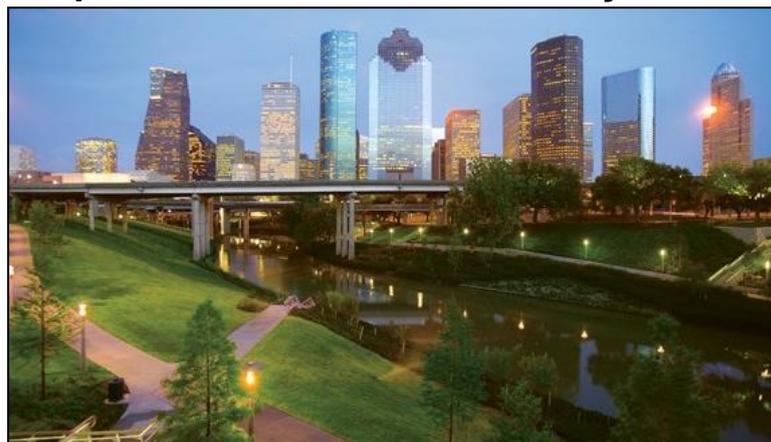
Fred Keys was the lead attorney on the case with Melissa Spinks second chairing. Christine McGee provided paralegal assistance.



### ReadyHarris mobile app ready for download

The Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management app will help you build a personal preparedness plan and get real-time updates during emergencies. It's free at Google Play or iTunes.

### Supreme Court finds for County in Kerr



Sabine Promenade on Buffalo Bayou

The Texas Supreme Court on June 17 dismissed a lawsuit filed against Harris County and the Flood Control District by more than 400 homeowners who claimed their homes suffered flood damage because the county allowed upstream development.

Our Office argued and the Court agreed that the plaintiffs had failed to produce evidence supporting their inverse condemnation claim arising from flooding that occurred in 1998, 2001, and 2002. The justices said there was no way officials would have known that particular properties downstream would flood.

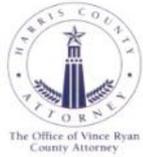
"The record is clear that the County never harbored a desire to cause flooding anywhere," the Court stated in its opinion. "Its motive was the opposite: it desired to prevent flooding and undertook extensive efforts over many years to accomplish this goal."

Managing Attorney Melissa Spinks led the trial and appellate teams.

**5 things YOU didn't KNOW about ME**

**Rupal Mehta is the Community Relations Intern**

1. I have a scary obsession with dogs.
2. I am a professional photographer.
3. I go to at least three concerts every month.
4. My sister is nine years older than me, but we look like twins!
5. I have traveled to every continent on our beautiful planet.



The Office of Vince Ryan  
County Attorney

*WE, THE MEMBERS OF THE HARRIS COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, BOTH LAWYERS AND NON-LAWYERS, ADHERE TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL ETHICS AS WE SERVE THE PEOPLE OF HARRIS COUNTY AND STRIVE TO BE THE BEST PUBLIC LAW FIRM IN THE UNITED STATES.*



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**Coming Attraction:**

**Emergency Orders: Part 2**

With Sandra Hachem  
2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., July 22, 2016  
Houston Conference Room (17th floor)  
1 hour ethics; 2.5 hours total



**CAO practices emergency alert drills**



County Attorney Investigators with Constable Precinct One conducted emergency alert drills at our offices on June 23. If the panic alarm sounds, you should seek shelter in your office unless you can safely exit the building.

**Retiring Fred Keys goes west**

Fred Keys retired from our Office on June 30 after eleven years of service. Fred had served as deputy manager for the Litigation Practice Group since 2012 and defended the County in many law suits focusing on civil rights and law enforcement cases. Fred served as general counsel for the Houston Police Officers' Union and staff counsel for the Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas. Fred was an assault team, marksman, and intelligence officer with Houston S.W.A.T. before he began the practice of law. Fred is moving to Arizona where he says he plans to spend time reflecting on life and building a house.



Fred shows he's pleased with his final argument in the Gordon ADA case.

**HCAO welcomes new colleagues**



Michelle Hebert

Michelle Hebert began work in June as a paralegal in the Public Law Practice Group. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Relations from the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, and graduated from Southwestern Paralegal Institute in 1991. Michelle has worked for a number of years as a paralegal, most recently with Anadarko Petroleum Corporation.

Julie Taylor is serving as a legal assistant in the Disability and Elder Law Group. She holds a Bachelors and Masters Degree in Geology and a Bachelors degree in Anthropology from Michigan State University. She comes to our Office from the oil and gas industry where she worked in software development and client services.



Julie Taylor



Elizabeth Holt

Elizabeth Holt has begun work as a paralegal in the Litigation Practice Group. Elizabeth graduated magna cum laude with an Associates of Applied Science degree in Paralegal Studies from Lone Star College. She has served as the chair of the Harris County Criminal Lawyers Association Paralegal Division since 2014.

**Compliance stops bond refund scam**

A Florida company sending notices to persons in urging them to pay it \$59.99 for a Cash Bond Refund from Harris County has agreed to stop doing business in Texas after our Office contacted the corporation. Randy Smidt and Susan Sciaaca in the Compliance Practice Group moved quickly, sending a cease and desist letter when the scheme was brought to our attention.

**Voter Registrar class set for July 21**

J.R. Harris, Director of Compliance with the Office of Mike Sullivan Tax Assessor-Collector, will present a Voter Registrar training at 2 p.m. on Thursday, July 21 in the HCAO Conference Center. Persons who take the training and are appointed Volunteer Deputy Registrars can distribute and accept completed voter registration applications under the direction of the Voter Registrar. Please check with your manager if you wish to attend this training.

**ACA Kristin Barry leads CACI training**

Assistant County Attorney Kristin Barry led a class on June 23 for the Public Law Practice Group about CACI, the County Attorney Case Information system, which is used by our Office to track the cases we are working on, keep information readily available, and help us deliver great service to our client representatives.

Kristin is a power user generating statistical reports from CACI about her cases for her engineering client representatives.

