



V.BETA



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The Best Lawyers Under 40 in Dallas

Our exclusive list of the Best Lawyers Under 40 in Dallas. PLUS: pity young lawyers. They have it tougher than the old guard ever did. *D Magazine* recently sat down with David McAtee, president-elect of the Texas Young Lawyers Association, to talk a

Adam McGill Published 5.01.2004 From D Magazine MAY 2004

THE BEST LAWYERS UNDER 40 IN DALLAS

Please note that the lawyers name listed in **RED** link to a profile listed in *D Magazine*.

Miriam Ackels

Family Law, Webb & Ackels

Jeff Anderson

Family Law, The Andersons
Attorneys and Counselors at Law

Matt Anderson

Patent Law, Davis Munck

Jonathan Bates

Family Law, Burleson, Pate & Gibson

Keith Becker

Family Law, Keith D. Becker

Van Beckwith

Business Litigation, Baker Botts

Keefe Bernstein

Litigation, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld

Derek Braziel

Labor & Employment, Edwards & George

Murray Bristol

Civil & Criminal Law, Bristol & Dubiel

Lee Brown

Liability, Brown, Sawicki & Mitchell

Kay Lynn Brumbaugh



STATE OF THE UNION: David McAtee (front) is president-elect of the Texas Young Lawyers Association, a group that includes (far left) Stephanie Curtis, Trey Cox, and Ashley Kisner.



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Antitrust & Business Litigation
Andrews Kurth

Craig Budner

Commercial Litigation, Hughes & Luce

Paul Caver

Corporate/Securities, J. Paul Caver

Ron Chapman Jr.

Labor & Employment
Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart

Chris Clark

Commercial Real Estate
David, Goodman & Madole

John Clement

Corporate, Classic Industries

Keith Clouse

Labor & Employment, Clouse Dunn Hirsch

David Coale

Litigation
Carrington, Coleman, Sloman & Blumenthal

Carlos Cortez

Civil Law, Law Firm of Carlos R. Cortez

John "Trey" Cox

Commercial & Business Litigation
Lynn Tillotson & Pinker

Christina Crain

Family Law, Christina Melton Crain

Rob Crain

Personal Injury, Crain & Montes

Julie Crawford

Family Law
Koons, Fuller, Vanden Eykel & Robertson

Stephanie Curtis

Bankruptcy & Commercial Law
The Curtis Law Firm

R. Scott Downing

Family Law, McCurley, Orsinger,
McCurley, Nelson & Downing

Keith Dugger

Healthcare Law, Stewart & Stimmel

Carson Epes

Family Law, McCurley, Orsinger, McCurley, Nelson & Downing

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Plaintiff's Lawyer
Law Offices of Joel M. Fineberg

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Family Law, Diana S. Friedman

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Charles W. Gameros

Civil Litigation
Hoge Carter Holmes & Gameros

Michael Gardner

Business Litigation, Bickel & Brewer

Bob Garrey

Business Litigation, Jackson Walker

Laura Geisler

Personal Injury, Parham, Jones & Shiver

David Genender

Trial, Baker Botts

Paul Genender

Commercial Litigation, Hughes & Luce

Basheer Ghorayeb

Civil Litigation
The Rodriguez Law Firm

Robert Gilbreath

Civil Appellate Law, Jenkins & Gilchrist

Jeff Goldfarb

Commercial Litigation
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Brian Hail

Commercial & Employment Litigation, Godwin Gruber

David Harper

Intellectual Property & Business Litigation, Haynes and Boone

Geoff Harper

Complex Commercial Litigation
Fish & Richardson

Michael Held

Bankruptcy, Jenkins & Gilchrist

John Helms

Commercial Litigation & White-collar Criminal Defense, Fish & Richardson

Carrie Hoffman

Labor & Employment
Gardere Wynne Sewell

Michael Hoffman

Corporate, Vartec Telecom

Thomas Hoffman

Employee Benefits, Hughes & Luce

Michael Hurst

Commercial & Employment Litigation, Godwin Gruber

Monte Hurst

Labor & Employment
Hermes Sargent Bates

Wei Wei Jeang

Intellectual Property, Haynes and Boone

Steve Jensen

Toxic Tort Litigation, Baron & Budd

David Johnson

Litigation, Winstead Sechrest & Minick

Michael Kaeske

Plaintiff's Litigation, Kaeske Law Firm

Marc Katz

Labor & Employment
Jenkins & Gilchrist

William Katz Jr.

Litigation, Thompson & Knight

Chris Kirkpatrick

Corporate/Securities, White-collar Criminal Defense, Haynes and Boone

Ashley Kisner

Litigation & Environmental Law Strasburger & Price

Richard Krumholz

Litigation, Fulbright & Jaworski

Paul Lackey

Commercial Litigation
Lackey Hershman

Gregory Laird

International Arbitration
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld

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Family Law, Cooper & Scully

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Litigation, Carrington, Coleman,
Sloman & Blumenthal

Kirk Lechtenberger

Criminal Defense, The Curtis Law Firm

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Civil Appeals & Litigation
Cowles & Thompson

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Lance Lewis

Insurance Coverage & Business Litigation
Strasburger & Price

Lee Ann Wheelis Lockridge

Corporate, Thompson & Knight

Brant Martin

Personal Injury & Business Litigation Puls, Taylor & Woodson

David McAtee II

Antitrust & White-collar Criminal Defense, Haynes and Boone

Scott McElhane

Employment, Jackson Walker

Kurt Meaders

Product Liability & Business Defense Sedgwick, Detert, Moran & Arnold

Walt Miller

Real Estate, Haynes and Boone

John Molinar

Workers' Compensation
Molinar & Associates

Daniel Morris

Workers' Compensation
Daniel L. Morris

William Mureiko

Estate Planning & Probate Law
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Todd A. Murray

Securities/Corporate Governance Carrington, Coleman, Sloman & Blumenthal

Brad Nace

Family Law, Brad Nace Esq.

Michael Newman

Corporate Securities & Business Transactions, Gardere Wynne Sewell

Toni Nguyen

Litigation & Technology, Travelocity.com

Polly O'Toole

Family Law, Atkins & O'Toole

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Tort & Civil Litigation, Brown McCarroll

Andrew Payne

Personal Injury, Howie & Sweeney

Eric Pinker

Civil Litigation, Lynn Tillotson & Pinker

Cole Ramey

Civil Litigation, Crouch & Ramey

Todd Ramsey

Personal Injury & Business Litigation Bailey, Crowe & Kugler

Jeff Rasansky

Personal Injury
The Law Offices of Jeffrey H. Rasansky

Eric Reis

Tax & Probate Law, Thompson & Knight

Brian Robison

Business Litigation, Vinson & Elkins

J.R. Rodriguez

Civil Litigation
The Rodriguez Law Firm

Ladd Sanger

Aviation Law, Slack & Davis

Matthew Schindel

Business Litigation, Hughes & Luce

Michael Schmidt

Product Liability & Personal Injury Litigation, The Schmidt Firm

Ellen Sessions

Commercial Litigation
Jenkins & Gilchrist

Bart Showalter

Intellectual Property, Baker Botts

Jeffrey Simon

Toxic Tort Litigation, Waters & Kraus

Renée Skinner

Intellectual Property Litigation
Law Offices of Renée Skinner

Eric Stahl

Commercial & Personal Injury Litigation, Vinson & Elkins

Bruce Steckler

Personal Injury, Silber Pearlman

Scott Summy

Environmental Litigation
Baron & Budd

Michael Taten

Corporate, Jackson Walker

Josh Ungerman

Tax, Meadows, Owens,
Collier, Reed, Cousins & Blau

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Commercial Litigation, Wick Phillips

Kevin Wiggins

Labor, Employment & Benefits
Ohashi and Horn

Douglas Wilder

DWI, Douglas L. Wilder

Robert Witte

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Emeline Yang

Banking & Credit Transactions Winstead Sechrest & Minick

Thomas Yang

Securities/Mergers & Acquisitions Haynes and Boone

Matt Yarbrough

Intellectual Property
Fish & Richardson

Lawrence Youst

Intellectual Property & White-collar Criminal Defense, Danamraj & Youst

Thomas Yoxall

Commercial Litigation
Locke Liddell & Sapp

To compile our list of the top young lawyers in Dallas, we surveyed 4,000 of their peers, even those over 40. Voters were asked the following question: which Dallas lawyers, of those whose work you've witnessed firsthand, would you rank among the current best? Nominated lawyers had to be younger than 40 as of April 30, 2004. Participants could nominate only one lawyer from their own firms and two from outside firms. Same-firm votes counted for less than outside-firm votes. All ballots had to be signed, and voters had to provide their Texas State Bar numbers. Self-nominations were not counted, and a distinguished panel of local attorneys reviewed the final list.

Legal Brief

Pity young lawyers. No, seriously. More than ever, young lawyers have it tough. Increasingly, they are looking for work with fewer and fewer jobs available. And once a lawyer is lucky enough to find employment, he or she is pressured to perform on a higher level than before with less pay. Plus, they have to put up with all of those lawyer jokes.

D Magazine recently sat down with David McAtee to talk about the challenges today's young lawyers face. McAtee, 35, a business litigation attorney for Haynes and Boone, is president-elect of the Texas Young Lawyers Association (he starts his presidency in June). Organized in 1930, the TYLA comprises more than 20,000 lawyers who are 36 years old or younger or who are in their first three years of licensure.

D Magazine: What is the benefit of separating the young lawyers from the rest of the crop?

David McAtee: Number one, young lawyers are different demographically than old lawyers. And by "old lawyers," I mean lawyers older than 37. The group is more diverse. There are more lawyers in private practice who are young lawyers than those who are in the senior bar.

Number two, the challenges that young lawyers face are vastly different than the challenges that more seasoned lawyers face. As young lawyers, I like to say that we are in our teenage years of being a lawyer. A lot of changes happen from the time you graduate law school in your mid-20s to the time you become old enough to no longer be a young lawyer. And so we try and focus on those

needs.

D: When you say “those needs,” what specifically are you talking about, besides a support group and a happy hour and that sort of thing?

McAtee: First and foremost, it's just technical competence, learning how to be a lawyer. If you ask any young lawyer these days, you'd find a general concern that young lawyers are not being mentored like the prior generation was. It's a function of the fact that there were fewer lawyers. So there was more time, and the economic pressures weren't as great. And some of this is looking back with rose-colored glasses, but there's a truth to it. Someone has to step in and fill in the gap to try to offer support, just technical mastery.

D: Are there areas of law that young lawyers are more prevalent in than—oh, let's continue to call them “old lawyers”?

McAtee: If you're asking what young lawyers are most interested in today, what are the hot areas, the honest answer is today's young lawyers don't have the same luxury to choose a speciality as they once had. In the late '90s, during the dot-com boom, young lawyers had a variety of choices, and you saw people really clumped together, saying, “I want to do intellectual property litigation.” Or, “I want to do Internet mergers and acquisitions.” Honestly, today, lawyers are more concerned about having a job with some security and some sense of their growing in that job for the long term.

D: Do you feel a pressure to accomplish X amount before you're 37? To be a young hotshot lawyer, you have to be young. Is there sort of a *Logan's Run* kind of attitude?

McAtee: I'm not sure I'd phrase it that way. I think all young lawyers recognize that the competition to be a good lawyer later on—and I define good as being someone who people will actually hire—is much more intense than it used to be. There is a pressure, I believe, that most young lawyers feel to begin to distinguish themselves as early as possible in the hopes that when they are 40 years old, 45, and 50, they are what we call a “go-to lawyer.” I've heard nice, warm tales of the old days when you didn't have to do that. You kind of grew up in a firm or you grew up in a solo practice or the government, and you didn't really have to unveil your talents until you were 45 or 50, and that's when you would become a productive lawyer. To the extent that was ever true before, it sure is not true now. So I think there is a bit of a race that [all lawyers feel] they are running to distinguish themselves as early as they can.

D: What age do you stop feeling pressure? You have to pick the right undergrad in order to get into the right law school in order to clerk for the right firm or judge, and then you're on the partnership track. At what age is it that you can relax, be yourself, and just be a lawyer?

McAtee: You're describing my life story. The honest answer is there is no such age. If someone is going along the way saying, “I'm going to endure the stress now because I want to make it to the next hurdle where the stress is less,” [he or she is] looking at the game the wrong way. In law, you will never reach a stage, in my opinion, where that stress is alleviated. That stress only increases if you are attuned to it. What you have to do, in my mind, is re-orient the way you think. These milestones will come and go whether you want them to or not. If you focus on your work, you focus on your clients, and you focus really on being the type of lawyer you wanted to be when you went to law school, they will all fall into place. But, if you start focusing on the milestones themselves and you forget why you were interested in law in the first place—how law can help people, why you thought that was neat when you first figured that out—then you won't enjoy the process of getting from one to the other.

D: Finally, if I were a client and paying you for this, how much would it have cost?

McAtee: How long have you been here?

D: About half an hour.

McAtee: Half an hour would have cost—what's \$350 divided by two?

Photo: Lisa Means

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