

**2024 Robert O. Dawson Conference on Criminal Appeals**  
**May 1-3, 2024 • AT&T Conference Center • Austin, TX**  
**May 1-3, 2024 • Live Webcast**

**Wednesday Afternoon, May 1, 2024**

**Presiding Officer:**

**Hon. Barbara P. Hervey**, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Austin, TX

1:00 pm In Austin Only	<p><b>Registration Opens</b></p> <p>Includes light refreshments.</p>
1:50 pm	<p><b>Welcoming Remarks</b></p>
2:00 pm 1.50 hrs	<p><b>U.S. Supreme Court and Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Update</b></p> <p>Get current on the two high courts' latest cases in a presentation curated for the appellate practitioner. Get caught up with the cases from the end of last year's term and preview what remains in the pipeline for this one.</p> <p>Emily Johnson-Liu, Office of the State Prosecuting Attorney - Austin, TX  Britt Houston Lindsey, Taylor County District Attorney's Office - Abilene, TX</p>
3:30 pm	<p><b>15-Minute Break</b></p>
3:45 pm 0.75 hr	<p><b>Drafting Effective PDRs and Motions for Rehearing</b></p> <p>Discuss effectively phrasing issues in PDRs, knowing when to fight and when to fold and getting PDRs granted.</p> <p>Carmen Roe, Carmen Roe Law Firm, PLLC - Houston, TX</p>
4:30 pm 0.75 hr	<p><b>Approaches to Statutory Interpretation</b></p> <p>Hear discussion of reading and analyzing statutes, dissecting issues in brief writing, and providing practical tips on briefing and arguing statutory construction issues before appellate courts.</p> <p>Hon. Melissa Young Goodwin, Third Court of Appeals - Austin, TX</p>
5:15 pm	<p><b>Adjourn</b></p>
In Austin Only	<p><b>Adjourn to Reception (5:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.)</b></p> <p>Enjoy refreshments and a networking opportunity with colleagues and conference faculty.</p> <p><b>THANK YOU TO OUR RECEPTION SPONSORS</b>  Appellate Section of the State Bar of Texas  State Bar of Texas Criminal Justice Section</p>

## Thursday Morning, May 2, 2024

### Presiding Officer:

**Carson R. Guy**, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Austin, TX

8:30 am In Austin Only	<b>Conference Room Opens</b>  Includes continental breakfast.
9:00 am 1.00 hr	<b>The Intersection of Science and the Law</b>  Highlight the increasing importance of forensic science in the criminal justice system and some of the challenges facing lawyers and scientists.  Hon. Barbara P. Hervey, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Austin, TX Carson R. Guy, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Austin, TX
10:00 am 0.50 hr	<b>Beyond the Font Wars: Word Processing Tips for Formatting Appellate Briefs</b>  Don't let bad formatting get in the way of a good argument. Learn intermediate and advanced techniques to make your briefs readable and user friendly.  Douglas R. Gladden, Rosenthal Kalabus & Therrian - McKinney, TX
10:30 am	<b>15-Minute Break</b>
10:45 am 0.50 hr	<b>Writs</b>  Discuss the law of 11.07 habeas corpus with tips for writ practice at the Court of Criminal Appeals.  Michael Staats Falkenberg, Harris County Public Defender's Office - Houston, TX
11:15 am 1.00 hr	<b>Writ Panel: An Interactive Walkthrough the Process</b>  An interactive conversation with representatives from all sides of 11.07 writ litigation discussing the roles they play in the investigation, presentation, and decision in a post-conviction writ.  Moderator: Michael Staats Falkenberg, Harris County Public Defender's Office - Houston, TX Panelists: Kelly Gatewood, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Austin, TX Hon. Stacey Mathews, 277th District Court - Georgetown, TX Nancy Louise Nicolas, Travis County District Attorney's Office - Austin, TX

## Thursday Afternoon, May 2, 2024

### Presiding Officer:

**Hon. Barbara P. Hervey**, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Austin, TX

12:15 pm In Austin Only	<b>Networking Luncheon (in Austin)</b>  Lunch included with registration.
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1:00 pm 1.00 hr	<p><b>The Science of Readable Legal Writing</b></p> <p>There is a growing body of empirical research that validates many of the best writing and legal-writing tips the experts have been pushing for years. This presentation highlights the tips, explains the research, and suggests how to implement the tips in your own writing.</p> <p>Wayne Schiess, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX</p>
2:00 pm 0.50 hr	<p><b>Drafting Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law</b></p> <p>Practical tips for post-conviction litigators: drafting proposed Findings of Fact; increasing the likelihood they will be adopted; and framing the issues for favorable review.</p> <p>Catherine G. Burnett, South Texas College of Law Houston - Houston, TX</p>
2:30 pm	<p><b>15-Minute Break</b></p>
2:45 pm 0.75 hr ethics	<p><b>Brady/Watkins/Morton Act</b></p> <p>The obligation to disclose evidence comes from multiple sources, including constitutional, statutory, and ethical. This presentation discusses each source and recent, significant cases in the area.</p> <p>Carson R. Guy, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Austin, TX</p>
3:30 pm 1.00 hr 0.25 hr ethics	<p><b>Court of Appeals Judicial Panel</b></p> <p>Court of Appeals justices discuss what goes into their decision-making, how to make them more receptive to your briefs (or not), and other factors to improve your appellate practice. Audience members will have the chance to ask questions. Please submit your questions in advance to <a href="mailto:ConferenceQA@utcle.org">ConferenceQA@utcle.org</a>.</p> <p>Moderator: Jay Brandon, Bexar County District Attorney's Office, Appeals Section - San Antonio, TX Panelists: Hon. Rosa Lopez Theofanis, Third Court of Appeals of Texas - Austin, TX Hon. Beth Watkins, Fourth Court of Appeals - San Antonio, TX</p>
4:30 pm	<p><b>Adjourn</b></p>

## Friday Morning, May 3, 2024

### Presiding Officer:

**Alison Fox Dahlberg**, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Austin, TX

8:30 am In Austin Only	<p><b>Conference Room Opens</b></p> <p>Includes continental breakfast.</p>
9:00 am 1.00 hr	<p><b>Tricks of the Trade: Appellate Tips from Both Sides</b></p> <p>10 tips to be a better direct appeal and writ practitioner.</p> <p>Douglas K. Norman, Nueces County District Attorney's Office - Corpus Christi, TX</p>
10:00 am	<p><b>15-Minute Break</b></p>

10:15 am  
1.00 hr  
0.25 hr ethics

**Court of Criminal Appeals Judicial Panel**

Hear a panel of judges respond to your frequently—and sometimes infrequently—asked questions. Please submit your questions in advance to [ConferenceQA@utcle.org](mailto:ConferenceQA@utcle.org).

Moderator:

Alison Fox Dahlberg, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Austin, TX

Panelists:

Hon. Barbara P. Hervey, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Austin, TX

Hon. Mary Lou Keel, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Austin, TX

Hon. Bert Richardson, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Austin, TX

Hon. Michelle M. Slaughter, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals - Austin, TX

11:15 am  
1.00 hr ethics

**Ethical Issues in Criminal Appeals Practice**

Ethical representation is required at the appellate level as well as the trial level. Explore rules of ethics and situations specifically centered on appellate representation.

Stephanie L. Stevens, St. Mary's University School of Law - San Antonio, TX

12:15 pm

**Adjourn**