

# BRAGGING RIGHTS

## Pro Bono Projects

Texas Tech Law's Pro Bono Program provided underserved people throughout Texas with more than 3,700 hours of pro bono legal aid during 2014-2015. In the process, law students applied lessons learned in the classroom to the practice of estate planning, immigration, and general litigation.

Under the guidance of volunteer attorneys, bar groups, and the Texas Tech Law School community, students worked with many legal-services organizations, including the Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas in Abilene, Dallas, Fort Worth, Lubbock, and San Angelo; Disability Rights Texas in Lubbock; the Innocence Project of Texas in Lubbock; and the Human Rights Initiative in Dallas.

In the fall, 73 students participated in a two-part wills clinic coordinated by the law school and Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas. Students drafted wills and assisted with the execution of advanced directives and powers of attorney for Lubbock-area clients. A few weeks later, 37 students traveled to Amarillo to help with two immigration clinics coordinated by the Equal Justice Center. Equal Justice Center attorneys credited the students, who prepared and reviewed 45 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals applications, as the "backbone of the entire operation." Seven Texas Tech Law delegates joined student leaders from all ten Texas law schools at the Access to

Justice Summit in Austin, a forum to discuss civil-justice issues faced by Texas's 5.8 million poor.

The momentum continued in the spring with the 2015 Pro Bono Spring Break, a program coordinated by the Texas Access to Justice Commission and sponsored by the State Bar of Texas. Texas Tech Law provided the largest number of law school applicants, and 17 students were placed with a variety of legal-services organizations throughout the state. In April, 13 students participated in the Wills for Heroes Clinic hosted at Texas Tech Law. The clinic, coordinated by the Lubbock Area Bar Association, assisted veterans and first responders in Lubbock and contiguous counties.

In perhaps the most formidable challenge of the year, Professor Dustin Benham, with Miranda Grummons ('16) and John Reyna ('15), went toe-to-toe with Wal-Mart on behalf of an indigent client. The client alleged the corporation rendered his vehicle inoperable after a routine oil change. Though Wal-Mart and its claims company initially denied responsibility, the trio negotiated a favorable settlement for the client. "This case was a win-win," said Benham. "A client who was in a tough situation got the compensation he deserved, and two students were able to experience litigation firsthand while helping someone in their community."

Texas Tech Law will add to its pro bono contributions with a new public-service graduation requirement announced by Dean Darby Dickerson and Texas Supreme Court Justice Eva Guzman in August. Effective with the Class of 2018, all J.D. students must complete at least 30 hours of public service to graduate, with at least half of those hours in law-related service. In addition, faculty are required to perform a minimum of ten public-service hours each year.

Visit [www.law.ttu.edu/acp/programs/probono](http://www.law.ttu.edu/acp/programs/probono) to view a full list of participating organizations and to learn how you can become involved.



*Pictured [left to right]: John Reyna, Professor Dustin Benham, and Miranda Grummons.*