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## The Verdict Is In – High School Government Jury Project Back

By Jenny Mitschke

**T**he Austin Bar Association is excited to announce the return of the award-winning *Pick Me! A Jury of My Peers* project this spring. Last fall proved to be a great success, generating positive feedback from the high school government students and teachers, as well as attorneys and judges involved in the mock *voir dire*. Thank you to everyone who made this achievement possible.

The Bar received a number of e-mails and phone calls from par-

ticipants citing words of enjoyment about the experience and enthusiasm about participating again. And the project was an absolute hit with the students.

One teacher wrote "It was truly a remarkable experience. I have had the students write papers about the whole process. Some of them are quite interesting. It shows that they are getting it. They now know how they fit in."

And another teacher gratefully declared, "I know it has been of great benefit to my students and

has really exposed them in a meaningful way to one of our most vital civic institutions, not to mention to some very admirable role models."

Mark your calendars – *Pick Me!* will take place the weeks of **March 20 through March 24** and **April 10 through April 13**.

To volunteer for this highly influential project and for more information, please visit our Web site at [www.austinbar.org](http://www.austinbar.org) or contact **Jenny Mitschke** at [jenny@austinbar.org](mailto:jenny@austinbar.org) or 472-0279. • AL

## Bar & Grill Show Raises Laughter and Money for VLS

**A**ustin attorneys took the stage in November for a good time – and a good cause. It was a night full of fun, follies, and even a 40-Year-Old

Trial Virgin. The attorneys-turned-actors put their dignity on the line to raise approximately \$25,000 for Volunteer Legal Services, money

*Continued on page 5...*



David DuBose and JoAnn Dalrymple perform the "Arbitration Tango."

# president's column



## Helping Lawyers in Need: The Justice Mack Kidd Trust Fund

By Randy Howry, HERMAN, HOWRY & BREEN

In January, we passed the one year anniversary of the death of our friend and colleague **Justice Mack Kidd**. During the past year, the Austin Lawyers' Assistance Committee of the Austin Bar Association has been considering options to recognize the many contributions of Justice Kidd to the Austin Bar and to assist our fellow lawyers who are suffering from depression or a related illness. At the Austin Bar Foundation Gala, held on January 21, **Woodie Jones** announced the creation of the Mack Kidd Trust Fund. The money raised for this fund would be used exclusively to provide counseling and medical treatment on a short-term basis for lawyers in the Austin area whose practices as a result of depression or related illness have declined to a point that they cannot afford to pay for the treatment themselves.

The death of Justice Kidd forced many of us, perhaps for the first time, to examine closely the realities of depression and the practice of law. Research proves that lawyers are two to four times more

likely to suffer from depression than the general public. Of all professions surveyed, lawyers have the highest rate of clinical depression. A recent study by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health indicated that male lawyers in the United States were twice as likely to commit suicide than men in the general population. Statistics from the Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program reveal that more than 40 percent of calls received via its telephone hotline are from lawyers suffering from depression as opposed to those suffering from substance abuse.

A lawyer suffering from depression is also most likely a lawyer who is not taking care of business. Clients' needs are not being met. The lawyer is not earning any fees. When, and if, the lawyer accepts that there is a medical problem, the lawyer typically does not have the financial resources to get help. The Justice Mack Kidd Trust Fund will allow for lawyers in the Austin area to receive the needed counseling and medical treatment on a short-term basis.

The fund has been established by the Austin Bar Association and will be operated under the umbrella of the Austin Bar Foundation. Any contributions intended for the Justice Mack Kidd Trust Fund should be directed to the Austin Bar Foundation with reference made to the trust fund. Soon you will be receiving communication soliciting contributions for the fund. Please consider making a generous donation.

Any questions concerning the Justice Mack Kidd Trust Fund should be addressed to Woodie Jones or DeLaine Ward. Much effort, on the project, has already been extended by the Austin Lawyers' Assistance Committee which is co-chaired by **Velva Price, Jeff Jury, Judge David Phillips** and Woodie Jones. Many thanks to this committee.

If you are suffering from depression or think you might be or know someone who is, please contact TLAP at 800-343-8527. You are not alone. You are not unusual. There are people standing by, ready to help.

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Continued from page 1 (Bar&Grill)

that will help a great number of people in Central Texas get the legal assistance they need and could otherwise not afford.

Thank you to all of the attorneys who donated their time and talents and put their respectable careers at stake and to all of the people who attended in support of the show despite its Oscar®-rivaling length in years past. You are what allows the show to go on!

The Austin Bar Association and Volunteer Legal Services would also like to thank the following for their valuable sponsorship of Bar & Grill:

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Simi Denson, Amy Mitchell, Jenna Donatiello, and Denis McElroy warn the audience to stop in the name of law.



Bar & Grill is groovy, baby. David Kroll, Lance Cawthon (as Bar, Austin Bar), Gene Storie, Liz Branch, and Jo Ann Merica sing about the Bar's recent name change.

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# central docket survival tips

By Warren Vavra, CIVIL COURTS ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE TRAVIS COUNTY CIVIL DISTRICT COURTS

**O**ccasionally, after you've taken the steps to set your case for a hearing and announced "ready" during the docket call announcement period, you determine that you no longer need your hearing. Perhaps the issues in dispute have been settled, the inevitable scheduling conflict has arisen, or

opposing counsel has asked you to postpone the hearing. Whatever the reason, please give the Court Administrator's Office a call at 854-9093, -9097 or -9098 to pass your setting by agreement.

When you call to pass a setting, the efficiency of the Central Docket improves because case assignments can be made more

accurately. That often results in a docket that moves at a faster pace and lawyers and clients spending less time at the courthouse. Even if it is just a few minutes before the docket is called, knowing that a hearing has passed is most helpful.

So when appropriate, please remember to call when you intend to pass a setting. • AL

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## More Adoption Day Thank You's

The Austin Bar Association would like to thank those involved in Austin Adoption Day held November 17, 2005. Special thanks goes out to our volunteers and donors of books to the fabulous Adoption Day book store, where children were able to visit and pick out books of their very own to take to their new homes. Thank you to The Austin Bar Family Law Section, Catherine Wicker, Denise Hyde, Michele Morgan, Cindy Dollar, and Girl Scout Troop 1259.

Austin Bar would also like to thank the attorneys who volunteered for this special day. Without them none of these adoptions would have been possible:

- Amanda Andrae
- Amy Wright
- Anna Kuhn
- Brad Bayliff
- Christi Trusler
- Christie Keilers
- Cynthia Dollar
- Dana Kocurek
- Dylan Moench
- Elaine Mustard
- Elizabeth Rogers
- Emma Garrett
- Gail Nicholson
- Julian Rivera
- Karen Langsley
- Katherine McAnally
- Kathleen Reyes
- Kim Isham
- Kimberly Stone
- Kristi Taylor
- Kristin Lemke
- Lauren Mathews
- Lori Duke
- Lori Hansel
- Meghan Griffiths
- Michele Morgan
- Michelle Chuang
- Michelle Kwan
- Miguel A. Huerta
- Nellie Wiedenkiller
- Robin Krumme
- Sandra Moreno
- Sarah K Brandon
- Simi Denson
- Stephanie Ledesma
- Timothy Lee
- Tim Whitten
- Tina Amberboj