



Spring 2011 Newsletter

Welcome to the inaugural edition of our e-newsletter! We will use this forum to report firm news to clients, referral sources, and friends on a quarterly basis. For more frequent updates, follow us on [Twitter](#), connect with us on [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#), or subscribe to the [Texas Appellate Law Blog](#).

Texas Supreme Court Visits Hidalgo County

On March 2, 2011, the Hidalgo County Bar Association welcomed the Texas Supreme Court by hosting a reception at the Cimarron Country Club. Nick Dominguez, a member of the HCBA board of directors, and Brandy Wingate, the president-elect, formed the committee to organize the event. Smith Law Group was a sponsor of the event, which was attended by all Texas Supreme Court justices, a number of county, state, court of appeals, and federal judges, and more than 200 HCBA members.

The court visited Hidalgo County to hear oral arguments in two cases at the University of Texas at Pan American on March 3. While in the Valley, the Court visited with UTPA students and also met with representatives from Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid to discuss the need for low-income legal services in the area.

E-Filing Rolls Out in Texas Appellate Courts

The Texas Supreme Court and the two Houston courts of appeals have adopted e-filing rules and are now accepting briefs and other filings electronically through [Texas.gov](#). Other appellate courts are expected to follow suit. Visit our blog for [updated e-filing information and tips](#) and watch for Todd Smith's forthcoming article on this subject in the June *Texas Bar Journal*.

Firm Wins Geographic Restriction Appeal

Smith Law Group recently celebrated a noteworthy victory in a family-law case involving a request to modify a geographic restriction on a minor child's primary residence. The mother sought modification of a divorce decree to allow the child to move out of state. The child's father—our firm's client—opposed



HCBA Event: Todd Smith with 13th Court of Appeals Chief Justice Rogelio Valdez and Mrs. Valdez



HCBA Event: Brandy Wingate with Texas Supreme Court Justice David Medina and 13th Court of Appeals Justice Dori Contreras Garza



Recent and Upcoming

Speaking Engagements

- *Rehearing in the Court of Appeals*, Brandy Wingate, [Handling Your First Civil Appeal](#), Feb. 18, Austin

the request, which the district court denied. In a published opinion, the appellate court affirmed the district court's order, rejecting the mother's invitation to consider her own quality of life as a primary factor in evaluating the decision. *In re C.M.G.*, ____ S.W.3d ____, 2011 WL 1136215 (Tex. App.—Amarillo Mar. 29, 2011, no. pet. h.). D. Todd Smith was the father's lead counsel on appeal.

Other recent wins include:

- successfully defending a seven-figure judgment in an oilfield-injury case, including denial of the operator's petition for review to the Texas Supreme Court;
- affirmance and denial of the opposing parties' petition for review in a boundary dispute brought under the Declaratory Judgments Act; and
- assisting trial counsel in obtaining a seven-figure verdict in a negligence case involving the death of a forklift driver.

Selected Texas Appellate Law Blog Posts

- [Exciting Announcements to Begin 2011](#)
- CCA Overrules [Clewis's](#) Factual Sufficiency Review
- Chief Justice Joe R. Greenhill, 1914-2011
- Chief Justice to Deliver State of Judiciary Address
- At Last, E-Filing Is Coming to Texas Appellate Courts
- An Evening with the Third Court of Appeals

- *Appellate Law From One Practitioner's Perspective*, Todd Smith, University of Texas School of Law, Feb. 23
- *Improve Your Business Model: Practice Tips for Running Your Practice More Efficiently and Profitably*, Todd Smith, Austin Bar Association, March 31
- *Transitioning from Trial to Appeal: Post-Trial Motions*, Brandy Wingate, [Federal Court Practice](#), Dallas, May 20
- *E-Filing in State and Federal Appellate Courts*, Todd Smith, [State Bar Annual Meeting](#), San Antonio, June 23
- *Standards of Review*, Todd Smith, [Advanced Civil Appellate Practice Course](#), Austin, Sept. 8
- *Gateway to Appellate Practice*, Todd Smith, online seminar at [AppealsCourse.com](#)