

35TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON STATE AND FEDERAL APPEALS



June 12–13, 2025
The Otis Hotel Austin ■ Austin, Texas

 [Live Webcast June 12–13](#)

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Times listed are in Central Time

THURSDAY MORNING, JUNE 12, 2025

Presiding Officer:

Hon. Daryl L. Moore, Ahmad Zavitsanos
& Mensing PLLC, Houston, TX

8:00 a.m. Registration Opens

Includes continental breakfast.

8:50 a.m. Welcoming Remarks

9:00 a.m. .50 hr

89th Legislature: What Just Happened and How it Affects Your Practice and the Courts

A recap of selected bills that passed and some that didn't during the legislative session.

Hon. Jerry D. Bullard, Texas Business Court, Eighth Division, Fort Worth, TX

9:30 a.m. .50 hr

Supreme Court of Texas by the Numbers

What do the Court's numbers from the last term tell us about your client's chances.

Don Cruse, Law Office of Don Cruse, Austin, TX

10:00 a.m. .50 hr

Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure: Amendments Past and Future

Focus on recent changes to the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure and address potential rule amendments recommended by appellate practitioners.

Hon. Tracy Christopher, Fourteenth Court of Appeals, Houston, TX
Jennie Knapp, Underwood Law Firm, P.C., Amarillo, TX

10:30 a.m. 15-Minute Break

MCLE

This course has been approved for Minimum Continuing Legal Education credit by the State Bar of Texas Committee on MCLE in the amount of 11.75 hours, of which 2.00 credit hours will apply to legal ethics/professional responsibility credit. The University of Texas School of Law is a State Bar of California approved MCLE provider (#1944), and an Oklahoma Bar Association MCLE presumptively-approved provider (#169).

10:45 a.m. .75 hr

Fifteenth Court of Appeals Panel

After almost a year of operation, what do you need to know about practice in the Fifteenth Court of Appeals? What kinds of issues are being decided by this Court? Where does it stand on the scope of its jurisdiction? Answers to all of these questions and more from the three sitting Justices of the Fifteenth Court of Appeals!

Moderator:

Anne M. Johnson, Tillotson Johnson & Patton, Dallas, TX

Panelists:

Hon. Scott A. Brister, Fifteenth Court of Appeals, Austin, TX
Hon. Scott K. Field, Fifteenth Court of Appeals, Austin, TX
Hon. April Farris, Fifteenth Court of Appeals, Austin, TX

11:30 a.m. .50 hr

Horton: Charge Practice Now and Where It's Going

Discuss whether *Horton* renews previously settled questions on best practices for granulating questions in a jury charge and identify some open questions on where *Horton* might go.

Hon. David M. Gunn, First Court of Appeals, Houston, TX
Cody Vaughn, Jackson Walker LLP, Austin, TX

12:00 p.m. Pick Up Lunch

Included in registration.



UT Law CLE is committed to helping attorneys meet their annual Texas MCLE requirements. Following the event, registrants will receive a free, on-demand eSupplement that will bring their total available hours to 15.00, including 3.00 hours of ethics.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON

Presiding Officer:

Jane M. N. Webre, Scott Douglass & McConico LLP, Austin, TX

LUNCHEON PRESENTATION

12:30 p.m. .75 hr ethics

Ethics Game Show

Watch shameless appellate practitioners try to outgame each other as they answer ethics questions savvy practitioners need to know.

Moderator:

Hon. Tanya Garrison, 157th District Court, Houston, TX

Panelists:

Hon. Daryl L. Moore, Ahmad Zavitsanos & Mensing PLLC, Houston, TX
Alan York, Reed Smith LLP, Houston, TX

1:15 p.m. 15-Minute Break

1:30 p.m. .50 hr

Using the State Law Library

Learn about various books and research sources (online and in-person) that can assist appellate practitioners in preparing to write briefs and argue cases. Audience participation and recommendations for "essential reads" is encouraged.

Kyle Hawkins, Austin, TX
Amy Small, Texas State Law Library, Austin, TX

2:00 p.m. .75 hr

Supreme Court of Texas Panel

Hear a candid conversation among the Justices about what is new at the Court, the state of the docket, and ways practitioners can improve their chances of securing discretionary review for their clients.

Moderator:

Connie H. Pfeiffer, Yetter Coleman LLP, Houston, TX

Panelists:

Hon. Jimmy Blacklock, The Supreme Court of Texas, Austin, TX
Hon. Jane N. Bland, The Supreme Court of Texas, Austin, TX
Hon. James P. Sullivan, The Supreme Court of Texas, Austin, TX

2:45 p.m. 15-Minute Break

3:00 p.m. 1.00 hr

Supreme Court of Texas Update

Explore recent opinions issued by the Court in the current term.

Hon. Jeff Boyd, The Supreme Court of Texas,
Austin, TX
Kurt Kuhn, Kuhn Hobbs PLLC, Austin, TX

4:00 p.m. .50 hr ethics

Overcoming the Existential Crisis of Being An Appellate Lawyer

Because many factors control the outcome of an appeal—most unrelated to the performance of the advocate—appellate lawyers should try to avoid the crushing weight of responsibility for a favorable outcome. Yet for our clients, a favorable outcome is the only thing that matters. How do we simultaneously serve our clients' needs and our own mental and emotional health?

Kevin Dubose, Alexander Dubose & Jefferson LLP,
Houston, TX

4:30 p.m. .50 hr ethics

Ethics: Following the Letter and the Spirit of the Rules

Following the letter of the Disciplinary Rules helps Texas lawyers avoid misconduct findings in grievances. But that is only the beginning of a lawyer's professional responsibilities to clients. Explore how we can maximize our professionalism by following not only the letter of the disciplinary rules, but their spirit as well.

Scott Rothenberg, Law Offices of Scott Rothenberg,
Bellaire, TX

5:00 p.m. Adjourn

NETWORKING RECEPTION

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Join us for drinks and hors d'oeuvres with program faculty and attendees.

FRIDAY MORNING, JUNE 13, 2025

Presiding Officer:

Kirsten Castañeda, Alexander Dubose & Jefferson LLP, Dallas, TX

8:00 a.m. Conference Room Opens
Includes continental breakfast.

9:00 a.m. .50 hr | .25 hr ethics

Effective Strategies for Selecting Your Appellate Point

Cover what appellate practitioners should consider when selecting points of error on appeal. From standards of review to public policy, this presentation will help you select the most persuasive points for your appellate brief.

Mia Lorick, Troutman Pepper Locke, Houston, TX

9:30 a.m. .50 hr

Secrets of a Successful Reply Brief

How to craft a powerful reply brief that gets to the point, tackles key arguments head-on, and keeps the reader engaged—without redundancy or wasted words.

Robert B. Gilbreath, Hawkins Parnell Thackston & Young, Dallas, TX

10:00 a.m. .75 hr

Interpreting Texas

A discussion on recent developments in statutory and constitutional interpretation.

Hon. J. Brett Busby, The Supreme Court of Texas,
Austin, TX
Jason R. LaFond, Scott Douglass & McConnico LLP,
Austin, TX

10:45 a.m. 15-Minute Break

11:00 a.m. .50 hr

Temporary Relief in Appellate Courts

In 2024, the Supreme Court of Texas provided significant new guidance on the standard for granting temporary relief in appellate courts. Hear an overview and update on the standards and bases for temporary and emergency relief in appellate courts.

Grant Martinez, Yetter Coleman LLP, Houston, TX

11:30 a.m. .50 hr

Lightning Round Topics: Appellate Practice and Procedure

10 things to keep in mind when bringing an appeal or original proceeding.

Anthony T. Golz, Cokinos | Young, Houston, TX

12:00 p.m. Pick Up Lunch

Included in registration.

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FRIDAY AFTERNOON

Presiding Officer:

Marie Jamison, Wright Close & Barger, LLP, Houston, TX

LUNCHEON PRESENTATION

12:30 p.m. .75 hr

District Court Judges Panel

A discussion of how district court judges feel about having appellate counsel at trial. And, how appellate counsel can be most beneficial at certain stages of the trial.

Moderator:

Jessica Z. Barger, Wright Close & Barger, LLP,
Houston, TX

Panelists:

Hon. Beau A. Miller, 190th District Court, Houston, TX
Hon. Anna Perez, 41st District Court, El Paso, TX
Hon. Staci Williams, 101st District Court, Dallas, TX

1:15 p.m. 15-Minute Break

1:30 p.m. .50 hr

Loper Bright, the End of Chevron Deference, and What's Next for APA Challenges

The U.S. Supreme Court has overturned *Chevron* deference. What's next for challenges to new federal regulations, the authority of federal agencies, and the role of the judiciary?

Fermeen F. Fazal, Senior Counsel, Houston, TX
Travis Wussow, Jackson Walker LLP, Austin, TX

2:00 p.m. .50 hr

U.S. Supreme Court Update

An overview of major decisions and trends from the U.S. Supreme Court's 2024-2025 term.

Erin Glenn Busby, The University of Texas School of Law, Austin, TX

2:30 p.m. .50 hr

U.S. Fifth Circuit Update

This presentation covers the most interesting cases about civil litigation from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in the past year.

Antonio X. Milton, Ahmad Zavitsanos & Mensing PLLC, Houston, TX

3:00 p.m. Adjourn

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41st District Court
El Paso, TX

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*Planning Committee member

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Mail:

The University of Texas
School of Law
ATTN: CLE
P.O. Box 12883
Austin, TX 78711

Fax:

512.475.6876

Questions? 512.475.6700

If you have dietary requirements or would like to request accommodations under the ADA, please contact Customer Service at 512.475.6700 or service@utcle.org at least 10 days prior to the conference.

REGISTRATION BENEFITS

Comprehensive Course Materials: Access course materials in "Your Briefcase" approximately 48 hours before the live event, and enjoy unlimited access to the final, complete course materials – downloadable PDFs of papers and slides.

Accredited eConference: Complimentary access to the eConference – with papers, slides, and video – accredited for one year in both TX and CA are available in "Your Briefcase" 6–8 weeks after the event.

TX MCLE Credit Reporting: UT Law CLE can report credit on your behalf directly to the State Bar of Texas. Track the Texas MCLE credit reported on your behalf at "Your Account" after you've logged in at www.utcle.org.

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AP25

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Firm _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

Registrant's Email (required) _____

Assistant's Email (optional) _____
Invoices, confirmations, and receipts are emailed to these addresses.

EVENT REGISTRATION

Includes Electronic Course Binder Download (PDF) in "Your Briefcase." Special group registration rates available. Call 512.475.6700.

- ☐ Live, In-Person Event Registration \$695 | \$795 after May 23
☐ Live Webcast Registration \$795

Printed and Shipped Binder with Registration (Shipping Included) – Available for order through Thursday, June 13, 2025

Please note that the printed binder will arrive 2–3 weeks after the conclusion of the live event. Delivery to P.O. boxes is not permitted. Binders will not be distributed on-site.

- ☐ Printed and Shipped Course Binder \$102.84 (\$95*)

Webcast Add-on

Register for the in-person conference and add on the webcast format for attendance flexibility.

- ☐ Webcast Add-on \$100

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- ☐ Electronic Post-Course Download (PDF) \$319.34 (\$295*)
☐ Printed Post-Course Binder \$373.46 (\$345*)

TOTAL POST-CONFERENCE PRODUCTS \$ _____

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Authorized Signature _____

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AUSTIN

June 12–13, 2025

CONFERENCE LOCATION



The Otis Hotel Austin
1901 San Antonio St.
Austin, TX 78705
512.473.8900

Special Room Rate: \$234
good through May 21, 2025

Visit www.utcle.org/conferences/AP25/#venue
to access the booking link
(subject to availability)

Parking:

\$25 Daily Self-parking
\$35 Overnight Self-parking
\$55 Overnight Valet parking

KEY DATES

May 23, 2025

Last day for early registration rates

June 6, 2025

Last day for full refund cancellation

June 9, 2025

Last day for partial refund cancellation
\$50 processing fee applied

June 12, 2025, 8:50 a.m., CT

Conference begins

June 13, 2025

*Last day to order a printed and shipped course binder
with in-person or webcast conference registration.*

REASONS TO ATTEND

UT Law CLE's **35th Annual Conference on State and Federal Appeals** – designed for advanced-level civil appellate practitioners – has earned a reputation as the premier program on appellate practice and procedure in Texas and is a must-attend event for Texas civil appellate practitioners.

Topics include:

- Fifteenth Court of Appeals Panel
- 89th Legislature: What Just Happened and How it Affects Your Practice
- Supreme Court of Texas Panel
- Effective Strategies for Selecting Your Appellate Points
- Ethics: Following the Letter and the Spirit of the Rules
- Secrets of a Successful Reply Brief
- Lightning Round Topics: Appellate Practice and Procedure
- Ethics Game Show

Following the conference, attendees will receive a bonus eSupplement to ensure practitioners can earn their required 15.00/3.00 Texas MCLE hours for the year.

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We are here to support our community. Information and updates regarding our in-person conferences and live webcasts will be posted at www.utcle.org.

In addition, we continue to offer multiple educational opportunities online—both live and on-demand—by bringing practitioners together virtually. We are fortunate to serve so many of you who strive for excellence in the practice of law.

