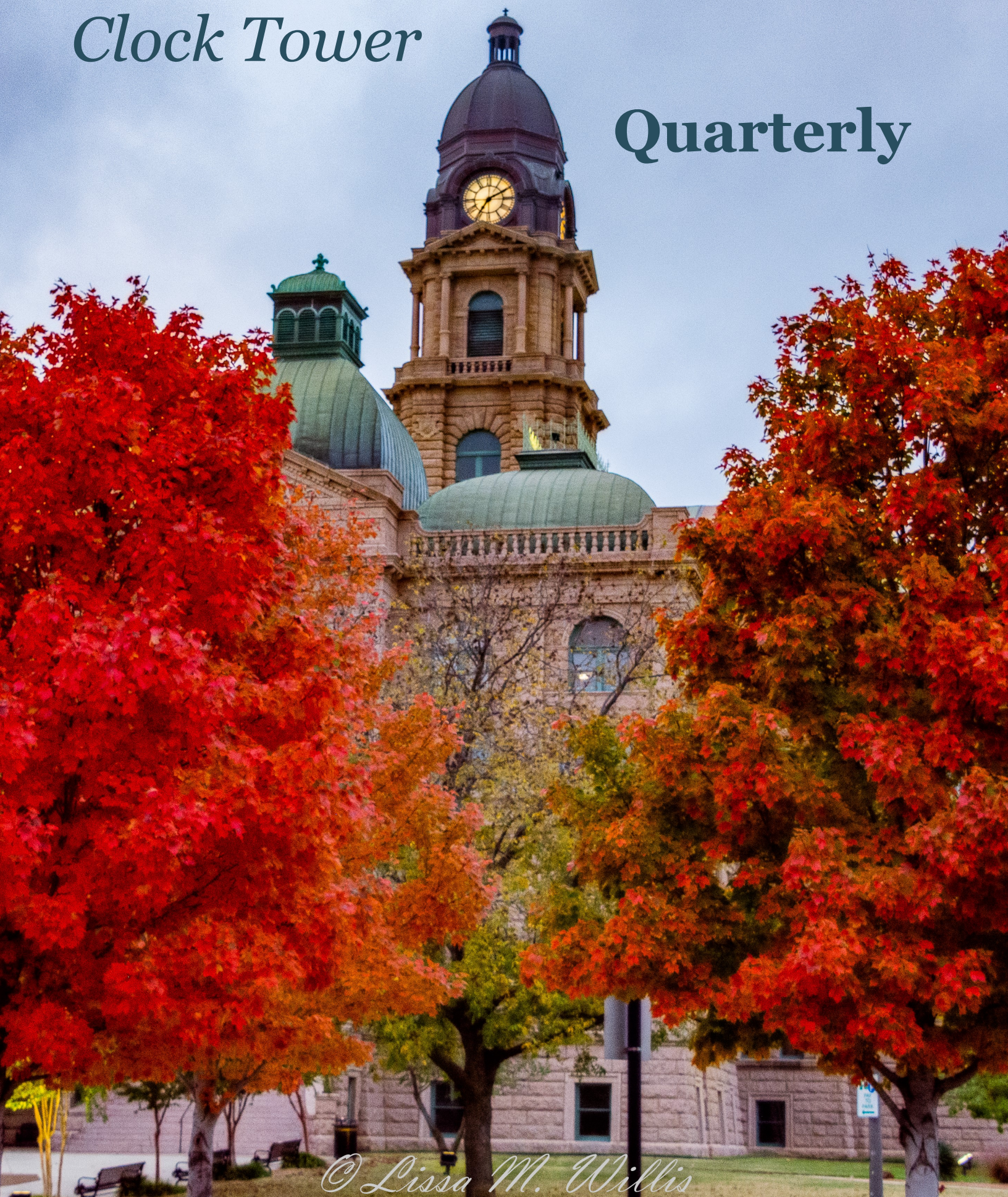


Fall 2025

Clock Tower

Quarterly



© Lissa M. Willis



Dell DeHay Law Library

Hours:

Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:00pm

Note: Computers automatically shut down at 4:00pm

Phone Number:

817-884-1481

Email:

lawlibrary@tarrantcountytexas.gov

Physical Address:

100 W. Weatherford St., Suite 420

Fort Worth, TX 76196

Website:

<https://www.tarrantcountytexas.gov/en/law-library.html>



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Announcements



Dive Into Supreme Court Cases and Oral Arguments

The U.S. Government Publishing Office has released over 500 volumes of *United States Reports*, covering Supreme Court decisions from 1790 to 1990, now fully searchable and downloadable on GovInfo. View the electronic copies at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/usreports>.

At the same time, CourtListener has added searchable oral argument transcripts for federal courts, complete with keyword search, audio syncing, and alert features. These updates improve access for researchers, legal professionals, and the general public. Listen at <https://www.courtlistener.com/>.

Additionally, Oyez offers an archive of Supreme Court audio recordings, case summaries, and detailed transcripts, making it easy to explore the landmark decisions. Access the resources at <https://www.oyez.org>.



Need Legal Research Help? Meet with a Law Librarian!



Dell DeHay Law Library offers an easy online sign-up to schedule a one-on-one meeting with a law librarian. This appointment allows the librarian to prepare and provide legal resources tailored to your research topic.

Please note: Law librarians can assist with legal research, but they **cannot** provide legal advice, interpret law, or calculate deadlines.

Schedule your appointment today at <https://www.tarrantcountytx.gov/content/main/en/law-library/connect-with-a-law-librarian.html>.



Did You Know You Can Have Forms Emailed to You?



Many legal forms and resources are available electronically—no need to come in! Simply email, call, or visit us to request what you are looking for.

- **Email:** lawlibrary@tarrantcountytx.gov (response within 1 business day or less)
- **Call:** 817-884-1481
- Visit us in person

Please note: While a large number of resources are available electronically, some materials require an in-person visit.



Breast Cancer Awareness Month

By Brittany Schick

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Each year, more than 2 million women worldwide are diagnosed with breast cancer. In the United States alone, the **CDC reports that 42,000 women die annually from the disease.**

A common myth is that breast cancer is always easily treatable. In reality, breast cancer can spread beyond the breast to other parts of the body, becoming metastatic breast cancer (Stage IV). According to Breastcancer.org, an estimated 168,000 women in the U.S. are living with metastatic breast cancer. **While Stage IV breast cancer is treatable, it's not currently curable. With treatment, life expectancy averages 5-10 years.**

My own family has been impacted by this reality. My mother was diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer in September 2018, despite having regular mammograms. By the time she was diagnosed, the cancer had already spread. She passed away in November 2021.

Through her journey, we learned that breast ultrasounds (sonograms) can sometimes detect cancers that are not visible on a mammogram, particularly in women with dense breast tissue. This is an important consideration for prevention and early detection.

To learn more about common breast cancer myths, visit <https://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/breast-cancer-myths/>.

RESOURCES

- National Breast Cancer Foundation provides information on early detection, diagnosis, stages, types of breast cancer, treatment, and BRCA: the breast cancer gene. The website is available at <https://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/>.
- Breastcancer.org provides informative articles and videos about breast cancer. The website is available at <https://www.breastcancer.org/>.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) provides an overview on breast cancer available at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/breast-cancer>.
- An article written by Ethan Cohen, M.D. (MD Anderson Cancer Center) titled *Mammogram vs. Breast Ultrasound: What's the Difference?* is available at <https://www.mdanderson.org/cancerwise/mammogram-vs--breast-ultrasound--what-s-the-difference.h00-159702279.html>.



Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Three ways to support domestic violence abusers are to listen without judgment, validate their feelings without diminishing them, and respect their boundaries if they prefer silence or need time to gather their thoughts.

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and/or psychological abuse. Domestic violence can happen to men, women, children, and the elderly. The perpetrator is seeking to gain control by using threats, intimidation, fear, and isolation.

Characteristics of Perpetrators:

- *Addicted to drugs or alcohol*
- *Possessive, jealous, suspicious, and paranoid*
- *Controlling of family life, including finances*
- *Low sense of self-worth*
- *Destructive criticism: yelling; shouting; name calling; verbally threatening*
- *Doesn't admit when they're wrong; never apologizes; plays mind games*
- *Acts angry or entitled*
- *Gaslighting that causes the victim to question their memory or perception of events*
- *Pressures the relationship to move quickly by marriage, living together, or shared finances before the partner is ready*



Domestic Violence Statistics

- **Almost half of all women and men in the U.S. have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime (48.4% and 48.8%, respectively).**
- **Most female victims of intimate partner violence were previously victimized by the same offender at rates of 77% for women ages 18 to 24, 76% for ages 25-34, and 81% for ages 35-49.**
- **An average of 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States-more than 12 million women and men over the course of a single year.**
- **Nearly 1 in 5 women (18.3%) and 1 in 71 men (1.4%) have been raped in their lifetime.**
- **1 in 6 women (16.2%) and 1 in 19 men (5.2%) in the US have been a victim of stalking at some point during their lifetime in which they felt fearful or believed that they (or someone close to them) would be harmed or killed.**
- **1 in 10 high school students has experienced physical violence from a dating partner in the past year.**

References

Domestic Violence, U.S. Dep't of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (Jan. 22, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/domestic-violence>.

Domestic Violence Statistics, The Hotline (July 4, 2023), <https://www.thehotline.org/stakeholders/domestic-violence-statistics/>.

How to Recognize the Warning Signs of Domestic Violence, Conn. for Abused Women & Their Children (June 30, 2025), <https://www.cawc.org/news/how-to-recognize-the-warning-signs-of-domestic-violence/>.







October 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15		17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

- **Oct. 1st: 80th Anniversary Event**
Historic 1895 Courthouse
Law Library (Room 420)
11:30am-1:30pm
- **Oct. 2nd: DRO Family Law Workshop**
Historic 1895 Courthouse
3rd Floor (Room 326)
10:00am
- **Oct. 16th: DRO Family Law Workshop**
Historic 1895 Courthouse
3rd Floor (Room 326)
10:00am

November 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5		7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19		21	22
23	24	25	26			29
30						

- **Nov. 6th: DRO Family Law Workshop**
Historic 1895 Courthouse
3rd Floor (Room 326)
10:00am
- **Nov. 20th: DRO Family Law Workshop**
Historic 1895 Courthouse
3rd Floor (Room 326)
10:00am
- **Nov. 27th and 28th: Thanksgiving Holiday**
County Offices Closed



December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3		5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17		19	20
21	22	23			26	27
28	29	30				

- **Dec. 4th: DRO Family Law Workshop**
Historic 1895 Courthouse
3rd floor (Room 326)
10:00am
- **Dec. 18th: DRO Family Law Workshop**
Historic 1895 Courthouse
3rd Floor (Room 326)
10:00am
- **Dec. 24th and 25th: Christmas**
County Offices Closed

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18		20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

- **Jan. 1st: New Year's Day**
County Offices Closed
- **Jan. 19th: Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
County Offices Closed

Understanding the Court Structure of Texas

Like every other state, Texas has a judicial system to settle conflicts, uphold the law, and carry out justice. This article introduces the structure of the Texas courts in a straightforward way, outlining each court's role, jurisdiction, and function. Understanding the structure of Texas courts is important, regardless of whether you are a party to a legal dispute or are merely inquisitive. The Texas judicial system is structured at the local, county, and state levels and consists of trial and appellate courts. The system is defined by both the Texas Constitution and legislative statutes. This results in a blend of constitutional and statutory courts. A full chart of the Texas court structure can be found here: <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1459839/court-structure-chart-january-2025.pdf>¹

Court Creation: Constitution vs. Legislation

Some courts in Texas are established by the Texas Constitution. Others are created by legislative acts. Constitutional courts include county-level courts, district courts, and the Supreme and Criminal Appeals courts. These courts are foundational to the judicial system and are described in Article V of the Texas Constitution.² Check out our research guides to learn more about the Texas Constitution.³ Statutory courts are governed by different chapters in the Texas Government Code. These courts are established for Texas's diverse and growing population and include municipal courts, county courts at law, statutory probate courts, business courts, and other specialty courts.

Jurisdiction Types

Courts in Texas operate under different types of jurisdictions, or areas of authority. Some courts may even have multiple types of Jurisdictions too. The following are the most common.

<i>Original jurisdiction</i>	<i>Appellate jurisdiction</i>	<i>Exclusive jurisdiction</i>
A court has the authority to hear a case first, before any other court.	A court to review and revise decisions made by lower courts.	The sole authority a particular court has over certain types of cases.

Trial Courts vs. Appellate Courts

Trial courts are where cases originate. They involve fact-finding, witness testimony, evidence presentation, and a determination of guilt, liability, or resolution. Trial courts can be presided over by a judge or a jury. Appellate courts, by contrast, review the legal decisions made by trial courts. They do not conduct trials or hear new evidence but instead determine whether legal or procedural mistakes were made. Notably, in cases where the death penalty is imposed, the appeal bypasses intermediate appellate courts and goes directly to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

Variation by County

The structure of county-level courts can vary across Texas. Not all counties have every court type. Larger counties may use multiple statutory courts to handle more cases. Smaller counties may consolidate court responsibilities or rely on regional judges. Judicial responsibilities and case assignments are coordinated through the Administrative Judicial Regions. You can find court contact information and structure by county using the Texas Office of Court Administration's [Court Directory Search](https://card.txcourts.gov/DirectorySearch.aspx).⁴

1. *Court Structure Chart*, Tex. Judicial Branch, <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1459839/court-structure-chart-january-2025.pdf> (Jan. 2025).
2. Tex. Const. art. V (West 2025).
3. *Texas Constitution Research Guide*, Dell DeHay Law Library, https://www.tarrantcountytexas.gov/content/dam/main/law-library/pdfs/research-guides/Texas_Constitution_Research_Guide.pdf (last visited Sept. 15, 2025).
4. *Court Directory Search*, Texas Office of Court Administration, <https://card.txcourts.gov/DirectorySearch.aspx> (last visited Sept. 15, 2025).

Lowest Level Courts

Starting with the lowest level in the Texas Court System we have Local Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction. Generally, these are not courts of record, but to know for sure, check local ordinances.

<i>Justice of the Peace Courts (JP Courts)</i>	<i>Municipal Courts</i>
Justice of the Peace Courts are responsible for handling minor civil and criminal matters, including small claims disputes up to \$20,000, landlord-tenant disagreements, truancy cases, and some Class C misdemeanors. These courts provide accessible, community-level justice. Judges in JP courts are not required to be attorneys but must complete judicial training, including an 80-hour education program in their first year and a 20-hour continuing education course annually thereafter ⁵ .	Municipal Courts are created by city governments and handle cases involving violations of city ordinances, traffic offenses, and Class C misdemeanors, such as public intoxication or disorderly conduct. These courts have exclusive original jurisdiction over municipal ordinance violations. ⁶

County-Level Courts

The next level up from our JP and Municipal courts are the three different County-Level Courts. This is where the divide between Statutory & Constitutional really shows up.

<i>Constitutional County Courts</i>	<i>Statutory County Courts at Law</i>	<i>Statutory Probate Courts</i>
Each of Texas's 254 counties has a Constitutional County Court, established by the state constitution. Many of these courts handle misdemeanor criminal cases, probate issues, civil matters, and serve as appellate courts for JP and municipal courts. In Tarrant County, Commissioners Court is the Constitutional County Court.	County Courts at Law are created by legislation and vary in jurisdiction by county. They typically handle civil cases, misdemeanor criminal cases, probate matters, and appeals from lower courts. The number and scope of these courts often reflect the population and case load of the county. Here is a map of counties with County Courts at Law. ⁷	Found in larger, more urban counties, Statutory Probate Courts specialize in probate, guardianship, and mental health cases. These courts provide more specialized management than constitutional or county courts at law in complex probate matters. Here is a map of counties with Statutory Probate Courts. ⁸

District and Business Courts

<i>District Court</i>	<i>Business Courts</i>
District Courts are Texas's primary trial courts of general jurisdiction. With over 470 courts statewide, they hear a broad range of cases, including felony criminal cases, family law matters, juvenile cases, and large civil disputes. Judges must be licensed attorneys with at least four years of legal experience. View the 2024 District Court Map. ⁹	Established in 2023, Business Courts are designed to handle complex commercial and business-related disputes. These courts have jurisdiction over significant contract disagreements, business torts, and similar high-level business conflicts. Business Courts are divided into 11 regions to serve the state efficiently. ¹⁰ See the Texas Business Court Map. ¹¹

5. Tex. Gov't Code § 27.005 (West 2019 & Supp. 2024).

6. Tex. Gov't Code § 29.003 (West 2023).

7. Texas Judicial Branch, *County Courts at Law*, https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1456929/county-courts-at-law_october-2023.pdf (Oct. 2023).

8. Texas Judicial Branch, *Statutory Probate Courts*, <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1456926/probate-courts-october-2023.pdf> (Oct. 2023).

9. Texas Judicial Branch, *State District Courts*, https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1459251/state_district_courts_2024.pdf (2024).

10. Texas Judicial Branch, *Business Court*, <https://www.txcourts.gov/businesscourt/> (last visited Sept. 15, 2025).

11. Texas Judicial Branch, *Texas Business Court Divisions Map*, <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1459928/texas-business-court-divisions-map.pdf> (last visited Sept. 15, 2025).

Child Protection and Support Courts

The Child Protection and Child Support Courts are a specialty courts programs operating under Chapter 201 Subchapter B and C of the Texas Family Code.¹²

<i>Child Support Courts</i>	<i>Child Protection Courts</i>
<p>These courts were created to meet orders requiring accelerated judicial or administrative processes to handle child support disputes. Managed by the Office of Court Administration (OCA), associate judges are appointed to oversee cases like applying Title IV-D of the federal Social Security Act, establishing paternity, and enforcing child support orders. These courts allow for more efficient processing of high-volume family law cases.</p> <p>View Child Support Map.¹³</p>	<p>Specialty child protection courts were established to help local trial courts effectively manage child abuse cases. Like the Child Support Courts, child protection associate judges are OCA employees. These judges focus exclusively on abuse and neglect cases, often related to Child Protective Services actions. This helps children reach stability faster and enhances the quality of placement decisions.</p> <p>View Child Protection Map.¹⁴</p>

Intermediate Appellate Courts

Between the District courts and the highest level of courts in Texas are the Intermediate Appellate Courts. Each Appellate court has one Chief Judge and at least two others below them. There can be between three to thirteen judges per Appellate Court.

<i>1st through 14th Courts of Appeals</i>	<i>15th Court of Appeals</i>
<p>Texas is divided into 14 appellate districts, each with one Court of Appeals that oversees appeals from trial courts. The only exception is for death penalty cases that go straight to the Court of Criminal Appeals. These courts ensure uniform interpretation and application of the law across Texas. View Appellate District Map.¹⁵</p>	<p>The 15th Court of Appeals was created in 2024 with exclusive jurisdiction over civil appeals involving the State of Texas, its agencies, state officers, and employees. It also has exclusive appellate jurisdiction from the Business court.</p>

Highest State Courts

After the Intermediate level and in the highest level of courts there is a bifurcated appellate system, meaning it has two separate high courts: one for civil and one for criminal matters.

<i>Texas Supreme Court</i>	<i>Texas Court of Criminal Appeals</i>
<p>The Texas Supreme Court is the highest appellate court for civil and juvenile cases. It has final review authority on matters of state civil law, rulemaking authority for civil court procedures, and supervisory jurisdiction over the entire judicial system.</p>	<p>This is the highest court for criminal matters in Texas. It reviews decisions in criminal cases from the lower appellate courts and has exclusive jurisdiction over death penalty appeals.</p>

12. Tex. Fam. Code § 201.101 (West 2020).

13. Texas Office of Court Administration, *Child Support Courts Map*, <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1459926/csc-map-january-2025.pdf> (Jan. 2025).

14. Texas Office of Court Administration, *Child Protection Courts Map*, <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1459927/cpc-map-january-2025.pdf> (Jan. 2025).

15. Texas Legislative Council, *Plan C3740 Congressional Districts Map*, https://redistricting.capitol.texas.gov/docs/24R3740_FINAL.pdf (2024).



Tarrant County Courts at a Glance



Justice of the Peace Courts

(Also Known as Justice Courts)

Justice of the Peace (JP) Courts were established by the Texas Constitution in 1876. Each county shall have, depending on the population, one to eight justice precincts.¹ JP Courts are often referred to as “the people’s courts” because they offer a more informal and accessible way to resolve disputes. Tarrant County has a total of eight, which are listed below.²



Precinct 1

1895 Courthouse
100 W. Weatherford St., Suite 450
Fort Worth, TX 76196



Precinct 2

Southeast Subcourthouse
700 East Abram Street, Suite 200
Arlington, TX 76010



Precinct 3

Northeast Courthouse
645 Grapevine Highway, Suite 220
Hurst, TX 76054



Precinct 4

Northwest Subcourthouse
6713 Telephone Road, Suite 201
Lake Worth, TX 76135



Precinct 5

Tim Curry Criminal Justice Center
401 W. Belknap St., Suite B060
Fort Worth, TX 76102



Precinct 6

Southwest Subcourthouse
6551 Granbury Road
Fort Worth, TX 76133



Precinct 7

Mansfield Subcourthouse
1100 E. Broad Street, Suite 202
Mansfield, TX 76063



Precinct 8

Poly Subcourthouse
3500 Miller Avenue
Fort Worth, TX 76119

1. Tex. Gov't Code ch. 27 (West 2019 & Supp. 2024).
2. *Justice of the Peace Courts*, Tarrant County, Texas, <https://www.tarrantcountytx.gov/en/justice-of-the-peace-courts.html> (last visited Aug. 26, 2025).

Constitutional County Court

Each county in Texas has a Constitutional County Court, though the functions of these courts can vary. In more populous counties, the County Judge often focuses primarily on administrative responsibilities rather than judicial duties.³ In Tarrant County, for example, the County Judge serves as the presiding officer of Commissioners Court, the county's primary governing body.⁴

Statutory County Courts at Law

Tarrant County has 3 civil County Courts at Law, all located in the 1895 Courthouse. These courts were established in accordance with Texas Government Code Chapter 25.³ These courts hear both original and appellate civil matters, as outlined for county courts by state law, including appeals originating from Justice of the Peace courts. Furthermore, the court shares jurisdiction with the district court in civil cases where the amount in controversy is greater than \$500 but does not exceed \$250,000.⁴

County Court at Law No. 1 100 W. Weatherford Street Room 490 Fort Worth, TX 76196	County Court at Law No. 2 100 W. Weatherford Street Room 240A Fort Worth, TX 76196	County Court at Law No. 3 100 W. Weatherford Street Rm 290A Fort Worth, TX 76196
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Statutory County Probate Courts

In Tarrant County, probate matters are managed by two statutory probate courts.⁵ These courts are established under Texas Government Code Chapter 25⁶, while their jurisdiction and authority are defined by Chapter 32 of the Texas Estates Code.⁷ Their responsibilities encompass a wide range of legal issues, including probate, guardianship, trusts, and mental health matters. Both courts are located in the historic 1895 Courthouse.⁸

Probate Court No. 1 100 W. Weatherford Street Room 260A Fort Worth, TX 76196	Probate Court No. 2 100 W. Weatherford Street Room 150 Fort Worth, TX 76196
--	---

3. *About Texas Courts*, Texas Judicial Branch, <https://www.txcourts.gov/about-texas-courts/trial-courts/> (last visited Sept. 29, 2025).

4. *Tarrant County Commissioners Court*, Tarrant County, Texas, <https://www.tarrantcountytx.gov/en/commissioners-court.html> (last visited Sept. 29, 2025).

5. Tex. Gov't Code ch. 25 (West 2019 & Supp. 2024).

6. *County Court at Law No. 2*, Tarrant County, Texas, <https://www.tarrantcountytx.gov/en/civil-courts/county-court-at-law-2.html> (last visited Aug. 27, 2025).

7. *Probate Courts*, Tarrant County, Texas, <https://www.tarrantcountytx.gov/en/probate-courts.html> (last visited Aug. 27, 2025).

8. Tex. Gov't Code ch. 25 (West 2019 & Supp. 2024).

9. Tex. Est. Code ch. 32 (West 2020).

10. *Probate Courts*, Tarrant County, Texas, <https://www.tarrantcountytx.gov/en/probate-courts.html> (last visited Aug. 27, 2025).

Family Courts

Tarrant County family courts oversee a wide range of legal matters, including divorce, child custody, visitation, child support, paternity, name changes, and other family-related issues. Among these are the IV-D Courts and Child Protection Courts, which also fall under the family court system.¹¹ IV-D Courts specifically handle child support cases in Tarrant County where services have been provided by the Texas Attorney General or the Tarrant County Domestic Relations Office under Part D, Title IV, of the Federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. §651 et seq.).¹² Meanwhile, Child Protection Courts focus on cases involving child abuse and neglect.¹³ All of these courts are conveniently located within the Tarrant County Family Law Center.



**Tarrant County Family Law Center
200 E. Weatherford St.
Fort Worth, TX 76196**

231st District Court 5th Floor	233rd District Court 5th Floor	322nd District Court 4th Floor
324th District Court 4th Floor	325th District Court 5th Floor	360th District Court 4th Floor
IV-D Court No. 1 1st Floor	IV-D Court No. 2 1st Floor	IV-D Court No. 3 1st Floor
Child Protection Court No. 1 5th Floor		Child Protection Court No. 2 5th Floor

11. *Family Courts*, Tarrant County, Texas, <https://www.tarrantcountytx.gov/en/family-courts.html> (last visited Aug. 28, 2025).

12. *IV-D Courts*, Tarrant County, Texas, <https://www.tarrantcountytx.gov/en/iv-d-courts.html> (last visited Oct. 3, 2025).

13. *About Texas Courts: Trial Courts*, Texas Judicial Branch, <https://www.txcourts.gov/about-texas-courts/trial-courts/> (last visited Aug. 28, 2025).

Civil District Courts

Civil District Courts are the primary trial courts in Texas, and Tarrant County has 10 of them, all located in the Tom Vandergriff Civil Courts Building. These courts handle a wide range of civil cases, including contract disputes, property issues, personal injury claims, and more. They have jurisdiction over matters involving a minimum monetary amount, but no maximum limit.¹⁴



Tom Vandergriff Civil Courts Building
100 North Calhoun Street
Fort Worth, TX 76196

17th District Court 3rd Floor	48th District Court 4th Floor	67th District Court 4th Floor	96th District Court 4th Floor	141st District Court 3rd Floor
153rd District Court 3rd Floor	236th District Court 5th Floor	342nd District Court 5th Floor	348th District Court 3rd Floor	352nd District Court 4th Floor

Juvenile Court

The 323rd District Court in Tarrant County serves as the Juvenile Court, handling cases involving juveniles aged 10 to 16 who are accused of violating the law, as well as matters related to their care and supervision.¹⁵



Scott D. Moore Juvenile Justice Court
2701 Kimbo Road
Fort Worth, TX 76111

14. Office of Court Administration, *Texas Courts: A Descriptive Summary*, <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/994672/Court-Overview.pdf> (last visited Oct. 4, 2025).

15. *Tarrant County Juvenile Services*, About Juvenile Services, <https://www.tarrantcountytx.gov/en/juvenile-services/about-juvenile-services.html> (last modified Dec. 11, 2018).

Criminal Courts

Tarrant County operates 11 district courts that handle felony-level criminal cases and 10 county criminal courts responsible for misdemeanor-level matters.¹⁶ All criminal courts are located in the Time Curry Criminal Justice Center. Magistrate Courts are also located in the same building and handle a variety of pretrial matters for criminal cases.



Tim Curry Criminal Justice Center
401 W. Belknap Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76196

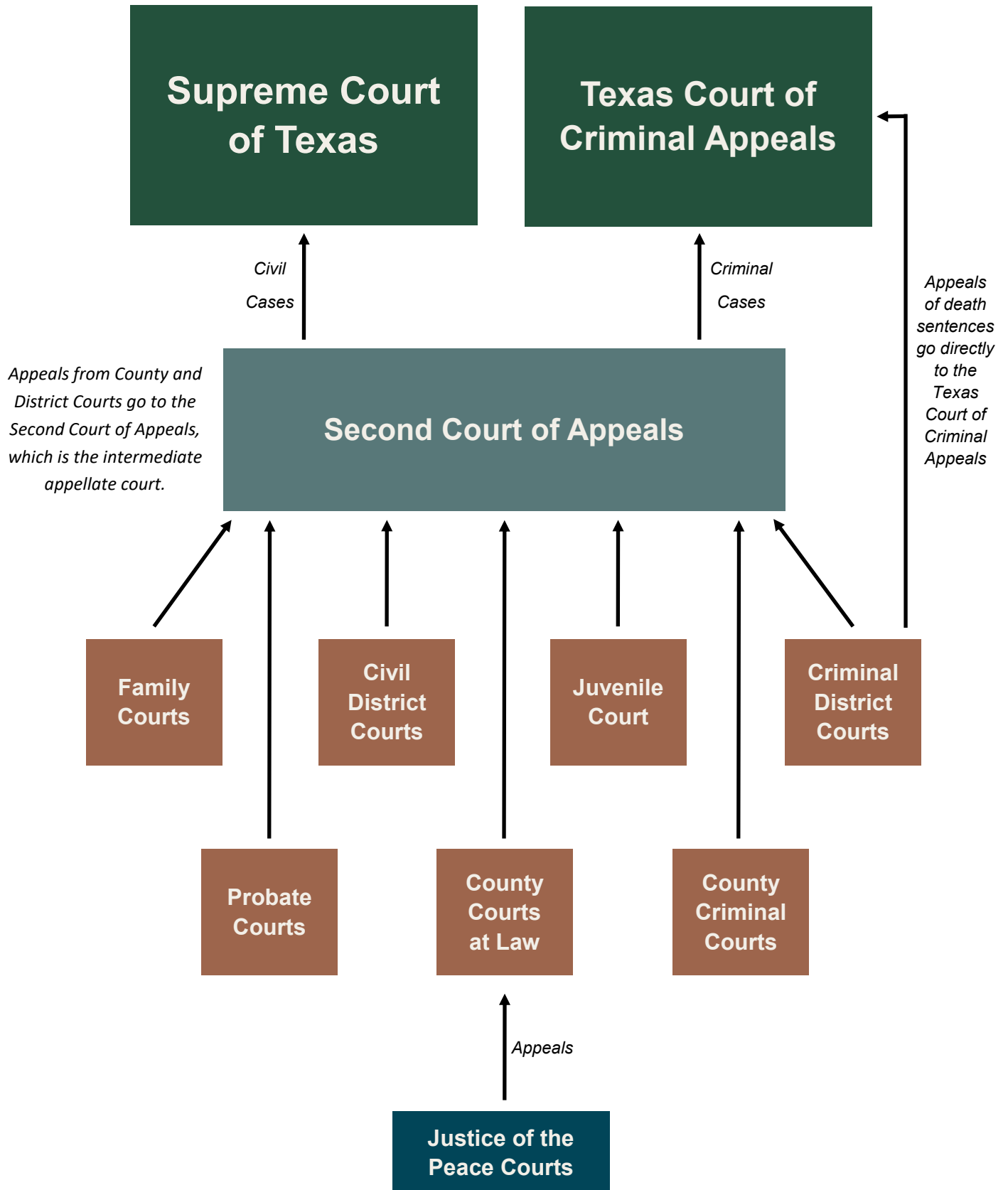
Misdemeanor Courts				
County Criminal Court No. 1 5th Floor	County Criminal Court No. 2 6th Floor	County Criminal Court No. 3 7th Floor	County Criminal Court No. 4 5th Floor	County Criminal Court No. 5 8th Floor
County Criminal Court No. 6 8th Floor	County Criminal Court No. 7 7th Floor	County Criminal Court No. 8 7th Floor	County Criminal Court No. 9 8th Floor	County Criminal Court No. 10 6th Floor

Felony Courts			
Criminal District Court No. 1 5th Floor	Criminal District Court No. 2 6th Floor	Criminal District Court No. 3 7th Floor	Criminal District Court No. 4 8th Floor
213th District Court 8th Floor	297th District Court 5th Floor	371st District Court 6th Floor	372nd District Court 6th Floor
396th District Court 7th Floor		432nd District Court 6th Floor	485th District Court 8th Floor

Magistrate Courts Basement

16. *Criminal Courts*, Tarrant County, Texas, <https://www.tarrantcountytx.gov/en/criminal-courts.html> (last visited Oct. 4, 2025).

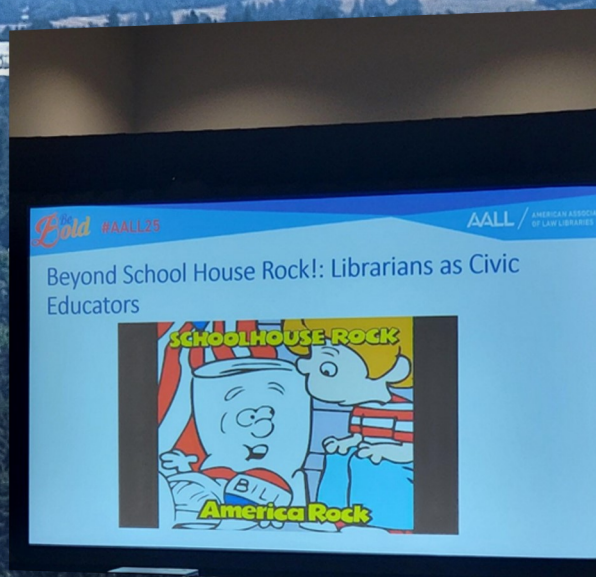
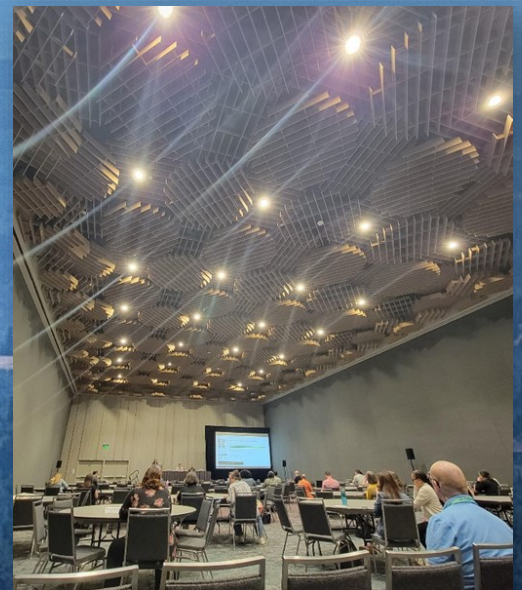
Court Structure of Tarrant County



AALL Annual Conference 2025 Reflections

By Colleen Hardy

This July, I had the incredible opportunity to attend the 2025 American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) Annual Conference in Portland, Oregon. It was a whirlwind of education and inspiration, and I came back with a suitcase full of ideas (and maybe a few Pokémon cards, too).



Mt. Hood from Portland by C.K. Hardy

The conference sessions offered a deep dive into the evolving role of law libraries, especially in the age of artificial intelligence. I attended several standout programs, including:

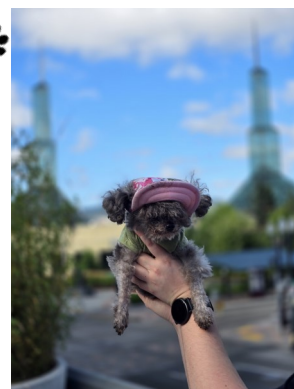
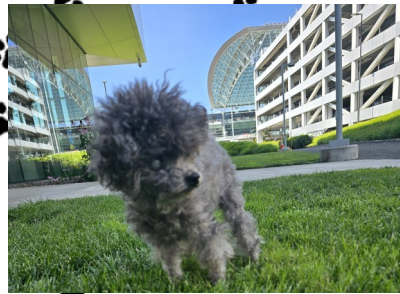
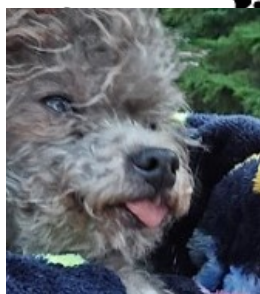
- **"Power Prompting: Mastering Prompting Techniques for Legal Professionals"** A hands-on session exploring how to craft effective prompts to get better results from AI tools.
- **"Practical Application of AI in Library Functions: Shelf-Reading, Workflows, & More"** This class showcased real-world ways AI can streamline daily operations.
- **"Beyond 'School House Rock!': Librarians as Civic Educators"** A session on better ways to engage communities in understanding government and civics.
- **"Service Design, Knowledge Management, & Workflows: How Libraries & IT Departments Work Better Together"** A collaboration focused program on strategies for coordinating with IT professionals.
- **"To Boldly Go Where Everyone Else Has Gone Before: Generative AI, Policy, & Practice in Government Libraries"** This session delved into the challenges and opportunities of generative AI in public institutions.



Mt. Hood from the plane home by C.K. Hardy

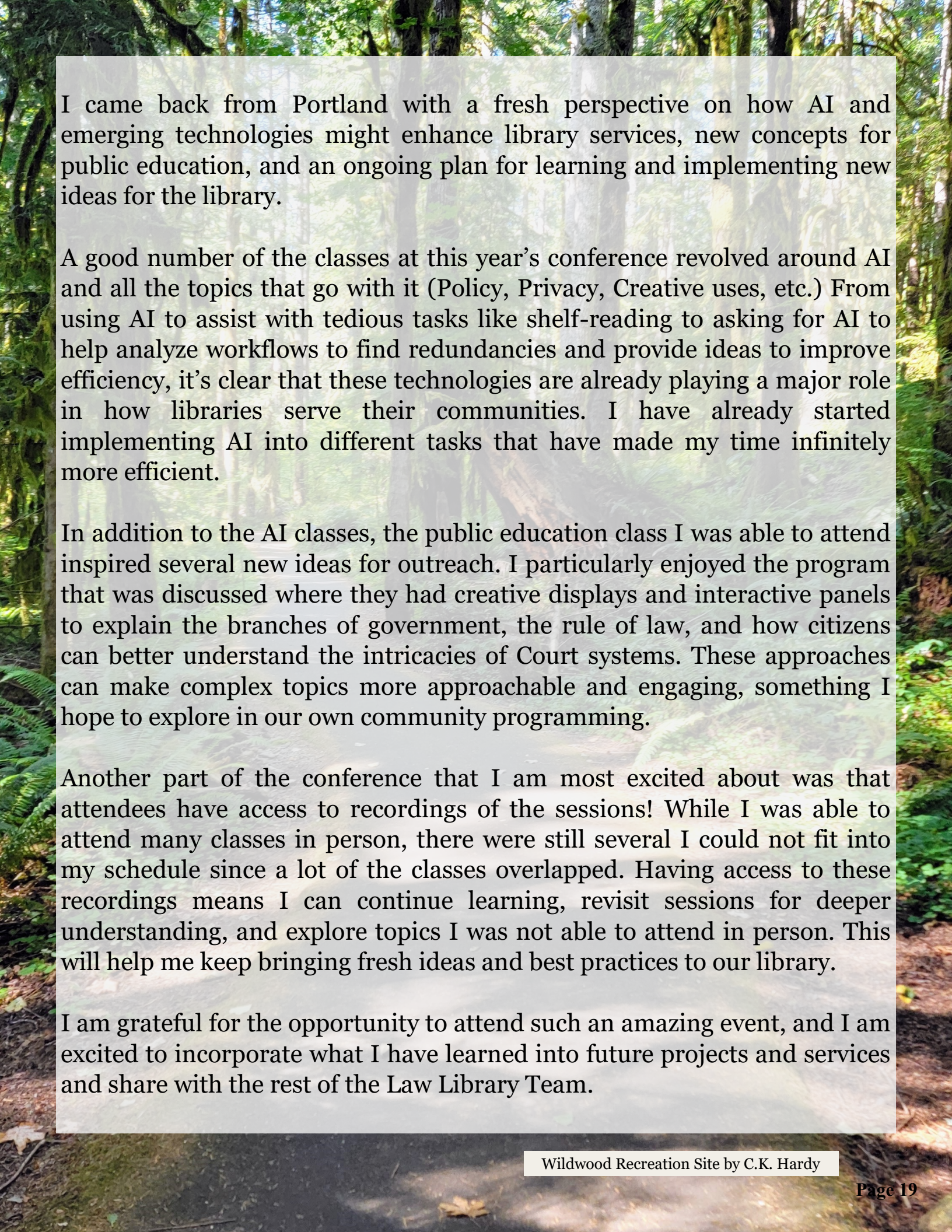


I was also lucky enough to bring along a very special travel companion, my 21-year-old blind teacup poodle, Saffy. This was her first time flying, and we made it a bucket list trip to remember. In our free time we explored the Oregon Coast, drove around Mt. Hood, hiked to waterfalls, even visited the North American Bigfoot Center in Boring, OR, and went on a ghost tour! Saffy wasn't a fan of the beach (She said it was too cold, and she got sand in her nose!), but she loved the adventure and all the attention she received from fellow travelers.



And a fun surprise, a Pokémon card show happened to be going on *in the same convention center!* I couldn't resist dropping by, and yes, spending way too much money on some cool cards like this 1st edition Eevee!





I came back from Portland with a fresh perspective on how AI and emerging technologies might enhance library services, new concepts for public education, and an ongoing plan for learning and implementing new ideas for the library.

A good number of the classes at this year's conference revolved around AI and all the topics that go with it (Policy, Privacy, Creative uses, etc.) From using AI to assist with tedious tasks like shelf-reading to asking for AI to help analyze workflows to find redundancies and provide ideas to improve efficiency, it's clear that these technologies are already playing a major role in how libraries serve their communities. I have already started implementing AI into different tasks that have made my time infinitely more efficient.

In addition to the AI classes, the public education class I was able to attend inspired several new ideas for outreach. I particularly enjoyed the program that was discussed where they had creative displays and interactive panels to explain the branches of government, the rule of law, and how citizens can better understand the intricacies of Court systems. These approaches can make complex topics more approachable and engaging, something I hope to explore in our own community programming.

Another part of the conference that I am most excited about was that attendees have access to recordings of the sessions! While I was able to attend many classes in person, there were still several I could not fit into my schedule since a lot of the classes overlapped. Having access to these recordings means I can continue learning, revisit sessions for deeper understanding, and explore topics I was not able to attend in person. This will help me keep bringing fresh ideas and best practices to our library.

I am grateful for the opportunity to attend such an amazing event, and I am excited to incorporate what I have learned into future projects and services and share with the rest of the Law Library Team.



Hug Point Beach by C.K. Hardy



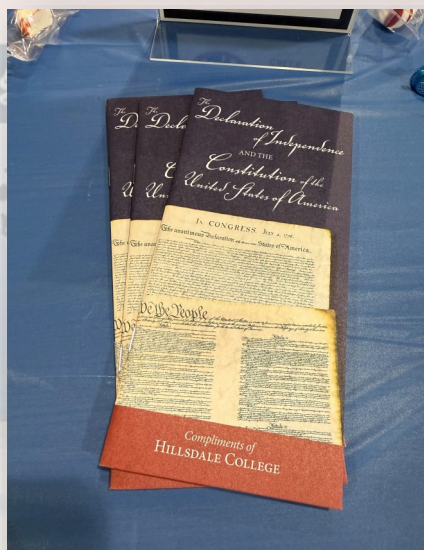
Be
Bold
AALL 2025

PORTLAND,
OREGON
JULY 19-22

Silver Point Overlook by C.K. Hardy

Dell DeHay Law Library Celebrates Constitution Day

September 17th, 2025



September 17th, 2025 marked the 238th Anniversary of the Constitution signing. Constitution Day highlights the importance of the U.S. Constitution and the rights of citizenship.

The Constitution establishes the framework for the federal government by creating three separate branches of government (legislative, executive, and judicial) with a system of checks and balances.

It also divides power between the federal government and the states, acts as the supreme law of the land, and protects the basic individual rights and liberties of American citizens.

HELP US PRESERVE THE LAW LIBRARY'S HISTORY!



The Dell DeHay Law Library is preparing a detailed history for our archives, and we need *your* help. If you have photographs, stories, newspaper clippings, or any other memorabilia connected to the library, whether from last year or decades ago, we would love to hear from you! Your contributions will help us document the library's unique place in our community and ensure its story is preserved for future generations.

Please send any items, scanned copies, or information to
lawlibrary@tarrantcountytexas.gov or drop them off at the Reference Desk.

Spooky Season with Haunted Hearsay & Fiendish Filings

As leaves fall and pumpkins appear, so too does a certain chill in the air. Courts have long handled strange disputes, but some cases tread the line between the bizarre and the paranormal. Here are three real-life cases that bring the Halloween spirit straight into the courtroom.

Stambovsky v. Ackley, New York Appellate Division (1991)

In New York, a buyer sued to rescind a real estate contract after learning the home he purchased in Nyack, New York, was widely believed to be haunted, and had been featured in Reader's Digest and on local ghost tours. The court ruled that since the seller had previously embraced the ghostly reputation, she was estopped (banned) from denying it. The home was declared "legally haunted," and the buyer was allowed to back out of the contract. Proof that some disclosures really do come back to haunt you.

United States ex rel. Mayo v. Satan and His Staff, W.D. Pa. (1971)

As the case name implies, yes, someone really did try to sue Satan. A man representing himself attempted to sue Satan (and his staff). The complaint alleged that the Prince of Darkness was responsible for causing him misery, obstructed his path in life, and violated his constitutional rights. The court acknowledged the novelty of the case, but ultimately declined to move the case forward questioning whether Mayo could properly represent a class of similarly afflicted souls in a class action lawsuit. The court also noted difficulty with establishing personal jurisdiction for the defendant (where does one serve Satan, and who is brave enough to deliver the summons?). Last I heard he went down to Georgia, not Pennsylvania. It seems even in federal court, the devil's in the details.

McClary v. Stull, Neb. (1895)

This contested will is centered around a woman who left nearly her entire estate to a charity instead of her living relatives. Her family argued she was under an "insane delusion," namely that she believed she could communicate with her deceased husband through a planchette and Ouija board and believed that he told her to change her will. However, the Nebraska Supreme Court found no evidence that her spiritual beliefs influenced the terms of her will. The court held that eccentric beliefs do not, on their own, invalidate mental capacity.

A Final Word from the Stacks...

May these cases serve as a reminder that the law can be just as strange and spine-tingling as any ghost story. And speaking of spooky, if you are ever working late and a book mysteriously falls from the shelf, maybe give Dell, our own friendly (we hope) library ghost a nod, just in case.

Happy Haunting and Happy Halloween!

Haunted by the Law: Spooky Legal Trivia Challenge

Think you know some spooky legal trivia? Test your knowledge. If you dare!

1. In which U.S. state was a house legally declared “haunted” by a court?

- A) Massachusetts
- B) Texas
- C) New York
- D) Louisiana

2. What happens if a will is signed while the testator is under the belief that ghosts are instructing them?

- A) It’s automatically void
- B) It’s valid if they’re otherwise competent
- C) It becomes a haunted artifact
- D) The court contacts the ghost for clarification

3. Which famous horror author also studied law before turning to fiction?

- A) H.P. Lovecraft
- B) Stephen King
- C) Bram Stoker
- D) Thomas Harris

4. Which of these is not a actual legally banned Halloween activity in parts of the U.S.?

- A) Wearing clown costumes in public
- B) Trick-or-treating over age 12
- C) Celebrating Halloween at all
- D) Telling ghost stories in libraries

5. TRUE OR FALSE: In Salem, Massachusetts, it is illegal to impersonate a witch.

6. In which U.S. state is it illegal to own more than six haunted dolls?

- A) Florida
- B) There is no such law
- C) Pennsylvania
- D) Arizona

BONUS: What legal tool would a ghost use to settle unfinished business?

- A) Habeas Corpuscle
- B) Posthumous Petition
- C) Writ of Revenant
- D) Rest in Peace Order



Trivia Answers

1. **Answer: C) New York**
In *Stambovsky v. Ackley* (1991), a New York appellate court ruled that a house was legally haunted due to the seller's repeated public claims. The buyer was allowed to rescind the contract.
2. **Answer: B) It's valid if they're otherwise competent**
Belief in the paranormal doesn't disqualify someone from making a will, unless it shows a lack of testamentary capacity or undue influence.
3. **Answer: C) Bram Stoker**
The author of *Dracula* earned a degree in mathematics and studied law at Trinity College in Dublin, although he never practiced.
4. **Answer: D) Telling ghost stories in libraries**
Thankfully, spooky storytelling is still welcome! But in some cities like Chesapeake, Virginia, trick-or-treating over age 12 is a misdemeanor (rarely enforced), and clown costumes have been banned in response to public panic.
5. **Answer: FALSE**
In fact, witch-themed tourism is a huge part of Salem's identity! There's no law against witch impersonation—but fraud is still fraud, magical or not.
6. **Answer: B) There is no such law**
Haunted dolls may be creepy, but there's no doll ownership limit—yet.
7. **Answer: Just for laughs D) Rest in Peace Order**
(Okay, we made that one up. But maybe it should exist.)

Ask a Librarian

Have a challenging research question or need assistance with a legal database? Our law librarians are here to help. Visit us in person, give us a call, send an email, or use our [Connect with a Law Librarian](#) service!

Suggest A Research Topic

Have an idea for a research guide or workshop?

The Dell DeHay Law Library is looking for topic suggestions to expand our collection of guides and classes—and we want your input. Whether it is a legal area you would like to learn more about or a resource you think others should know, now is your chance to help shape content that supports your research and professional needs.

Submit your ideas to lawlibrary@tarrantcountytexas.gov and let us know what topics you would like to see covered.

