



JOE ESCOBEDO*

LUIS M. CARDENAS*

July 23, 2021

Co-Chairs Larry McDougal and Charlie Ginn
Members, SBOT Nominations and Elections Subcommittee

RE: Statement of Interest to Serve as State Bar President and Resume

Dear Co-Chairs McDougal and Ginn, and Members of the Subcommittee:

It is my distinct honor to be considered for nomination as President-Elect of the State Bar of Texas. I have never had to tell my life story, and I do so here with some trepidation. A large part of me finds it hard to believe that I am even in this position. My father and mother never made it past the 5th grade, but they instilled in me the belief that if you worked hard, you could succeed in this country. I have taken that advice to heart. Among the proudest moments of my life was when my parents attended my law school graduation and swearing-in ceremony. Given my humble beginnings, with the exception of my incredible family, I can honestly say that the practice of law has given me everything I have. My service to the Bar is my small attempt to pay something back to the profession which has given me such a blessed life.

When it comes to Board service, I am somewhat of a late bloomer. While I spoke often at local and State Bar CLEs, I never ran for a leadership position in our local bar association. That all changed when my good friend Justice Gina Benavides "suggested" that I run for the position of Director for District 12. For those who know Justice Benavides, you can understand that saying "no" was not an option. I have fond memories of my time serving on the Board of Directors. I remember the first day of my service walking up to then President Trey Apffel and asking him to put me to work. Of course, he did just that. I was honored to participate in President Apffel's Solo and Small Firm Outreach Program and speak to solo practitioners and members of small firms throughout the state. Many times, attendees would thank me for showing up to their city and providing this service. This experience provided me with valuable insight on how to educate our membership on the services provided by the Bar.

My four years on the SBOT Board were truly remarkable. I made close friendships that I maintain today. I also witnessed the unwavering commitment of other volunteer lawyers and the Bar staff. As a Director, I served on numerous committees including the Executive Committee and the Nominations & Elections Subcommittee. This gave me the opportunity to become thoroughly immersed in learning how the Bar was managed. Of course, the highlight of my Board service was

*Board Certified Personal Injury Trial Law • Texas Board of Legal Specialization

serving as Chair; this remains one of the highest honors of my life. During my year as Chair, I dealt with some division on the Board. However, throughout several contentious meetings, we kept the discussions positive. I believe I earned the respect of the Directors, even those who disagreed with me. In addition, 2017 was the year of Sunset Review. I witnessed the expertise and dedication of our Bar staff as we dealt with the challenges of such a legislative review. I was fortunate to work with President Frank Stevenson during this process. At the Supreme Court's behest, we also undertook to change the Bar rule that precluded lawyers who had been suspended from serving as officers and directors. Throughout it all, I remained committed to my promise to listen to the Directors and allow everyone to present their viewpoints. During the long committee meetings and phone conferences, President Stevenson often joked that our reward would come the following year where we would have essentially nothing to do but co-chair the Nominations and Elections Subcommittee. That is not exactly the way it turned out.

The following year, as Immediate Past Chair, we undertook the comprehensive review and revision of the nominations and elections rules in the Policy Manual and came up with a creative solution to two prospective nominees for President-Elect announcing their intention to run as petition candidates. Further, I co-chaired the General Counsel Search Committee and served on the Executive Director Search Committee. There was no rest for the weary, but I enjoyed every minute of it.

Following my years on the Board, I have continued my service to Texas lawyers. I serve on the Board of the Texas Bar Foundation and am a Commissioner for the Texas Access to Justice Commission. I was proud to serve as Chair of the President Sylvia Borunda Firth's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force. I have been involved in DEI in every organization I have belonged to, including serving on the Steering Committee for the Texas Minority Counsel Program (TMCP). Through my involvement with the Bar, I have been able to help open doors to young men and women of color to participate in Bar activities. I deeply believe that DEI is important for the administration of justice and the practice of law and that the Bar should remain committed to these principles.

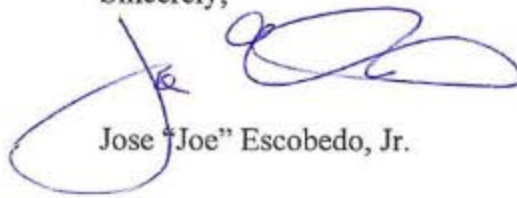
The most immediate concern for our Bar is dealing with the aftermath of the *McDonald* litigation, whatever the result may be. Foremost, we must remain committed to providing access to justice for all Texans. While we may need to restructure the program considering the recent decision, we must work tirelessly to assure that access to the law and legal support is not limited to those who can afford to pay our retainers and hourly fees. I have personally lived through and seen what can happen when the rights of the powerless are trampled by those with power. Throughout my career, I have worked to provide legal services to the poor and underprivileged. The Bar must come up with a creative solution to continue this commitment, and I am prepared to work toward that goal.

Further, we should take this recent court decision as an opportunity to reconnect with our members. There is a long-standing belief shared by some lawyers that the Bar is not responsive to the needs of the average lawyer. I faced this notion while traveling the state as Chair. We obviously need to do more to tackle this perception, and I believe that I am in a unique position to deal with it. I live and work in a small town and come from a part of the state that often feels disconnected from the rest of Texas. I know the stress that comes from working hard to have a practice that

provides for my family and the families of my employees. Every day is a challenge when you know that you and your law partner are the only thing keeping the firm going. In that environment, it can be easy to be led astray by the Bar's detractors. We need to be just as active in persuading Texas lawyers that our Bar has their best interest at heart. I say this because I deeply believe it. The State Bar of Texas is the best bar association in the country. I am ready to work hard to keep it that way.

I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a series of loops and a final flourish.

Jose "Joe" Escobedo, Jr.

JOSE “JOE” ESCOBEDO, JR.

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EDUCATION

Pan American University, BA 1986

University of Texas, JD 1989

Certified Mediator, The Center for Public Policy Dispute Resolution, The University of Texas School of Law 2007

AREAS OF PRACTICE

Commercial and Tort Litigation

Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

AV Rated by Martindale-Hubbell

Board Certified in Personal Injury Trial Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization

Texas Super Lawyers 2006-2021

State Bar of Texas Presidential Citation for Service to the Bar 2015

Texas Bar College

Texas Bar Foundation, Fellow

ADMISSIONS

Admitted to Texas State Bar 1989

Admitted to practice before the U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit

Admitted to practice before the U.S. District Court, Northern and Southern Districts of Texas

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS & ACTIVITIES

State Bar of Texas

Commissioner, Texas Access to Justice Commission (2021-2024)

Chair, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force (2020-2021)

Steering Committee, Texas Minority Counsel Program (2014-2019)

Board of Directors, Director (2014-2017)

Board of Directors, Chair (2016-2017)

Board of Editors, State Bar of Texas Bar Journal (2014 – 2017)

Hispanic Issues Section, Council member (2014-2017)

Various CLE Planning Committees

Hidalgo County Bar Association

Co-Chair, Civil Trial Law Section (2009-2011)

Civil Trial CLE Planning Committee (2009-present)

American Board of Trial Advocates [ABOTA]
National Board Representative (2012)
Diversity of Membership Committee (2012-2014)

RGV Chapter of ABOTA
President (2010-2011)
Treasurer (2012)

Texas Bar Foundation
Board of Directors (2021-2024)

Texas Association of Mediators

National Association of Minority & Women Owned Law Firms (NAMWOLF)

PUBLICATIONS AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Policy Limits Demands: Strategies, Tactics and Practical Considerations, Advanced Personal Injury and Law Course, University of Houston Law Foundation

Common Evidence Problems in Medical Malpractice Cases, Medical Malpractice Conference, St. Mary's/Texas Tech Schools of Law

Pharmaceutical Litigation, Corpus Christi Personal Injury Seminar, Corpus Christi Bar Assn., 2006

VIOXX Trial Insights - A Panel Discussion, Mealey's VIOXX Litigation Conference, Amelia Island, Florida, 2006

Accident Investigations & Preservation of Evidence, Prosecuting or Defending a Trucking Case, Texas Bar CLE, San Antonio, 2007

The Dos & Don'ts of the Civil Trial Practice, Today's Law Practice: An Attorney Workshop. Hidalgo County Bar Association, 2009

Paid or Incurred, Hidalgo County Civil Trial Section, 2010

Case Law Update, Civil Trial Conference 2012, Hidalgo County Bar Association

Paid or Incurred Update, Fifth Judicial Region Judges' Meeting, 2012

Premises Liability, Advanced Personal Injury Law Course, 2013

Paid or Incurred Update Webcast, Texas Bar CLE, 2012

Director and Officer Liability and Shareholder Oppression, Business Disputes 2013

Expedited Trials, Texas Minority Counsel Program, 2013

Corporate Fiduciary Duties and Shareholder Oppression, Business Disputes 2014

Minority Shareholder Oppression, Texas Minority Counsel Program 2014

Corporate Fiduciary Duties and Shareholder Oppression, Essentials for General Practitioners, 2014-2015

Paid or Incurred Update, Texas Bar CLE 2015

Corporate Fiduciary Duties and Shareholder Oppression, Corporate Counsel Review (May 2015)

Why is Being a Rainmaker So Important? Texas Minority Counsel Program 2017

Business Torts Update, Advanced Civil Trial Law Course 2018

Business Torts Update, Soaking Up Some CLE 2019

Business Torts Update 2020, 15th Annual Fiduciary Litigation 2020

Business Torts Update, Litigation Update Institute Course 2021