



From the corner: HCAO has talent!



Last week, we celebrated the accomplishments of many members of our Office as they reached milestone years of service at Harris County. We also had the privilege of watching our colleagues demonstrate their acting, singing, and dancing abilities. After that, no doubt remains that the HCAO has talent. In the past year alone, the employees of the Office of the Harris County Attorney utilized their considerable talents to:

- Defend Harris County in more than 300 lawsuits having potential liability to the public treasury of more than \$50 million;
- Collect more than \$5 million for the taxpayers of Harris County;
- Offer protection to the children of Harris County through our representation of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in more than 3,500 cases; and
- Prepare more than 2,000 contracts having a value of more than \$2.2 billion.

We can be pleased with these statistics, but that's just the beginning. Our combined talents in the courtroom, in our offices, and in working with our elected and appointed officials accomplish much on behalf of the people of Harris County.

The list of accomplishments could go on and on. Taking note of every well-deserved accolade in one awards ceremony would be impossible.

But this can be said: The CAO is full of talent. We very much appreciate what each of you do every day to continue to be of "Service to all, According to law." -- Vince

Happy Anniversary!

Thank you for your service to the public:

Erin Werner	1 year	Steven Dieu	7 years
Patrick Nagorski	1 year	Susan Sciacca	8 years
Shilpa Ghurye	2 years	Nick Turner	19 years
Jenny Patten	2 years		

Fox hears Friends of Cedar Bayou concerns



Assistant County Attorney Jennifer Fox attended a Friends of Cedar Bayou United meeting on April 1 in Baytown to hear the group's concerns about the bayou and its management.

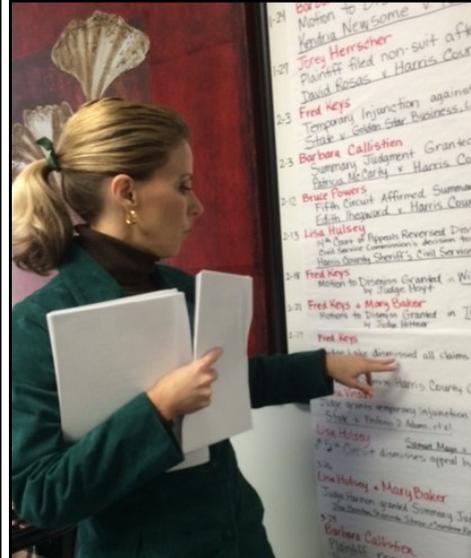
The meeting deviated from the group's typical format in that it featured a guest listener rather than speaker. Jennifer served as a liaison for our Office and heard the group discuss their concerns about environmental issues related to the waterway.

The meeting was of such importance to the community that it was covered by the Baytown Sun.



A special thank you to all of who participated in the HCAO's annual awards ceremony on April 9th. Check out the photos on **pages 3 and 4**.

Wall of Fame reflects hard work



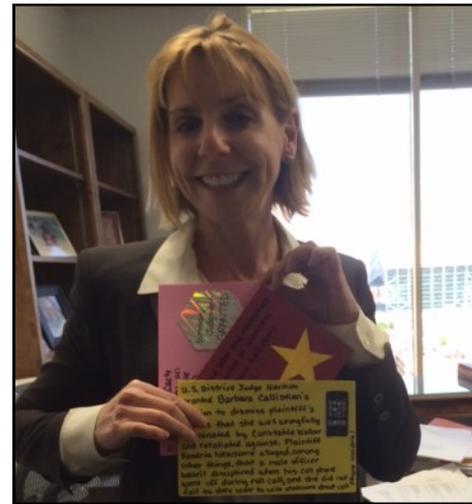
Litigation Group Managing Attorney Melissa Spinks has developed a new way to track and celebrate the practice group's achievements: A Wall of Fame. The project, which began at the start of the year, has already begun to envelop Melissa's office in a quickly growing list on long scrolls of paper. At this rate, Melissa's office will be wall-papered with achievements by the end of the year — a change in décor she's very much looking forward to.

"Not only are we winning cases and disposing of pend-

ing suits, but we're also making good law in the process," Melissa said.

In addition to having their accomplishments listed on the Wall, Melissa also taps into her inner crafter and presents her team members with colorful certificates in recognition of their hard work.

Above: Melissa highlights some major Wall of Famers. Right: Barbara Callistien shows off her one-of-a-kind certificate.



Connect5

Five questions for Sarah Utley



Sarah Utley is an Assistant County Attorney in the Environmental and Infrastructure group. She has been with our Office since 2011.

What book would you recommend? *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* by Edmund Morris

Where do you call home? Family ranch near Kenedy, Texas

Who would you like to meet? Plato

If you could time travel, to what era would you go? 1st Century, Height of Roman Empire

Are you a cat person or a dog person? Dog



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.

Useful Links

County Attorney [SharePoint](#) | County Attorney [Website](#)
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Save the Date



The State Bar of Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program will present a Stress Management seminar on April 24 at 10:30 a.m. at the Murworth location and at 1:30 p.m. in the Driscoll Courtroom.



Law Library in the Spotlight



In the April 7 edition of the Houston Bar Association e-Bulletin, the HBA thanked Harris County Law Librarian Mariann Sears "for her outstanding work with the HBA's County Law Library Committee to greatly improve the efficiency, usefulness and services provided by the law library to both the legal profession and the public." Mariann works with the HBA's Law Library Committee.

Mariann Sears Presents at SWALL Conference

Mariann attended the Southwestern Association of Law Libraries annual conference in Austin on March 20-22. SWALL is a regional association of private, academic, and government law libraries. Mariann joined a panel of county law librarians who discussed various "hot topics" affecting county law libraries. The panelists presented a lively discussion on how such topics of interest as working with lay and pro se patrons, security issues, collection development, collaboration with legal service organizations and local bar associations, funding, and marketing are tackled by each of the represented organizations. The session reinforced the notion that no two county law libraries are alike and that every county law library's operations are unique to that county.



Mariann Sears

Law Library Hosts Family Law Research Training on WestlawNext

On April 1, the law library hosted a training for patrons and the public. This session focused on Family Law Research using the law library's WestlawNext Patron Access service. Thomson Reuters representative Jennifer Koithan conducted the session, which was attended by attorneys from the Harris County Domestic Relations Office, local attorneys, and attorneys and paralegals from the County Attorney's Office. The law library will continue to offer training sessions like this in furtherance of its mission to promote access to legal information and to educate the public on the use of legal information resources.



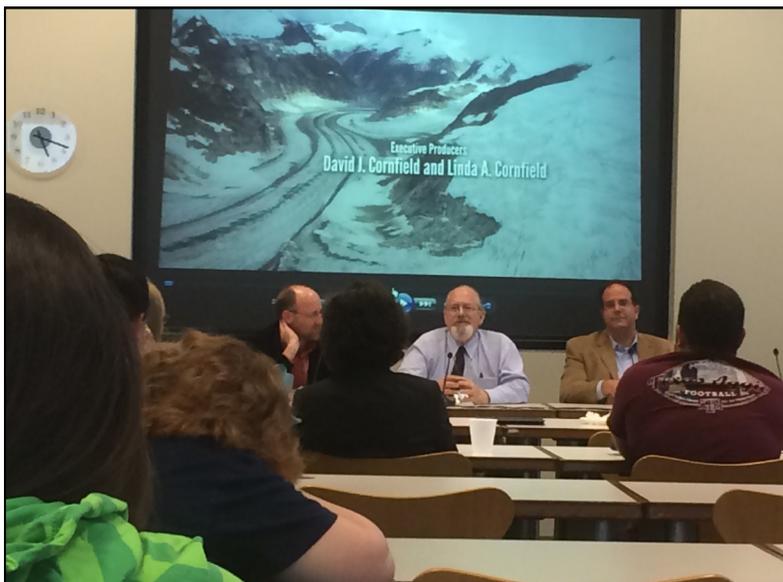
Westlaw Representative Jennifer Koithan conducts a training about Family Law Research.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month



Harris County Commissioners Court adopted a resolution designating the month of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Harris County. Our office was recognized in the resolution and John Odam was on hand. John praised the great working relationship our Office enjoys with all the agencies involved in identifying child abuse and protecting children.

Rock Owens speaks before STCL students



On April 7, Rock Owens joined a panel of Houston's leading environmental law attorneys at South Texas College of Law to discuss important legal issues of interest to aspiring attorneys. In addition to answering questions about the issues raised in *Chasing Ice*, a documentary screened at the event by STCL's Environmental Law Society, Rock shared general advice for students about working toward a career in the field of environmental law.

HCAO'S got Talent



**Celebrating 30 years of service:
Melinda Brents**



**Celebrating 25 years of service:
Lisa Hulsey, Elizabeth Bomser, and Robert LaPrade**



**Celebrating 25 years of service:
Joe Strange**



**Celebrating 20 years of Service:
Grace Newman, Curtrina Majors, and James Jones**



**Celebrating 15 years of service:
Zeke Cavazos, Oscar Burnias, Karen Dunn, Cara Protain,
Esmerelda Salinas, and Maria Escobar**



**Celebrating 15 years of service:
Mitzi Turner**



**Celebrating 10 years of Service:
Demetrice Collier, Doug Ray, Leslie Austin,
Latoya Ozain, Sumpter Frazier**



**Celebrating 5 years of service:
Renee Lowe**

HCAO'S got Talent

