

LGBTQ+ LAW SECTION

State Bar of Texas

State Bar of Texas
LGBTQ+ Law Section

2025–2026 Issue 2

2025–2026 SECTION OFFICERS

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VICE-CHAIR

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Terms Expiring 2026

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At-Large Position 2

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At-Large Position 4

Karri L. Bertrand

At-Large Position 5

Matias "Matt" E. Garcia

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Brian P. Klosterboer
(2022–2023) ex officio

BOARD ADVISORS

Forrest L. Huddleston
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lgbtqpluslawtx.org

Updates & Annual Meeting

The LGBTQ+ Law Section of the State Bar of Texas continues its longstanding commitment to advancing equality, professionalism, education, and advocacy throughout the Texas legal community. We encourage all members to renew their dues and invite you to join us in Houston at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting for Section CLE programming, our Section annual membership meeting, and networking receptions on both Thursday and Friday evening.



2026–2027 Section Membership Dues Reminder

As annual State Bar of Texas dues notices are distributed, members are encouraged to renew their LGBTQ+ Law Section membership for \$20 when paying their State Bar dues. The deadline for payment of State Bar of Texas annual dues is June 1, 2026 (accepted through August 31, 2026) and can be done by visiting <https://www.texasbar.com>.

Your continued membership support allows the Section to provide CLE programming, statewide outreach, law student engagement, historical preservation efforts, networking opportunities, and advocacy throughout Texas. One time attendance at a LGBTQ+ Law Section sponsored CLE pays for the cost of your \$20.00 Section dues, so please encourage your colleagues to join the Section! In addition, new lawyers licensed less than two years can join the section for free. Finally, **membership (nonvoting) is free for law students** who are members of the Law Student Division (<https://www.texasbar.com/Content/NavigationMenu/ForLawyers/MembershipInformation/LawStudentInfo/default.htm>) and **paralegals** who are members of the of the Paralegal Division (<https://txpd.org/membership/new-member-application/>).

Encourage the paralegals, young lawyers, and law students in your life to join the Section so that we can build the pipeline for the future.

stay **ENGAGED**

• WITH THE •



LGBTQ+ LAW SECTION
State Bar of Texas

Be sure to add our **Facebook** page and
follow us on **Instagram** to stay up to date!



**LIKE US ON
FACEBOOK!**

Stay informed about
events, programs,
resources, and more.



[https://www.facebook.com/
LGBTQPlusLawTX](https://www.facebook.com/LGBTQPlusLawTX)



**FOLLOW US ON
INSTAGRAM!**

Get updates, event
highlights, and connect
with our community.



[https://www.instagram.com/
lgbtqlawtx/](https://www.instagram.com/lgbtqlawtx/)



Connect. Support.



Advocate.

TOGETHER, WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



SBOT Annual Meeting, June 11–12, 2026, Houston, CLE, Reception, and Section Annual Membership Meeting Agenda & Council Slate

For those of you attending the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting in Houston on June 11–12, the LGBTQ+ Law Section invites you to attend networking receptions on Thursday and Friday nights. The Section will hold our CLE programming on Friday, June 12, followed by the 29th annual membership meeting and election of the 2026–2027 Section council. Please also consult the online Annual Meeting directory for room changes and updates which can be viewed or downloaded at:

[https://www.texasbar.com/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Digital Programming Guide&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=71245](https://www.texasbar.com/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Digital%20Programming%20Guide&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=71245)

Thursday, June 11, 2026

8:00–5:00 p.m. State Bar Annual Meeting and CLE, Marriott Marquis Houston

5:30–7:30 p.m. Houston Bar Association LGBTQ+ Committee's 6th Annual Pride Mixer

The Thursday night reception and networking event will be hosted by Norton Rose Fulbright at Fulbright Tower, 1550 Lamar Street, 28th Floor, Houston, Texas, within walking distance from the Annual Meeting.

Please join us for the Section's presentation of the 2026 Judge Norman W. Black Award, HBA's presentation of the 2026 Benny Agosto Jr. Pride Award, and networking. Please RSVP through the link below and invite colleagues, judges, and law students to attend.

<https://memcentral.wufoo.com/forms/s1bnn04e0nrd060/>

Friday, June 12, 2026

8:00–5:00 p.m. Section CLE Breakouts (Updated Schedule below), Marriott Marquis Houston

4:30–5:15 p.m. LGBTQ+ Law Section 29th Annual Membership Meeting, Marriott Marquis Houston

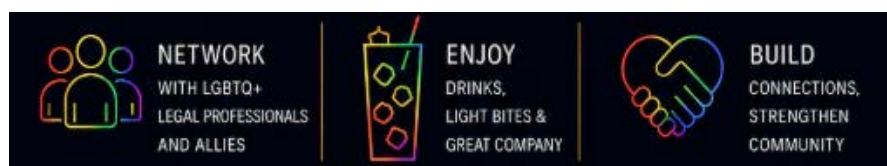
6:00–8:00 p.m. LGBTQ+ Law Section Reception & Networking, Private Residence in Montrose

LGBTQ+ Law Section Reception & Networking

On Friday evening, the Section will host an Annual Meeting Afterparty and Networking reception at a private residence in Montrose at 6:00 p.m. Please invite colleagues, judges, paralegals, and law students to join us for networking, drinks, and light bites. Street parking will be limited and rideshare is strongly encouraged. Address and further details will be provided after registration through the RSVP link: <https://forms.gle/cjctATB6HhZmZK9VA>.

Questions? Contact Sam Hodges at

sam.lgbtqlawtx@gmail.com.



29th Section Annual Membership Annual Meeting Agenda

Friday, June 12, 2026, 4:30 p.m., Marriott Marquis Houston

1. Credentialing of Section members (Bylaws § 7.4: majority vote of members present and voting)
 2. Call to order by Section chair
 3. Acceptance of agenda
 4. Acceptance of minutes of June 20, 2025 Section annual membership meeting
 5. Chair's report
 6. Treasurer's report
 7. Reports from other 2025–2026 Section officers
 8. Nominating committee report
 9. Nominations from floor
 10. Resolutions to modify method of election (Bylaws § 4.2)
 - a. Authorize acceptance of slate by voice vote
 - b. Authorize election of at-large members with place numbers to be randomly assigned
 11. Election
 - a. Chair
 - b. Vice-chair
 - c. Secretary
 - d. Treasurer
 - e. Communications director
 - f. At-large council member place 1 (2026–2027)
 - g. At-large council member place 2 (2026–2028)
 - h. At-large council member place 3 (2026–2027)
 - i. At-large council member place 4 (2026–2028)
 - j. At-large council member place 5 (2026–2027)
- Immediate past chair (Charles A. Spain) continues on council as voting member (Bylaws § 3.2)
- 2022–2023 past chair (Brian P. Klosterboer) continues on council as ex officio nonvoting member (Bylaws § 3.2)
12. Other business
 13. Adjourn (new council takes office)

As a reminder, Bylaws article VII provides in part:

Section 7.1. The annual meeting of the section must be held during the annual meeting of the State Bar of Texas, in the same city as the annual meeting of the State Bar of Texas, with the program and order of business as may be arranged by the chair.

Section 7.3. The members present at any meeting constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 7.4. A binding action of the section requires a majority vote of the members present and voting.

Section Officers and Council Election—Nominating Committee Slate

Friday, June 12, 2026, 4:30 p.m., Marriott Marquis Houston

In addition to the business meeting, the Section membership will elect officers and members of the council for the upcoming year. The nominating committee consists of chair Frederick W. Sultan IV and members R. Elliott Beck, Shelly L. Skeen, and Charles A. Spain.

2025–2026 Nominating Committee

LGBTQ+ Law Section

State Bar of Texas

2026–2027 Council Slate

Callie C. Butcher, chair (Dallas)

Karri L. Bertrand, vice-chair (Dallas)

Penny R. Robe, secretary (Richardson)

Philip B. Arnold, treasurer (Austin)

Samuel M. Hodges, communications director (Houston)

Matias “Matt” E. Garcia, at-large member (position TBD) (Austin)

Jesse H. Garza, at-large member (position TBD) (Austin)

Thomas L. McMillian, at-large member (position TBD) (Dallas)

Morgan J. Walker, at-large (position TBD) (Austin)

To be announced, at-large (position TBD)

Continuing 2026–2027 council members

Charles A. Spain, immediate past chair (2025–2026) (voting) (Houston)

Brian P. Klosterboer, third past chair (2022–2023) (ex officio nonvoting) (Houston)



Friday, June 12, 2026, LGBTQ+ Law Section CLE Programming Schedule

Marriott Marquis Houston, 1777 Walker Sreet, Houston, Texas

LGBTQ+ Law Section—Houston Ballroom 2

8:15–8:55 a.m. Practitioner Roundtable Discussion
with Section Leadership
Moderator, Shelly Skeen (Dallas) Lambda Legal

8:55–9:00 a.m. Introduction of Day by Section Chair
Hon. Charles A. Spain (Houston) Justice, Fourteenth
Court of Appeals (Ret.)

9:00–9:30 a.m. Essential Estate Planning Tools for
LGBTQ+ Relationships
.5 hour (.25 ethics)
Penny Robe (Richardson) Robe Law Firm

9:30–10:00 a.m. Building Your Practice and Your
Client Base as an Out LGBTQ+ Lawyer
.5 hour (.25 ethics)
Gary Schumann (Austin) Savrick, Schumann, Johnson,
McGarr, Kaminski & Shirley, L.L.P.

10:00–10:30 a.m. State of LGBTQ+ Civil Rights—
Federal
.5 hour (.25 ethics)
Callie Butcher (Dallas) Butcher Legal Group

10:30–11:00 a.m. State of LGBTQ+ Civil Rights—
State
.5 hour (.25 ethics)
Shelly Skeen (Dallas) Lambda Legal

11:00–11:45 a.m. Legislative and Executive Branch
Update
.75 hour (.25 ethics)
Brad Pritchett (Austin) Equality Texas

Lunch

LGBTQ+ Law Section CLE Replay

The Bill of Rights 2026: Litigating the Constitution CLE will be replayed on June 16, 2026. Attendees receive 6.5 hours of MCLE credit with 1.5 hours of ethics. LGBTQ+ Law Section members receive a \$25.00 discount on this CLE program and all CLE programs sponsored by the Section. Click the link below to view the Course Brochure and register for the webcast replay at the discounted rate.

<https://www.TexasBarCLE.com/new/?TransferTo=W23828>

1:45–2:15 p.m. AI, You, and Your LGBTQ+ Clients
.5 hour (.25 ethics)
Janiel Myers (Houston) Gibson, Dunn, & Crutcher LLP

2:15–3:00 p.m. Family Law for LGBTQ+ Families and
Relationships
.75 hour (.25 ethics)
Karri Bertrand (Dallas) KB Family Law
Mona Hosseiny-Tovar (Dallas) Goranson Bain Ausley,
PLLC

3:00–3:30 p.m. Immigration Update for LGBTQ Clients
.5 hour (.25 ethics)
Virginia Raymond (Austin) Law Office of Virginia
Raymond

3:30– 4:30 p.m. Judges' Panel
1 hour (.5 ethics)
Moderator: Hon. Beau Miller (Houston) 190th Judicial
District Court, Harris County
Hon. Charles A. Spain (Houston) Justice, Fourteenth
Court of Appeals (Ret.)
Hon. Jerry Simoneaux (Houston) Probate Court No. 1,
Harris County

4:30 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. Section Council and Membership
Meeting

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Reception and Afterparty at the
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Friday, June 12th from 6–8PM
at private residence in Montrose.
RSVP by clicking here.
Address provided on registration.

Judge Norman W. Black Award 2026

The Section will present the 2026 Judge Norman W. Black Award to the Honorable Robert L. Pitman on Thursday, June 11, 2026. The award will be given in conjunction with the Houston Bar Association 6th Annual Pride Mixer and networking reception from 5:30–7:30 p.m. at Fulbright Tower, 1550 Lamar Street, 28th Floor, Houston, Texas.

This Award is given by the LGBTQ+ Law Section of the State Bar of Texas in memory of United States District Judge Norman W. Black to a past or present member of the State Bar of Texas for significant contributions to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV law.



Judge Black (1931-1997) was nominated by President Carter, served on the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas from 1979 to 1997, and served as chief judge from 1992 to 1996. Hon. Robert L. Pitman is a Judge of the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas. He has a B.S. from Abilene Christian University and a J.D. from The University of Texas at Austin. After law school he served as a law clerk for Judge David Owen Belew Jr. of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas in Fort Worth.

Pitman served as an United States attorney for the Western District of Texas. In October 2003 he was selected to serve as a United States magistrate judge for the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas. President Obama nominated him to be United States Attorney for the Western District of Texas on June 28, 2011, which was opposed by some as Pitman was openly gay. He was confirmed by the United States Senate and took office on October 3, 2011. President Obama nominated Pitman to serve as a judge of the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas on June 26, 2014 to the seat vacated by Judge William Royal Furgeson Jr. Pitman was confirmed by the United States Senate and took office on December 19, 2014.



Judge Pitman is the first openly gay judge to sit on the federal bench within the Fifth Circuit, which covers Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Historical Reflection and Preservation of the Record

The LGBTQ+ Law Section is committed not only to advancing the legal rights of Texans who are LGBTQ or are living with HIV, but also to preserving the history of those who helped make that progress possible. The judges recognized in the following pages broke barriers by serving openly and visibly in judicial positions throughout Texas and the federal courts serving Texas.

First Out-by-Position Texas Federal and State LGBTQ Judges

Year	Name	LGB	T	M/F	Court & Position	Location	Judicial Service Began
1987	Hon. Susan L. Yarbrough	•		F	immigration judge	Houston	1987
1992	Hon. Jerry R. Birdwell	•		M	district court judge	Dallas County	1992
1999	Hon. John Paul Barnish	•		M	municipal court judge	City of Houston	1999
2003	Hon. Christopher K. Walter	•		M	appeals hearing officer, Texas Workforce Commission	Dallas	2003
2006	Hon. Barbara E. Hartle	•		F	municipal court judge	City of Houston	2006
2007	Hon. Susan K. Steeg	•		F	justice of the peace (elected)	Travis County	2007
2009	Hon. Steven E. Kirkland	•		M	elected district court judge	Harris County	2001
2010	Hon. Phyllis R. Frye		•	F	municipal court judge	City of Houston	2010
2011	Hon. Tonya Parker	•		F	district judge (elected)	Dallas County	2011
2014	Hon. Robert L. Pitman	•		M	U.S. district judge	Western District	2014
2019	Hon. Charles A. Spain	•		M	court of appeals justice (elected)	Fourteenth District	2010
2019	Hon. Jerry W. Simoneaux	•		M	statutory county court judge (elected)	Harris County	2015
2019	Hon. Jason A. Cox	•		M	statutory county court judge (elected)	Harris County	2019
2019	Hon. James F. Kovach	•		M	statutory county court judge (elected)	Harris County	2019
2019	Hon. Shannon B. Baldwin	•		F	statutory county court judge (elected)	Harris County	2019
2019	Hon. Rosa M. Gonzalez	•		F	statutory county court judge (elected)	Bexar County	2019
2025	Hon. Maggie J. Ellis	•		F	court of appeals justice (elected)	Third District	2025

- Unless the judge has the notation “(elected),” the judge was appointed.
- The year for “Judicial Service Began” for Article III federal judges and Article V state judges is only for Article III and Article V judicial service.
- The list only includes judges who (1) applied for an appointment or ran for office as openly LGBTQ and (2) were the first judge by gender and appointed/elected to serve at the level of administrative, municipal, justice of the peace, statutory county, district, or appellate court.
- In 2019 three males and two females were elected as the first out statutory county court judges.

First Out Categories

- First Out Judge (female)—Hon. Susan L. Yarbrough (1987)
- First Out Male Judge / First Out State Judge / First Out District Judge—Hon. Jerry R. Birdwell (1992)
- First Out Municipal Court Judge (male)—Hon. John Paul Barnish (1999)
- First Out Hearing Officer (male)—Hon. Christopher K. Walter (2003)
- First Out State Female Judge / First Out Female Municipal Court Judge—Hon. Barbara E. Hartle (2006)
- First Out Elected Judge / First Out Justice of the Peace (female)—Hon. Susan K. Steeg (2007)
- First Out Elected Male Judge / First Out Elected District Judge—Hon. Steven E. Kirkland (2009)
- First Out Transgender Judge (female)—Hon. Phyllis R. Frye (2010)
- First Out Female District Judge (elected)—Hon. Tonya Parker (2011)
- First Out Federal Judge (male; district court)—Hon. Robert L. Pitman (2014)
- First Out Appellate Justice or Judge (male; court of appeals; elected)—Hon. Charles A. Spain (2019)
- First Out Statutory County Court Judges (elected)—Hon. Jerry W. Simoneaux, Hon. Jason A. Cox, Hon. James F. Kovach, Hon. Shannon B. Baldwin, and Hon. Rosa M. Gonzalez (2019)
- First Out Female Appellate Justice or Judge (court of appeals; elected)—Hon. Maggie J. Ellis (2025)

Unless the judge has the notation “Elected” or “(elected),” the judge was appointed.

The use of parentheses is intentional; the parenthesized characteristic is not why that judge is a first out judge.

Throughout much of Texas history, LGBTQ+ attorneys and judges often served without the ability to be open about their identities. These lists document individuals who were the first openly LGBTQ persons to hold various judicial offices in Texas, whether by appointment or election. Their service helped expand representation within the judiciary, increased public visibility of LGBTQ+ legal professionals, and paved the way for future generations of lawyers and judges to serve openly.

Historical records relating to LGBTQ+ legal history are often incomplete or scattered among personal archives, newspaper accounts, judicial records, and community organizations. As a result, documenting these achievements requires historical research and verification. The information contained in the following lists was originally researched and compiled by Hon. Steven E. Kirkland as a part of his service as a board member for the International Association of LGBTQ+ Judges, with the assistance of Hon. Charles A. Spain. This project represents an ongoing effort to preserve an accurate historical record of LGBTQ+ representation within the Texas judiciary.

The Section recognizes that historical research continues to evolve and welcomes additional information, corrections, and documentation that may assist in further developing this important record of Texas legal history.



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NETWORK
WITH LGBTQ+
LEGAL PROFESSIONALS
AND ALLIES



ENJOY
DRINKS,
LIGHT BITES &
GREAT COMPANY



BUILD
CONNECTIONS,
STRENGTHEN
COMMUNITY

SPONSORED BY

Savrick
Schumann

Johnson
McGarr
Kaminski
& Shirley, LLP

Beck | Redden^{LLP}

SMH LAW
PLLC

Charles Spain & John Adcock

Houston, Texas



COMMUNITY. CONNECTION. CELEBRATION. BE YOU. BELONG. SEE YOU THERE.

Closing Remarks

We look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting and catching up at the various receptions. Please be sure to click the hyperlinks in this Newsletter and register for the receptions in advance. For questions about the receptions, the Section, or how you can become more involved, please email Sam Hodges at sam.lgbtqlawtx@gmail.com.

Thank you for your membership!

Penny R. Robe
Communications Director 2025–2026



The LGBTQ+ Law Section is a great way to network. Members receive *LGBT Law Notes*, the Newsletter, access to the LGBTQ+ Law Section listserv, and invites to Section events. Plus, the LGBTQ+ Law Section is always looking for those who want to be involved and become Section leaders.

To join go to www.texasbar.com, click on “About Texas Bar,” “Sections and Divisions,” and “Sections” or call the State Bar Sections Department at (800) 204-2222