

THE HELEN CASSIDY AWARD

This year, the State Bar Appellate Section begins what we hope will become a long and cherished tradition: The awarding of the First Annual State Bar of Texas Appellate Practice Section Helen A. Cassidy Award.

Those of you who were fortunate enough to know Helen understand full well why we would honor her. Helen was one of the very first attorneys board certified in civil appellate law in the State of Texas. She was appellate when appellate wasn't cool. Perhaps the crown jewel of Helen's contribution to appellate law is the 15 years that she devoted to public service as staff attorney, then chief staff attorney, of the 14th Court of Appeals. Her many other achievements will be discussed at the Section Meeting. A common theme uniting them all is Helen's ongoing commitment to excellence in appellate law and education, and to helping those with a more faint voice, and with fewer means, wealth and political connection.

For all these reasons, the State Bar Appellate Section Council is proud to recognize Helen's lifelong commitment to legal excellence through the giving of the Helen A. Cassidy Award. Each year, the award will be presented to the person whose scored the highest evaluations during the previous year's Advanced Civil Appellate Practice Course. Your evaluations of this Course thus serve two important purposes—assisting future planning committees in preparing next year's course and determining the recipient of next year's Helen A. Cassidy Award. The Section asks that as you fill out your evaluations, you keep these purposes in mind, and smile when you think of Helen. Appropriate for these purposes are her comments from "The Chair Reports" during her tenure as chair of the Appellate Section:

Over the years, I have served on several planning committees for CLE programs and have written and presented papers. After my first few seminars, I foolishly read the evaluation comments. Never again. I have memorialized the good comments and am working in therapy to forget the ugly remarks.

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Planning committees read your comments and evaluations and are glad to see suggestions for new topics or suggestion for new speakers. Cruel attacks on individual speakers don't help anyone, however.

If you can't control your severe critical impulses, try my outlet. Deliver scathing reviews of multi-million dollar movies or carp about mega-millionaire athletes who choke in championship games. Hollywood producers and pro athletes make enough to take any heat and besides they don't give a damn what I think. Seminar speakers, however, are your colleagues doing a tough, thankless job for nothing. Thank them, and thanks for letting me preach.

Always Helen.