

# TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL NEWS

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## Law School Receives Multiple Volunteer Awards

**FORT WORTH, Texas** – The volunteer efforts of Texas A&M University School of Law were recognized on Oct. 24, 2013, during the “Celebrate Pro Bono” reception sponsored by Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas. The event was held at the downtown Fort Worth YMCA as part of “Pro Bono Week” to honor volunteers and recognize those who have distinguished themselves through their unselfish contributions to the promotion of equal justice. Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas provides free civil legal services to eligible low-income residents in 114 Texas counties.

The Hon. Cynthia Mendoza '03, associate judge in the 360<sup>th</sup> District Court, was the event's special guest speaker. Judge Mendoza noted that she became an attorney at age 47, after having spent much of her professional career as a nurse. She handled and settled a pro bono case on her very first day as an attorney, just hours after having been sworn-in.

Callie Vivion-Matthews '06 and 3L Laurie Weir were recipients of the Dwight H. Moore 2013 Special Recognition Award. Dwight Moore served as executive director of West Texas Legal Services for 18 years before retiring in 1995. Shortly after Moore's retirement, the Fort Worth Private Attorney Involvement Advisory Board named its Pro Bono Attorney of the Year and then Special Recognition Awards for Moore, to honor his exemplary dedication and commitment to access to justice for the disadvantaged.

Vivion-Matthews is a long-time volunteer for Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas and was appointed by Gov. Rick Perry to the Texas Council on Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders in 2010. Weir is a volunteer coordinator for the Veterans Project at Texas A&M School of Law, which provides volunteers for monthly clinics at the VA hospital in southeast Fort Worth.

The 2013 Outstanding Law Firms Awards went to Texas A&M Law Clinic and the firm of Strother & Strother. Accepting the award for the Law Clinic were director Charlotte Hughart and supervising attorney Karon Rowden '01.

DeeAnn Strother '10 and her sister-in-law, Tiffany Strother, accepted for Strother & Strother. The firm is dedicated to treating its clients with respect, integrity, compassion and honesty. “We pride ourselves in developing and maintaining personal client relationships,” DeeAnn Strother said.

During its 15 years of existence, 742 students have enrolled in the Law Clinic course. “The clinic has been recognized by Tarrant County Commissioners, Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, the Tarrant County Bar Association and the National Association of Social Workers for its efforts to help those who could not otherwise afford legal representation,” Hughart said. “Fort Worth is a compassionate community and has been very welcoming and appreciative of the Law Clinic.” In 2012, legal aid referred 28 cases to the Law Clinic.

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