



Briefcase

September, 2020 Vol. 53, No. 8

A Publication of the OKLAHOMA COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

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A NEW PRESIDENT IN TOWN!



The Andrews family, Kate, Don, Molly & Maddie.

Access to Justice

By: Katie Dilks

“Access to Justice” – it’s a phrase we hear a lot in our profession, but what does it mean and how do we achieve it? The Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation, working hand-in-hand with the Oklahoma

Access to Justice Commission, is here to help.

We define access to justice as the ability of any person, regardless of income, to use the justice system to resolve legal issues and advocate for themselves. Oklahomans turn to the civil justice system when they

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We know the civil legal system is complex and difficult to navigate without the help of an attorney. When people represent themselves in court, filing fees, procedural rules, and confusion about the law are barriers to fair and just outcomes.

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BRIEFCASE

September 2020

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OKLAHOMA COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

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Volunteer lawyers and judges dedicated to serving the judicial system, their profession, and their community in order to foster the highest ideals of the legal profession, to better the quality of life in Oklahoma County, and to promote justice for all.



From the President



Despite A Pandemic, Gratitude Persists



"No one told me there'd be days like these . . . strange days indeed . . ."
John Lennon

As I contemplate the beginning of my term as President of the Oklahoma County Bar Association, I am reminded daily that despite my perception "the sky is falling" and everything around me has turned upside down, there have been numerous positive developments during this pandemic. I'm sure that I'm not the first to say, "enough, already!" It'll be nice when we are past all of this. However, in the meantime, let's focus on the good, which has come to pass, including but is not limited to the following, to-wit:

The development and use of technology in the legal profession has accelerated at warp speed. For me, it is a daily challenge when I log on for a video conference session. You may have a poor audio connection, or I can experience "tiling" of someone's video feed. Needless to say, it is not very enjoyable when this occurs. Despite these technical difficulties, it's all good – because, very importantly, none of us can catch COVID-19 through the internet (even though we may develop cataracts prematurely). Nevertheless, I get to learn something new every day – technology-wise - and that's been a good thing!

I have rediscovered the existence and utilization of District Court Rule 4(h). In an effort to reduce the number of lawyers (or people) on Motion Dockets at the Oklahoma County Courthouse, I and most of my colleagues have utilized District Court Rule 4(h), and entered rulings, usually by electronic means, based upon the briefs submitted by the parties. This often-overlooked simple procedure has now made a significant impact on the efficiency of our court system. It also reemphasizes the need to have a satisfactory understanding of the "king's language." Your legal research and writing skills were always important, and now even more so.

We are fortunate to have an excellent staff at the Oklahoma County Bar Association. You hear it all the time, but Debbie Gorden, Pam Bennett and Connie Resar are simply the best. Your OCBA office has remained "open for business" and available for you throughout this crisis.

Vehicular traffic has been significantly reduced, especially during rush hour. I will unofficially declare that since the middle of March, it has been my personal daily challenge to *legally* navigate the roads of Oklahoma City without being forced to stop at a traffic light (emphasis added). For multiple reasons, the morning traffic has been much easier to negotiate, and every now and then, I get lucky enough to time it where I "make" every possible green traffic light between my home and the courthouse. Perhaps on these days, I should purchase a lottery ticket.

Since mid-March of 2020, I have had a "full house" of gainfully employed twenty-something "kids" residing there. Although it feels like an endless Christmas holiday break, having my adult daughters

For multiple reasons, the morning traffic has been much easier to negotiate, and every now and then, I get lucky enough to time it where I "make" every possible green traffic light between my home and the courthouse. Perhaps on these days, I should purchase a lottery ticket.

under the same roof has really been a blessing. We all have needed to re-adjust, and at times, we cramp on each other's style. However, this reunion has been fun to say the least! I have been introduced to eating "clean," when I never knew "dirty" food existed.

The courtyards at the Oklahoma County Courthouse are beautiful again! If you haven't noticed, the grounds and flower beds around the Oklahoma County Complex were transformed earlier this year. A special thank you to Oklahoma County Clerk David Hooten and Charles Dodson, Second Deputy to Oklahoma County Commissioner Brian Maughan. Both of these gentlemen have been instrumental in beautifying "our courtyards". Next time you are at the Oklahoma County Courthouse, walk around the block and enjoy the beautiful new landscaping!

One of my goals this year as President of the OCBA is to establish an endowment through the Oklahoma County Bar Foundation that will perpetually, and at least on an annual basis, provide additional funding for the continual beautification of our courtyards at the Oklahoma County Courthouse. I remember when I first starting practicing law in 1989, and the grounds around the Oklahoma County Courthouse were awesome, owing to the efforts of an employee who took it upon himself to maintain them. When this employee retired, the courtyards slowly deteriorated, and frankly, became an embarrassment to the beautiful historical building where we conduct our legal business. Today, that has changed! I acknowledge that there are current financial challenges for us all. However, the beautification of the grounds at the Oklahoma County Courthouse have been long overdue, and if we can successfully establish endowed funds, then we can ensure the beauty of our courtyards will endure for many years to come.

No doubt the lyrics referenced above from John Lennon's song, *Nobody Told Me*, are very appropriate at this time. Much more has happened during the past several months than I could have ever *imagined* (perhaps a different Lennon song for another column-to-come in the *Briefcase*) – such that these days are indeed strange. Until matters turn to some resemblance of normalcy, let's all choose to accentuate the positives as opposed to dwelling upon the negatives.

Stump Roscoe

STUMP ROSCOE

By
ROSCOE X. POUND

Dear Roscoe: I have a client who may have been a fugitive from justice. My client's siblings recently filed an action against my client and others to quiet title and for an accounting of profits relating to several rental properties owned by their late father. The plaintiffs claimed the deeds resulted from forgery and undue influence. My client was served by publication, and a default was entered. Client contacted me from a penitentiary in New Mexico. He is about to be extradited to Oklahoma and answer for the alleged forgeries and wishes to contest the civil matter as well. I understand that there was something called the "disentitlement doctrine" but that SCOTUS abolished it. What's the deal? Can I get the default vacated? **B.R., Tulsa, OK**

Dear B.R. : I don't know if you can or cannot. First of all, you're working in an area solidly in the realm of judicial discretion. Second, SCOTUS did not abolish the disentitlement doctrine. It simply narrowed that discretion a bit. *Degen v. United States*, 517 U.S. 820 (1996). Bad news: defendant's knowledge of a lawsuit and his post-service actions still "play a role in measuring the willfulness of a defendant's default." Therefore, depending on your client's knowledge of the case, if nothing else from his co-defendants may still play a role in the court's determination of whether to exercise that discretion in his favor. The fugitive disentitlement doctrine is one of common law. To my knowledge, Oklahoma has not specifically adopted or rejected it. On the Federal side, its deployment requires (1) the party is a fugitive; (2) his fugitive status has a connection to the civil action; and (3) the sanction employed by the district court, default, is necessary to effectuate the concerns underlying the fugitive disentitlement doctrine. It is also appropriate to consider the interest or prejudice both to the plaintiffs, and the dignity of the courts.

Not wishing to burst your bubbles any further, but I assume this is a state court action. Thus, without entangling ourselves in the disentitlement doctrine, we have an *in rem* judgment as to property, granted upon default after publication notice. This type of judgment is one in which publication notice is common and legally authorized. Therefore, assuming plaintiffs' affidavits for publication service are properly filed and approved, and no further defects appear on the judgment roll, this matter may be decided simply upon Oklahoma law without the need for common law exotica.

Dear Roscoe: I know you're a dog owner. Get a load this: Officers attempting to serve a warrant raid a house owned by

relatives of the suspect in the mistaken belief that the suspect lived there as well. The family dog is in the yard and does his job trying to chase off the intruders. Police shoot the dog. I'd like to make a federal case out of this, literally. Does the family have a claim under 14th Amendment (Due Process) or Fourth Amendment (unlawful seizure)? **R.E., Shawnee, OK.**

Dear R.E.: Based on what you've told me, I'd like to say yes. Unfortunately, I don't think I can. Here's why. First, while federal precedent holds that people have a possessory interest in their pets, and "the killing of a person's dog by a law enforcement officer constitutes a seizure under the Fourth Amendment" *Brown v. Muhlenberg Twp.*, 269 F.3d 205, 210 (3d Cir. 2001). So, to be constitutional, an officer's conduct in fatally shooting a pet "must have been reasonable." In determining reasonableness, the court must "balance the nature and quality of the intrusion on the individual's Fourth Amendment interests against the importance of the governmental interests alleged to justify the intrusion." *United States v. Place*, 462 U.S. 696, 703 (1983). The weight of federal authority seems to be that the use of deadly force against a household pet is reasonable if the pet poses an imminent threat to the law enforcement officer's safety, viewed from the perspective of an objectively reasonable officer.

So, here's where we arrive. Most authorities agree that the unreasonable killing of a pet by law enforcement may constitute a Fourth Amendment violation. Can we plausibly plead, or place into contention, reasonableness? There we have a fact-driven question. How reasonable was the assumption their suspect resided or could be located on the premises? Did the police reconnoiter the property to develop a game plan for the raid and noting the presence of the dogs? Would a reasonable officer perceive the dog to act in a threatening manner? Was the dog one of a "dangerous" breed? The list can go on. And then we also have to contend with that eternal boogey man in most Constitutional violation cases – qualified immunity. Remember, the facts of the case must be viewed in light of what a reasonable officer would do at the time of the incident. 20/20 hindsight won't cut it.

If this animal in the possession of apparently innocent parties simply, as you put it, "did his job" I hope you can put together a plausible factual scenario to survive motions to dismiss and for summary judgment. Personally, I think you have a better chance under straight tort theory.

#####

Shark Week was great, thanks for asking. My garage freezer stood packed with blue fish, mackerel, and striped bass. I



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returned home on Friday evening, roused myself to an invigorating work out on Saturday, and spent a post-church Sunday morning undoing that workout with my prosecutor buddy Carl Coleman at Sinkers and Joe. We had barely finished our second cups of coffee when Captain Joe Innocente of the Secaucus P.D. entered. At first, we thought he may have come in from services at his own church – Immaculate Conception. He wore a grey three-piece and matching fedora, his shoes polished to a reflectivity that rivaled his mirrored shades. He approached glumly and did not take a seat with us.

"Roscoe Pound, I have been directed by the chief of police and the mayor of Secaucus to inform you that your permit to carry firearms has been suspended pending further investigation into charges that you have threatened a regulatory officer of this county in the performance of his duties. I have also been ordered to collect from you your permit and any firearms currently in your possession. You will have the opportunity to be heard on the restoration or permanent revocation of your permit in the ordinary course of proceedings as contained in the statutes and regulations of the State of New Jersey."

I waited a moment for him to smile and let us all in on the joke. His robotic delivery and the expression of one trying to keep his gorge from rising as spoke belied that idea.

"What's the deal?" I asked.

He shrugged. "I know what I just told you. That, and both the mayor and the chief called me personally and directed me to deliver the word. Apparently, too many of our patrol officers consider you a friend and, much as it pains me to say so, some appear somewhat afraid of you. Believe me, I'd rather be pecked to death by a duck than do this but, here we are. Don't make it harder than it needs to be."

I pulled my wallet from my back pocket

and slid out the laminated permit card. I slid it across the table.

"Thank you," he said, "now your guns." "Wait a second," said Carl, "He's a reserve officer of the Hudson County Sheriff's Department and authorized to carry a firearm."

"Oh," Joe said, "I guess that shoe hasn't dropped on you yet. Explains why you're being so reasonable."

"WTF," I said, but I pronounce each word loudly and in full. I drew stares but didn't care.

"Again, I wish I knew. My guess is you pissed off the wrong guy, or someone who was friends with the wrong guy, or, well, however that works. If I knew, I'd hope you know I'd tell you. Now, turn over the firepower so I can make it to late Mass. And don't piss me off where I get so angry, I say something that makes it so I can't receive."

I stared defiantly into his eyes until I began to doubt whether I could win that contest. I removed my Glock, holster and all, and slid it across the table like an air hockey puck. Joe deftly scooped it up and dropped it into his jacket pocket. "The Pico in your ankle holster too."

I could feel my anger building, my thoughts roiling. I guess Joe could see this too. "Come on, Roscoe don't press this. You have at least four other permits at risk until we get this all sorted out. No one wants to see you out of business."

"The facts suggest otherwise," I replied.

He placed the small gun in his other pocket. It didn't quite balance out and he wasn't happy about it. If only that were my biggest problem. Joe favored me with a weak smile and a nod and walked out.

"Bet you feel like a declawed cat," Carl said.

"Yeah," I replied, "but I'm still an apex creditor by nature."

Carl checked his watch. "I'll leave you to your hunt. Let me know what I can do."

Quote of the MONTH

There are not enough Indians in the world to defeat the Seventh Cavalry.

– George Armstrong Custer, U.S. Army Officer (1839-1876)

In Memoriam

William "Bill" Gorden

1948—2020

By: OCBA Past President
Michael Brewer

Bill Gorden entered into eternal rest peacefully on August 23, 2020. That morning, during the wee hours, our legal community lost a scholar and the Oklahoma County Bar Association lost another champion.

Bill's many passions in life included bicy-

cling, painting, languages and notably, reading. Bill was a regular contributor to the *Briefcase*, authoring innumerable reviews of the volumes he eagerly consumed. Bill's love of books transcended his reviews; he was ever willing to discuss authors and books—which he had read, we had read, and books that we simply had heard about (even if neither of us had read it yet).

Above all else, Bill was a devoted husband and partner to OCBA Executive Director, Chief Solution Finder, and Ringmaster Debbie Gorden, to whom he was married for thirty-eight years. Ever at Debbie's side, Bill attended and participated in OCBA events, chaperoning the "Terrific Trio" and enjoying conversations with OCBA officers, members, and non-lawyer attendees alike.

Conversing with Bill was entertaining and enlightening; It was something of a humanities course—but on Tik-Tok.

Through our sadness, it is our honor to present Bill's final book review to our readers below. The avian subject matter of which is, in the context of our loss, fitting.

We will miss them, and Bill, deeply. Fly high.

Book Notes

By Bill Gorden

The Bird Way Jennifer Ackerman
Penguin Press, 2020, Hardback, 368 pages,
\$28.00, Kindle \$14.99

Some birds, when migrating, fall asleep while hundreds or perhaps even thousands of feet in the air. Think on that for a moment. It seems strange at first, but there is no evolutionary reason for it to be otherwise. They are not likely to meet a predator at that time, they are surrounded loosely by other birds, some of them likely awake, and with the winds aloft carrying them, they are unlikely to fall without waking. This is amazing—but explainable.

We owe this tidbit to what seem to be rapid advances in our understanding of birds of all kinds. Better tracking, surveillance, listening devices are all reasons, but there is more going on than that. Apparently there has been sort of a hemisphere snobbery going on until recently, with much more known about Northern Hemisphere birds than those in the Southern Hemisphere. This has changed.

Apparently there are as many or more species there, perhaps less impeded until recently by the crush of modern life. Likewise, there has been an avalanche of bird watchers in that half of the earth, thanks to concerns on Climate Change.

Sort of a bird in the coal mine effect. Sorry.

Australia is a focal point, with plenty of empty space and avian species to boot. The new bird scientists are often female, and are making their mark.


The results are fascinating. Some birds have fright calls which tell whether the predator is on the ground or in the air, whether stalking or loafing or preparing to attack. Some fright calls are of the birds own species, some may mimic the fright calls of other species, some of them may even mimic mammal fright noises.

Antbirds soar above the marching Army and of jungles, waiting for the ants to disable prey such as crickets, then swooping

in and snatching the free meal. Sometimes the ants lose up to a third of their kill to the birds.

There are many more fascinating examples here. The downside is there is some of the cliché' birdwatcher stuff, and many, many names for the different kinds of birds. It is worth the interference. We are in a pandemic. Sit on the patio, swat a few mosquitos, watch, and listen, and read this for a codex, at least till the first Blue Norther.

Addition: For a little more traditional bird book, pictures and all, try *What It's Like to be a Bird*, by David Allen Sibley, also 2020.




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OBITUARY

Bill Gorden

By Rex Travis

Bill Gorden, longtime writer of book reviews for the Briefcase, died suddenly August 23 at the age of 71. Bill was a remarkable man. He was clearly the best-read man I ever knew. He was constantly reading across a broad spectrum of book types. He was truly a renaissance man.

Bill was from Tulsa. A “cradle Catholic”, he went to parochial schools, St. Catherine’s and Bishop Kelley in Tulsa. Among a number of degrees he earned, the first was a Bachelor of Science from OU with a major in political science. His later earned his law degree from the Oklahoma City University School of Law.

Bill married our own Debbie Gorden (Executive Director of the Oklahoma County Bar, for those who have dwelled beneath rocks for the past 33 years). They have two children, their sons Will Gorden



Bill Gorden

and Major Sean Gorden, an Air Force Academy Graduate. They also have two grandchildren.

Bill practiced environmental law working for the Attorney General’s Office, Oklahoma State Health Department, the Department of Environmental Quality and private practice. He was an Administrative Law Judge for DEQ for the past 20 years. When I first knew him, he utilized his extensive background as a reader by working part-time at Border’s Book Store. He could be counted upon there to advise customers what was and what was not a good book to purchase and read. Bill himself owned an incredible number of books, all of which he had read. Debbie

has said that moving was a chore because of all the books he owned which had to be moved. Later, Bill taught political science, various history courses and whatever tickled his fancy at Redlands Community College until his retirement there.

Bill was quite active in his Church, St. Charles Borromeo, in Oklahoma City. He served there as a Deacon, almost 20 years, since 2002. That is a much bigger deal than most who are not Catholic probably realize. Deacons in the Catholic Church are ordained and perform many of the functions of a priest, including performing baptisms, weddings and wake services. They are highly respected.

Bill had a particular interest in seeing to it that poor people had adequate food and shelter. To that end, the family suggests contributions in lieu of flowers to the St. Charles Borromeo Dorothy Day Center, <https://bit.ly/3mFeNjg> or by snail mail at 5024 N.Grove Ave., Warr Acres, OK 73122-5119.

WILLIAM “BILL” GORDEN:

A MAN FOR MANY, MANY SEASONS

BY DANIEL J. GAMINO

Decades ago, a motion picture was released about the clash between St. Thomas More and England’s King Henry the VIII. The title was “A Man For All Seasons.” The title referred to St. Thomas More.

I recall that movie title in remembering our colleague, the late William W. “Bill” Gorden, Jr. Bill’s innate humility would prevent him from ever claiming to be a “man for all seasons.” But any honest recollection of his life would unmistakably identify Bill Gorden as a man of many, many seasons.

In his 71 years, Bill successfully pursued a great many “seasons.” Scholastically he earned a political science degree at the University of Oklahoma followed by a law degree from Oklahoma City University. Bill was accomplished in law and in politics, from nuts and bolts local retail politics to global geopolitics. But that was only the beginning.

Bill had the wisdom to marry Debbie Gorden years before she ever became Executive Director of the Oklahoma County Bar Association. Their 38-year

“season” of marriage produced two fine sons, Will and Sean, who carry many good traits from both.

Bill faithfully served his church. After four years of intense didactic study on theology, philosophy, homiletics and church history and rigorous personal spiritual discernment Bill was ordained in 2002 as a permanent Deacon of the Catholic Church. He served the needs of parishioners in St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Northwest Oklahoma City.

The “season” of sports was another of Bill’s passions. Baseball was his first love. In typical fashion it was only Bill Gorden who would research the original, olde rules when baseball was first organized in the 1880s. And only Bill would organize games where those olde rules were played. The rest of the time Bill would cheer on his beloved New York Yankees when he was not coaching youngsters in baseball or basketball.

At heart, Bill was very much a teacher. He enjoyed a long successful tenure (season) at Redlands Community College, El Reno, Oklahoma. Untold thousands of students benefited at the college level from Bill’s knowledgeable insight

and wit.

And for *The Briefcase* Bill undertook another “season.” He was a regular contributor of book reviews. Bill devoured mostly heavy-duty, serious books on politics, philosophy, history and culture. Unlike the books in question, Bill’s reviews were succinct and most revealing about their subjects.

Bill excelled in the “season” of exercise. He bicycled regularly as a hardcore competitor to include the Hotter than Hell 100, ran marathons, enjoyed yard work, and working/playing with the family dogs. To no one’s surprise, Bill studied languages and cultures. Then he successfully took up painting.

Through it all, Bill’s wit was always outstanding. During Law Day in the late 1970s, Bill and I volunteered to be speakers together at one event. We were assigned to a junior high school in south Oklahoma City to make a presentation. Immediately, Bill realized we needed to revamp the handout Law Day materials to fit the attention span of our young restless audience.

Bill took the lead. We followed the Law Day theme in a mock debate, some

short skits and a question and answer game with the students. Bill told me he had worked up a finish where he would quote somebody named Arthur Fonza-relli. I didn’t know who he was talking about . . . even after he explained it was “Fonzie” on *Happy Days* (it was a new television show I never watched). I was skeptical. Would our junior high audience even get any reference to that character on the very new TV show? “Trust me,” said Bill. And Bill’s closing when he quoted “the Fonz” on the Law Day theme brought down the house. Then, Bill extemporaneously turned up the collar of his suit jacket and made Fonzie-like body movements to press his point. I thought the kids would storm the stage.

Everyone who knew Bill will sorely miss him. The only solace that we have is that Bill is now in a better place. In all his “seasons” Bill is one of the few people who exemplified the 18th Psalm, to-wit:

“The Lord has dealt with me according to my righteousness; because my hands were pure, he has rewarded me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord.”

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OBITUARY

ROBERT FORBES

By: Kent Eldridge

I have never seen a man stand taller than Robert Forbes.

Robert “Bob” Forbes left us August 23, 2020. Bob was a friend and mentor to all, always with a smile and a helping hand. The loving and devoted husband to Holly and father to Trey, he still had all the time in the world for his friends and clients. During the last week among us, his brother John and his sister-in-law, Leslie, traveled from Jacksonville, Florida to give Bob traveling directions for his journey and memories to carry along with him.

It was the summer of 2012 and I was reestablishing my practice after serving as a Workers Compensation Court Judge. Bob’s brother, John, called and asked if I would meet with them. When I joined Bob and John that afternoon and learned they could use my help trying Bob’s workers compensation cases, I readily agreed and so began our journey together. The plan for my assistance worked out well for all.

My first office after leaving the bench became a construction zone, so Bob offered me a furnished office and the next day I moved in. Bob offered me safe harbor and refused my offers to pay rent, always saying, “I cannot repay you for keeping me going in practice another year.” This is a compliment I will always treasure. Little did I know it was my chance to grow close to my friend and colleague, and not just admire from

Teresa, my longtime legal assistant, upon learning of Bob’s death said that Bob had a way of making you feel like you were the most interesting and important person in the world.

afar his skill as a great comp lawyer. Little did I know until John told me this week that Bob worked his way through night school at OCU working for BJ Brockett on bankruptcies, and how he represented Mac Hill in a divorce, he did it all as a lawyer. Until then I only knew him as a skilled PI and workers compensation lawyer.

Bob transitioned from University of Missouri football player to teacher to lawyer. He also went from a star athlete to a wheelchair. Bob’s friend and colleagues observed Bob going from a vigorous big man to successive amputations of his legs and his struggle with prosthetics, and finally a motorized wheelchair.

He handled every transition with courage, poise and never a complaint. With the help of Mac and Terry, Bob was to maintain his mobility and even was able to go on hunting trips. When I spoke to Mac about this article, he commented that he still could not believe a successful white lawyer would trust a black man with everything that was precious to him, including his son. Mac endured the times when the water fountains, and society at large, were designated as black and white. I never thought about a racial divide in this context until Mac’s comment, and it made me realize Bob was color blind. He treated all equally.

Bob glowed when he spoke of his son Trey. When I learned that Trey was an outstanding football player for very good Carl Albert teams, I asked Bob if he had played—he was too modest to have ever told me he was a three sport athlete in high school, and earned a D-1 scholarship to play football at University of Missouri, but I coaxed the D-1 story from him, and John told me about the 3 sport star he was in high school. Although a talented athlete in his own right, he held the athletic accomplishment of his son Trey high above his own. In fact, the only time I ever heard Bob boast or brag, he was speaking of his son Trey and his accomplishments. I stand corrected, there was the proverbial Bob white quail story, the size of a

See FORBES, PAGE 10

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Bar Observer

Christensen Law Welcomes Former Governor Mary Fallin-Christensen to the Firm as Senior Advisor and Consultant

Christensen Law is excited to announce the addition of the former Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin-Christensen as a Senior Advisor and Consultant. The unique talents, experiences, and input brought by former Governor Fallin-Christensen allow Christensen to further expand its capacity to offer a comprehensive suite of business services to its clients.

Mrs. Fallin-Christensen especially brings a wealth of expertise in the Workers' Compensation field. In 1997, as Lt. Governor, Mrs. Fallin-Christensen organized and led a bi-partisan coalition of 40 Workers Compensation stockholders, later named the "Fallin Commission on Workers' Compensation," which produced a comprehensive reform plan that would minimize the delays of getting benefits to injured workers, reduce fraudulent claims, and lower Workers' Compensation cost for employers.

Then, as the first female Governor of this great state, Fallin-Christensen spearheaded a complete overhaul of the Workers' Compensation System. Under her guidance the system was transformed from an outdated court system into the Administrative Law system under which it currently operates.

Christensen Law, which has specialized in Workers' Compensation defense of employers and insurance carriers for over 35 years, offers a full-range of legal and consultant services to insurance companies, self-insured organizations, businesses, schools, universities, non-profits and individuals operating in Oklahoma and throughout the nation.

For more information about Christensen Law, P.L.L.C., contact Mary Fallin-Christensen at Mary@christensen.law or the Managing Director, Wade Christensen at Wade@christensen.law, or by visiting the firm's website at www.christensen.law

The Immigration Law Firm of Stump & Associates Announce New Association

The Immigration Law Firm of Stump & Associates takes pleasure in announcing that **Ani Sargsyan** has become an associate of the firm.

For more information you may contact Stump & Associates at: 6307 Waterford Boulevard, Suite 222; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73118 – (405) 879-0800 – or www.usvisagroup.com

The Law Firm of Lytle Soule & Felty, P.C. Welcomes Four New Partners

M. Dan Caldwell joins the firm as a

Director. Mr. Caldwell's practice focuses on Worker's Compensation and Insurance law. A native of Ardmore, Mr. Caldwell received his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Oklahoma. He has previously served on the Workers Compensation Advisory Council.

Kristi Bynum Funk joins the firm as a Preferred Shareholder. Mrs. Funk also practices in the area of Worker's Compensation. She is the former Chairperson of the Oklahoma Bar Association Worker's Compensation Section. Born in El Reno, Mrs. Funk received a Bachelor's degree from Oklahoma City University (summa cum laude) and her law degree from the University of Oklahoma.

Eric L. Combs joins the firm as a Preferred Shareholder. Mr. Combs has a diverse civil litigation practice, with emphasis on commercial, oil and gas, and other complex litigation. Mr. Combs received his bachelor's degree (phi beta kappa) and law degree from the University of Oklahoma. Born and raised in Shawnee, Mr. Combs also serves on the Oklahoma Bar Association's Legislative Monitoring Committee.

Will T. Jordan joins the firm as a Preferred Shareholder. Mr. Jordan focuses his practice on oil, gas and energy law, as well as outside general counsel services. Mr. Jordan has extensive experience counseling businesses on a broad range of

legal issues, having served as corporate counsel at two publicly-traded oil and gas companies in Oklahoma City. Mr. Jordan received his undergraduate (cum laude) and law degrees from the University of Arkansas.

Hall Estill Welcomes Blake Gerow And Jonathan Rogers As Associates To The Firm

Hall Estill has announced the addition of two new Associates, Blake Gerow and Jonathan Rogers, to the Tulsa and Oklahoma City offices, respectively.

Gerow joins Hall Estill as an associate practicing energy and litigation law after receiving his J.D., with highest honors, from the University of Tulsa College of Law. While in law school, Gerow served as the Executive Notes Editor for the Energy Law Journal, receiving the Foundation of the Energy Law Journal Award for Editorial Excellence, and was vice president of the Renewable Energy and Environmental Law Society. In addition, he is a volunteer for the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless.

Rogers joins Hall Estill's litigation team after receiving his J.D. from the University of Oklahoma College of Law, where he served as Editor-In-Chief of

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JUSTICE
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Unfortunately, many people, particularly those who are low-income, cannot afford an attorney. Free legal services are available through Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma and other providers, but these providers must turn away more than half of those who qualify for services due to a lack of funding, and needs are rising in the face of COVID-19.

To address these challenges, the Access to Justice Commission works to develop and implement policy initiatives designed to expand access to and enhance the quality of justice in civil legal matters for low-income Oklahoma residents. The Access to Justice Foundation identifies resources, collaborates across the state and nation, and builds programs to achieve the Commission’s goal of meaningful access to justice.

The Commission and Foundation focus on three primary areas to improve access to the civil justice system by developing new resources for civil legal services, building and supporting pro bono programs, and expanding services for self-represented litigants.

One of the Access to Justice Foundation’s newest projects is a state-wide pro bono portal at okprobono.org, connecting law student and lawyer volunteers with over 70 ways to help across our state, representing a dozen organizations. There are opportunities in a wide range of subject areas, and they run the gamut from offering brief

We know the civil legal system is complex and difficult to navigate without the help of an attorney.

advice by phone or email to providing full representation. Helping our community by offering pro bono assistance to our neighbors in need is a critical way the legal profession can keep Oklahoma strong in the face of all the challenges 2020 has brought.

The Access to Justice Foundation was created to serve as a capacity builder, convener, and strategist for our state and the legal community – we work with everyone from judges and court staff to law students and professors, Legal Aid and other nonprofit providers, and the private bar from our largest law firms to solo practitioners. There’s no one-size-fits-all solution to the justice gap. The Foundation’s Executive Director, Katie Dilks, is eager to work with partners across the state to build and strengthen our community. You can reach her with questions or opportunities to collaborate at katie.dilks@okaccesstojustice.org and learn more about Oklahoma Access to Justice at okaccesstojustice.org.



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the Oklahoma Law Review, volunteered with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, and was awarded the Comfort Scholarship. Upon graduation, Rogers was inducted into the National Order of Scribes.

Founded in 1966 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Hall Estill is a full-service law firm with clients ranging from Fortune 500 corporations and medium-sized companies to

nonprofit organizations, emerging businesses and individuals. More than 150 legal professionals work in the firm at offices in Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Denver and Northwest Arkansas assisting a diversified base of local, regional, national and international clients.

OU Paralegal Student Receives Crowe & Dunlevy Scholarship. B. Jo Balding Scholarship Supports Legal Education

Caleb Stillwell was recently named the

2020 recipient of the Crowe & Dunlevy B. Jo Balding Scholarship.

A student in the University of Oklahoma Law Center's Legal Assistant Education Program, Stillwell is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma.

The \$1,000 scholarship is named for longtime Crowe & Dunlevy paralegal B. Jo Balding, who spent more than 50 years with the firm. The Crowe & Dunlevy Foundation established the annual scholarship in 2013.

Scholarship applicants must be enrolled in the Legal Assistant Education Program at the University of Oklahoma College of

Law and be in good academic standing with at least an 8.1 grade point average in legal specialty courses.

For more than 100 years, Crowe & Dunlevy has been a regional leader in innovative and effective legal solutions for businesses and individuals. Offering comprehensive transactional and litigation services from early mediation to alternative dispute resolution via our nearly 30 practice groups, we work with diverse clientele to meet even the most challenging legal objectives. For more information, visit crowedunlevy.com

FORBES
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tetradactyl, or was that a large mouth bass, that got away.

Trey recalls Bob attending his little league games, but by high school, he had to watch from the car when possible—he did manage, with great difficulty, to attend senior night. Bob thought the amputations would be traumatic for Trey, then about 4 years old, but his reaction was “I thought it was pretty cool. It made me think he was bad-ass.”

Teresa, my longtime legal assistant, upon learning of Bob's death said that Bob had a way of making you feel like you were the most interesting and important person in the world. She still has the refrigerator magnets he gave to with advice about raising children. She added, “Bob was one of the good ones.”

As further evidence of Bob's generosity, Leia, his legal assistant of 21 years, fondly recalls the many fishing trips Bob took staff and family to Texoma or Corpus Christie. Mac, who often drove Bob described him as “open hearted” and a “generous person

who helped everyone”.

As I represented Bob's clients, they constantly asked me about Bob. They were genuinely concerned. Many of them called and visited him to the end. I never observed such devotion by clients to their lawyer as they did for Bob.

Bob never complained that he could no longer roll through the halls of the Denver Davison Building, but every time we talked or visited after his retirement, he wanted an update on his many friends at the comp court. He missed the camaraderie of the lawyer's lounge.

The absolute and undisputed love of his life was Holly. They met at Pelicans restaurant in Midwest City and had known each other for years before they started dating. Their first date was December 10, 1997 and they were married in Santa Fe on April 3, 1998. Bob knew how to close a deal. Holly “dearly loved” Bob, and never ceased being amazed at his physical strength even after years in the wheelchair.

As I would instruct Bob at the conclusion of his trial before me, your case is now submitted, counsel, you are now free to go. Travel safely, my friend.



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3. **Increase job satisfaction.** Lawyers who regularly volunteer in their community report higher levels of job satisfaction and personal well-being, and their employers report higher levels of retention and loyalty.

www.okprobono.org

The Oklahoma Access to Justice Foundation, partnering with justice tech company Paladin and with the generous support of the Oklahoma Bar Foundation and the George Kaiser Family Foundation, proudly offers the *Oklahoma Pro Bono Opportunities Portal*. Available free to all Oklahoma lawyers, law students, and legal service providers, the Portal is a website that connects volunteers with meaningful legal opportunities across the state.

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