



THE WHOLE ENCHILADA

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE SAN ANTONIO
CHAPTER OF THE FEDERAL BAR ASSOCIATION



SAFBA NEWSLETTER
2022-2023

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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

With a year of incredible community and accomplishments behind us, the San Antonio chapter of the Federal Bar Association has accomplished a lot.

Take a look back with us as we acknowledge the incredible service and engagement of our members this year and the events that are the product of their efforts.

But first let's look ahead at what you can expect in a new year of excellence!

SAVE THE DATES

JOIN US FOR A LUNCH TO REMEMBER



The Honorable Jason Pulliam

U.S. District Court, Western District of Texas

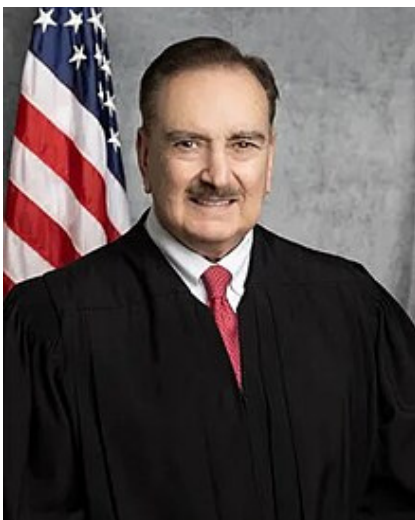
11:45 AM-1:00PM
Quarry Golf Club
444 E. Basse Rd.
San Antonio, TX 78209

August 9, 2023

11:45 AM-1:00PM
The New Jackson Walker Offices
1900 Broadway
San Antonio, TX 78209

September 13, 2023

POWER Act Panel



The Honorable David Ezra

U.S. District Court, Western District of Texas

11:45 AM-1:00PM
Quarry Golf Club
444 E. Basse Rd.
San Antonio, TX 78209

October 11, 2023

A Message from the Chapter President

BY ERICA GIESE
JACKSON WALKER, LLP

I hope this newsletter finds you in good health and high spirits. As we approach the end of another remarkable year, I wanted to take a moment to recap the accomplishments and successes we have achieved as a united and thriving legal community.

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to each and every one of you for your unwavering commitment to the San Antonio Federal Bar Association (SAFBA). Your dedication and active participation have been instrumental in making this year a resounding success.



One of the highlights of this year has been our continued emphasis on professional development and educational opportunities for our members. Throughout the year, we organized a series of highly informative and engaging events, including seminars, CLE luncheons, and panel discussions. These events featured renowned legal experts who generously shared their knowledge and expertise, enriching our understanding of various legal areas and enhancing our professional skills. The positive feedback we received from attendees has been overwhelming, highlighting the value and impact of these educational initiatives. It also reflects our commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where members can network, collaborate, and grow both personally and professionally..

"Your dedication and active participation have been instrumental in making this year a resounding success."

-ERICA GIESE



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



A Message from the Chapter President Continued

BY ERICA GIESE
JACKSON WALKER, LLP

Additionally, due in large part to our Community Outreach and Fox Tech Committees, our mentorship programs have flourished. We provided invaluable guidance and support to aspiring legal professionals at St. Mary's University School of Law and Fox Tech High School. The mentorship program has fostered meaningful connections and offered insight into the legal profession.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous efforts put forth by our dedicated board members and committee chairs. Their hard work and tireless commitment have been instrumental in ensuring the smooth functioning of the San Antonio FBA and the successful execution of our various programs and events. Their dedication to our mission has been truly inspiring.

As we reflect upon the achievements of this year, it is important to recognize that our success as a bar association is a collective effort. It is the result of each member's active engagement and contribution. I am grateful to be part of such a remarkable community of legal professionals who continuously strive for excellence and make a positive impact on the San Antonio legal landscape.

Looking ahead, I am excited about the prospects for the coming year. With Caroline Small at the helm, the San Antonio Federal Bar Association will continue to thrive. And with your continued support and involvement, I am confident that the Board will build upon our achievements and continue to elevate the legal profession in San Antonio.

On behalf of the San Antonio Federal Bar Association, I extend my warmest wishes for a restful summer and a prosperous year ahead. Thank you for your unwavering support and for being an integral part of our esteemed association.

Sincerely,

Erica Benites Giese
President (2022-2023)
San Antonio Federal Bar Association

" I am grateful to be part of such a remarkable community of legal professionals who continuously strive for excellence and make a positive impact on the San Antonio legal landscape."

-ERICA GIESE

MEET THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

LOCAL LEADERSHIP FOR A BETTER BAR



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Federal Public Defender's Office



Mike Villarreal

Immediate Past President

Gunn Lee & Cave PC

MEET THE ELECTED DIRECTORS



ELECTED DIRECTORS

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Clark Hill

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Dykema

Jay Hulings
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United States District Court Judge

The Honorable Craig Gargotta
United States Bankruptcy Court Judge

The Honorable Elizabeth "Betsy" Chestney
United States Magistrate Judge

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ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW LIAISON

Robin Thorner
Assistant Dean for Career Strategy

LAW STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE 5TH CIRCUIT OF THE NATIONAL FBA

Janell Thompson.
Student at St. Mary's School of Law

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT HIGHLIGHT

LAW STUDENT OUTREACH COMMITTEE AND THE ST. MARY'S FEDERAL BAR ASSOCIATION

In January of 2023, San Antonio FBA executive board member Zach Zurek took St. Mary's University FBA members out to lunch to discuss spring events and best practices. Zurek provided practical advice on how to decide on panel topics and how to approach potential speakers. and coordinated with the law student representative for the 5th circuit of the National FBA, Janell Thompson.

San Antonio FBA executive board members also brought pizza to St. Mary's Law campus for a lunch panel. Zach Zurek, Molly Roth, Brandon Cook, and Georgina Buckley-Graham encouraged students to consider becoming members of the FBA. They answered students' questions about the importance of federal practice and how to utilize a Federal Bar membership to broaden students' careers.

After a 30-minute panel session, the speakers broke into small groups to provide personalized advice and students had a chance to connect with these federal practitioners.



StMU FBA co-hosted a Black History Month panel with StMU Black Law Student Association. The event featured a panel of distinguished judges and professors discussing the importance of representation in the legal profession. The San Antonio Federal Bar Association made a generous donation to provide food and event was attended by over sixty law students.

"THERE WAS NOTHING BETTER THAN GETTING TO TELL FELLOW STUDENTS, 'THE FEDERAL BAR ASSOCIATION IS HERE ON CAMPUS AND OUT IN SAN ANTONIO, AND THEY WANT YOU TO JOIN.'"

St. Mary's FBA student members have also been volunteering at San Antonio Federal Bar events like the Haven for Hope community kitchen. With increased membership the St. Mary's FBA is committed to working together with SAFBA to support students with exposure to the legal opportunities of the federal bar.



Samuel Tunnell

RISING 2L
ST. MARY'S SCHOOL OF LAW

Samuel Tunnell just finished his first year at St. Mary's School of Law. He grew up in Denton, Texas and went on to study digital journalism at the University of North Texas and write on local politics. After finishing his undergraduate degree, Samuel became a middle school history teacher, teaching Texas History and World Geography. He decided to go to law school to pursue a career as a litigator.

Samuel finished his first year of law school with an impressive list of accomplishments. After completing his first semester, Samuel made the Dean's List and was ranked 12th out of 302 first-year students. He competed in the Dave and Linda Schlueter 1L Moot Court Competition and the Jimi Derrick Moot Court Competition where he advanced to the semifinals in both events. He also has the honor of working as a research assistant for Professor Chenglin Liu and Dean Ramona Lampley. In the Fall Samuel will also be both a staff writer on the St. Mary's Law Journal and an advocate on the St. Mary's National Trial Team.

This summer, Samuel is interning at the Bexar County District Attorney's office in the Family Violence division. He is hoping to gain trial experience from observing court proceedings and aiding his advising attorneys in the gathering of evidence. Samuel is dedicated to becoming a career litigator who is most at home in the courtroom. He also cares deeply about financial and environmental justice and is considering either a career as a white collar prosecutor or a civil consumer protection attorney.

Regarding his future career goals, Samuel had this to say: "A lot of folks who don't have the resources to help themselves have been cheated by people with a lot of power in our society. There are powerful people who think they are above the law. I want to make it my mission to prove them wrong."

"There are powerful people who think they are above the law. I want to make it my mission to prove them wrong."

-SAMUEL TUNNELL

PAST EVENTS

A Year of Luncheons

Every month the San Antonio Federal Bar Association hosts luncheons featuring distinguished guest speakers. This year's guests gave amazing talks and shared their unique experiences.

Several local federal judges gave wonderful talks this past year. Federal District Judge Alia Moses gave a talk on expectations for the next few years of her new term in office.



U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Michael Parker discussed litigation in bankruptcy court sharing his experience from his current role and his past at Norton Rose Fullbright

Former Chief Justice Orlando Garcia came and shared his legal experiences with the association and even posed for this wonderful group photo with luncheon attendees.



PAST EVENTS

Luncheons Continued

Federal Judges aren't the only kind of speaker to appear at these luncheons. This year we had quite a few accomplished attorneys speak about their experiences as advocates.



United States Attorney Jaime Esparza spoke on the role of the U.S. Attorney's office in Civil and Criminal Litigation.



Another luncheon featured Captain Wesley Nash and Jesse Bolaños discussing Military Prosecutions and Aid.

These luncheons are a great opportunity to hear from experienced members of the San Antonio legal community and to fulfill your CLE requirements. If you are interested in attending one of these luncheons check out our website in the contact information section on page 15.

PAST EVENTS

The Jimi Derrick Memorial Moot Court Competition

This year the San Antonio Federal Bar Association joined in sponsoring the 2023 Jimi Derrick Memorial Moot Court Competition at the new Federal Courthouse. As a demonstration of SAFBA's commitment to encouraging student advocacy the association donated \$5,000 to the competition and Many of the competition judges were executive members of the association

Student competitors were given the moot court problem only a few days before the competition and had to engage in simulated Appellate advocacy before volunteer judges. .



The competition started with 12 competitors before it was narrowed down to the final four. 1L students Emily Garcia and Samuel Tunnell finished as semi-finalists and 2L Caitlin Sullivan finished as a finalist

Congratulations to Champion Daniel Ramirez!

1L student Daniel Ramirez took home the championship trophy along with the award for best rookie advocate. Daniel argued in the final round before U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Craig Gargotta and Fourth Court of Appeals Justices Beth Watkins and Lori Valenzuela. With the plan to continue honing his appellate advocacy skills further, Daniel will continue competing next year as as a new member on the St. Mary's National Moot Court Team.



PAST EVENTS

Working with Fox Tech High School



This year the San Antonio Federal Bar Association partnered with Fox Tech High School to expose students to a variety of legal events and experiences.



On May 11, 30 high school students observed criminal proceedings in Federal Judge Fred Biery's courtroom. Judge Biery also spoke to the students and shared some of his wisdom.

A few days later students attended a women's luncheon at Dykema and heard from inspirational speakers, including SAFBA president Erica Giese.



Legal Experiences for Fox Tech High School Students!

Some of the students attended the final round of the Jimmy Derrick Memorial Moot Court Competition and observed a naturalization ceremony. They also heard from the finalists and final round judges, Chief U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Craig A. Gargotta and Fourth Court of Appeals Justices Beth Watkins and Lori I. Valenzuela.

PAST EVENTS

Welcome to the New Federal Courthouse

In April of 2023 a new federal courthouse opened in San Antonio. This modern building now houses the judiciary of the Western District of Texas. Federal Judge and SAFBA elected director, Xavier Rodriguez, spent the last 19 years working hard to secure funding for the new courthouse to ensure a safer experience for all those who pass through its halls.



The building, with its towering glass exterior, allows for large amounts of natural light. With image displays of state and national historical landmarks, the decor embodies the spirit of the Texas federal court. Details such as the visually striking backdrop of the central atrium stage will surely leave a colorful impression in the minds of all the court's visitors. The new courthouse also features many improvements to security such as restricted corridors, remedying the old courthouse's issue of jurors moving through the same spaces as detainees.



As the Western District settles into its new home, lawyers representing their clients can rest easy knowing that they won't have a mistrial mishap in the elevator. And while no guarantees can be made that the new technology will always run smoothly, having access to up-to-date tools is sure to make federal advocacy in San Antonio a more modern experience



PAST EVENTS

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

In September of 2022, San Antonio FBA President Erica Giese attended the FBA Annual Meeting and Convention in Charleston, South Carolina.

The event included CLE's on a variety of topics including the impact ICE's increased technology has had on privacy rights, the importance of pro bono representation in immigration cases, and much more.

The event also included a celebration of the accomplishments of FBA members during three awards luncheons.



FOOD FROM THE BAR

This year the San Antonio Federal Bar Association contributed to the San Antonio Food Bank's Food from the Bar program. The program was a month-long campaign inviting the legal community to join the San Antonio Food Bank's fight against hunger.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE SAN ANTONIO FBA WERE SO SIGNIFICANT THAT THE ASSOCIATION WILL RECEIVE THE AWARDS FOR OVERALL WINNERS AND MOST POINTS PER PLAYER.

The San Antonio Federal Bar Association is honored to receive these awards and to have been able to participate in such an influential program.

CONTACT INFORMATION

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE



[HTTPS://FEDBARSATX.ORG/](https://fedbarsatx.org/)

**CLICK HERE TO
BECOME A MEMBER**



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.ORG/MEMBERSHIP/](https://fedbarsatx.org/membership/)

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Philip Devlin



THANKS FOR THE YEAR!



**JOIN US NEXT YEAR FOR EVEN MORE
LUNCHEONS AND LEGAL EXCELLENCE**

**THE SAN ANTONIO
CHAPTER OF THE
FEDERAL BAR
ASSOCIATION**

