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Smith County Bar celebrates Law Day and honors recipients

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PBFCM Partner Alesha Williams recognized as 2017 Outstanding Young Lawyer.

On Wednesday, April 26, the Smith County Bar Foundation and Smith County Bar Association celebrated Law Day. Law Day is the largest gathering of attorneys in Smith County and recognizes the achievements of local lawyers, legal staff, and non-attorneys. The theme designated this year by the American Bar Association is The Fourteenth Amendment: Transforming American Democracy.

The luncheon was held at the UT Tyler Ornelas Activity Center, located at 3402 Old Omen Road in Tyler.

The Smith County Bar Foundation's 2017 Justinian Award was presented to the Honorable James W. 'Bill' Bass. The Justinian Award is a lifetime achievement award given to an outstanding Smith County attorney for his or her community service, legal ethics, and professionalism. The recipient is chosen based on his or her outstanding conduct, character, and exemplification of a distinguished level of professionalism among lawyers in the bar. Those honored with this award are truly "role models for the bar," a person who others in the bar seek to emulate, who is admired and respected by all, and who brings pride to the legal profession.

The Smith County Bar Association's 2017 Award of Excellence was presented to Robert H. Wilson. The Award was first presented on Law Day 2007 to the

Honorable Judith K. Guthrie. This award is presented to an attorney who has significantly contributed to the community and, at the same time, raised the profile of the profession.

The Smith County Young Lawyers Association ("SCYLA") presented Alesha Williams as the Smith County Young Lawyer Association 2017 Outstanding Young Lawyer. Each year, SCYLA presents the Outstanding Young Lawyer Award for the young lawyer who best demonstrates excellence in both the legal profession and the community-at-large. No immediate past president, current officer, or Selection Committee member is eligible for the award.

The 2017 Liberty Bell Award honored Terri Smith. This Award is given to an outstanding non-lawyer who has made selfless contributions to strengthen the effectiveness of the American system of justice in his or her community. The Award recognizes community service that promotes a better understanding

of government, encourages a greater respect for the law and the courts, stimulates a deeper sense of individual responsibility to help citizens recognize their duties and rights, contributes to the effective functioning of our institutions of government, and instills a better understanding of and appreciation for the law.

The 2017 Legal Professional of the Year award was presented to Jo Ruth Hancock, CP. This honor is given by the Tyler Area Association of Legal Professionals ("TAALP"), and chosen by a volunteer selection committee of three legal professionals who are not current members of TAALP. The recipient is chosen based on his or her professional experience, professional development, and community involvement. The award has been presented since 1997.

Legal products and services will be showcased at the annual exposition held before and after the luncheon.

Law Day 2017 Committee members include: Co-Chairs Debby Gunter and Hon. K. Nicole Mitchell; Amy Ames; John Berry; Dana Bias; Carol Campbell; Patricia Coplan; Jenna Gillingham; Stuart Hene; Leigh Hunt; Helen Koch; Ann Kuhn; Jim Noble; Jason Mazingo; Danny Noteware; Bob Wells; Ruth Yeager; and Executive Director, Cristy Arscott.