

A Symposium on Ethics *for* Texas State Agencies

Speaker BIODs



Kristin Alexander serves as director of the Compliance Division for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). She is responsible for oversight and coordination of TxDOT investigations, compliance evaluations, audits of external entities doing business with TxDOT, and advisory (consulting) services, with a focus on preventing and detecting fraud, waste and abuse.

Prior to joining TxDOT, Alexander served as a Managing Senior Auditor at the Texas State Auditor's Office (SAO). During her 10-year tenure at the SAO, she led several high-profile projects, including contracting audits and audits of the federal compliance portion of the Statewide Single Audit. Before the SAO, Alexander worked in the Advisory practice of PricewaterhouseCoopers in Dallas.

Alexander earned a BBA from the University of Texas at Austin and an MBA from St. Edward's University. She is a Certified Internal Auditor and a Certified Fraud Examiner.



Natalia Luna Ashley is the Executive Director of the Texas Ethics Commission and has served in that role since May 2014. Prior to that, she served as Interim Executive Director and Special Counsel. Natalia has also served the Commission as General Counsel for seven years, and prior to that as Assistant General Counsel and Assistant Director of Enforcement. In her current role, Natalia directs all operations of the Texas Ethics Commission and reports to an eight member board, and serves as counsel to the board on complex laws relating to campaign finance, lobby, personal financial statements, conflict of interest, and gifts. Natalia advises public officials and employees at all levels of state government, serves as legislative liaison between the Commission and the Texas Legislature, and testifies before legislative committees. Natalia provides training to appointed officeholders, candidates and elected officials at all levels of state government, public servants at all levels of state government, and Texas lobbyists. Natalia has worked on or overseen the processing of thousands of complaints, and her responsibilities have included writing advisory opinions and rules. Natalia graduated from St. Edward's University with a degree in Finance and Marketing. She earned a Juris Doctorate degree from Southern Methodist University School of Law.



Toya Cirica Bell is the Deputy Chief Ethics Officer for the Texas Health and Human Services System an agency with over 50,000 employees across the state. As a member of the HHS Ethics Office she shares in the responsibility for the development and implementation of robust and innovative ethics awareness, training and compliance initiatives in addition to providing thoughtful guidance to employees and all levels of management on ethics.

Toya is an attorney with over 25 years in the public and private sectors. She began her career in Austin as an Assistant Texas Attorney General and member of the Opinion Committee. Her practice areas include ethics, employment law, legislative decision-making and administrative law. Prior to her current position, Toya served as Special Counsel to the HHS System where she provided legal counsel on ethics, Medicaid policy issues and various special projects. Her experience in the private sector includes serving as the Associate General Counsel for Employment at Sam's Club, a division of Walmart Stores, Inc., where she provided senior legal guidance on employment and ethics matters to corporate executives and their teams.

Toya is a graduate of Keystone School in San Antonio. She received a BA in English from Rice University and a JD from the College of William & Mary. She is a 2016 recipient of the Travis County Women Lawyers Association, Attorney Award.

Amanda Crawford is the Deputy Attorney General for Administration and General Counsel for the Office of the Attorney General of Texas, overseeing the administrative and legal counsel divisions of the office. She has held her current position since June 2016. Prior to assuming her latest role, Mandy served as Associate Deputy Attorney General for Legal Counsel and General Counsel for the OAG. In that role, she served as general counsel and assisted in overseeing the OAG's Legal Counsel Divisions – the Open Records, Public Finance, and General Counsel Divisions, as well as the Opinion Committee. Additionally, since joining the Office of the Attorney General in 1999, she has served as the Chief of the Open Records Division, the Deputy Division Chief of the Open Records Division, a drafting attorney in the Open Records Division, and the Public Information Coordinator. She earned her B.A. from The University of Texas at Austin and her law degree from the University of Houston Law Center.



Fernando C. Gomez, J.D., Ph.D., is the Vice Chancellor and General Counsel Texas State University System.

Born in Gallup, New Mexico, Fernando C. Gomez earned degrees from the University of New Mexico (B.A. *cum laude*) and the University of Michigan (J.D. and Ph.D., American Culture). He attained tenure at Michigan State University before serving as assistant attorney general in Michigan and in Texas and as California State University System general counsel. He has served as Texas State University System vice chancellor and general counsel for over 25 years (1986-1990 and 1994-Present). He has authored three books, consulted and lectured on higher education and legal topics throughout the United States and overseas, including Cuba and Yemen.

In December 2011, Texas Review Press published **A *Texas State of Mind***, a book edited by Dr. Gomez, commemorating the Texas State University System, its colleges, and universities in celebration of the System's centennial year.



John Kuempel was sworn in on December 30, 2010 to the 81st Legislature and is serving his third term as State Representative from District 44. The district is comprised of Guadalupe and Wilson Counties.

John received a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin. He was born and raised in Seguin and graduated from Seguin High School. He was active in high school sports, playing football and baseball before becoming a walk-on member of the University of Texas football team.

Since his college graduation, John has been employed as a Salesman at Commercial Metals Company in Seguin.

Rep. Kuempel currently serves as Chairman of the House General Investigating and Ethics Committee where he leads all investigations pertaining to the conduct of and ethical standards of state and local government. He also serves as a member of the State Affairs Committee and the Licensing and Administrative Procedures Committee. During the 83rd Legislative Interim, Speaker Straus appointed Representative Kuempel as Co-Chairman of the Legislative Committee to Review the Texas Lottery Commission. Representative Kuempel has served as the Chairman of the Texas Legislative General Aviation Caucus since 2013.

In June 2011, Speaker Straus appointed John to serve on the Energy Council, a non-profit organization that helps promote a balanced national energy strategy and related environmental policies at the state level. Upon completion of the 82nd legislative session, Representative Kuempel was honored with the 2011 Legislative Champion Award given by the Foundation

Appraisers Coalition of Texas for his tireless efforts in reforming Appraisal Management Companies in Texas and authoring legislation to protect appraisers and consumers in the state. Representative Kuempel has been honored each session by the Texas Association of Business and has been named a “Champion of Free Enterprise”.

Like his parents, the late Edmund Kuempel and Roberta Blumberg Kuempel of Seguin, John is actively involved in his community. He is a member of the Seguin Rotary Club, the Guadalupe County 100 Club, Texas Farm Bureau and Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association.

John is an avid outdoorsman and serves as a Texas Parks & Wildlife Honorary Game Warden. He is also a life member of the National Rifle Association and the Texas State Rifle Association.

John and his wife, Michelle, are parents of 12 year old twin boys. They are active members of Faith Lutheran Church in Seguin where Michelle, a librarian at Koennecke Elementary, serves on the Alter Guild.

The couple supports several local charitable entities such as Guadalupe Regional Hospice, Seguin Education Foundation, Wade Busby Memorial, Tejas Literacy Club, Texas Agriculture Education and Heritage Center and Guadalupe, La Vernia and Wilson County Youth Shows.



Jerry McGinty is the Chief Financial Officer for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Mr. McGinty manages the fiscal operations of the agency, while overseeing the functions of TDCJ Business & Finance Division, which is comprised of budget, accounting, procurement, payroll and other agency functions to include the unit commissaries and agricultural operations.

Mr. McGinty has served in a variety of roles during his 24 years of dedicated service to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, including the Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Budget Director, as well as positions in Human Resources, Communications, Classification & Records and the Commissary & Trust Fund Department.

As TDCJ’s Chief Financial Officer, Mr. McGinty is responsible for the financial monitoring and fiscal oversight of an annual operating budget that exceeds \$3.4 billion with approximately 38,000 employees. These funds provide for the statewide management of nearly 148,000 incarcerated offenders, approximately 87,000 parolees under active supervision and 380,000 probationers.

Jerry and his wife of 24 years, Tammy, have three sons – Joshua, Jacob, and Jonah.

Ron Pigott started working for the State of Texas as an attorney in 1994. He's held legal positions at the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Texas Water Development Board, the Attorney General's Office, and the Comptroller's Office.

In 2008, Ron became the Director of the Texas Procurement and Support Services (TPASS) division at the Comptroller's Office. That job required him to manage statewide procurement, the Contract Advisory Team (CAT), the TxSmartBuy program, purchaser and contract manager training/certification, the statewide HUB program, the state charge card program, the state travel management program, the state fleet, the TXMAS program, and state mail operations.

In 2015, Ron became the Deputy Executive Commissioner for Procurement and Contracting Services at the Health and Human Services Commission. In this role, Ron oversees the contract creation and management of \$60 billion in state contracts for HHSC, DADS, DARS, DFPS, and DSHS.



Jacob Pugh is the manager of the Legislative Budget Board's Contracts Oversight and Technology Team, tasked with identifying and mitigating risk in the contracting process in Texas. In this role, he oversees the contract oversight function of the LBB, including managing the contracts database and providing outreach and training to state agencies regarding contract reporting, and providing policy recommendations on contracting matters.

He has a Bachelor's degree from Macalester College in Minnesota, a Law degree from the University of Minnesota and an MBA from the University of Texas. Prior to assuming his current duties, he spent 3 years at the Texas Military Department, and 14 years as an Air Force Judge Advocate. He is currently an officer in the US Air Force Reserve, and holds certifications as a Certified Texas Contract Manager (CTCM) and Project Management Professional (PMP).



Emily Ramshaw is the editor-in-chief of The Texas Tribune, a nonpartisan digital news organization that produces politics and policy news, data and events statewide, and operates the largest statehouse reporting bureau in the nation.

Under her leadership, the Tribune — billed “one of the nonprofit news sector’s runaway success stories” — has won seven national Edward R. Murrow Awards, eight honors from the Online News Association and been repeatedly recognized for innovation in investigative reporting. By way of its free syndication model, the Tribune has filled the pages of Texas newspapers, broadcast on TV and video airwaves statewide, and provided Texas-specific reporting for both The Washington Post and The New York Times. In addition to the Tribune’s original reporting and investigative projects, Ramshaw oversees audience and technology initiatives, premium newsletter products and a partner op-ed site, TribTalk.

Before joining the Tribune in 2010 as one of its founding reporters, Ramshaw spent six years at The Dallas Morning News, where she broke national stories about sexual abuse inside Texas' youth lock-ups, reported from inside a West Texas polygamist compound and uncovered "fight clubs" inside state institutions for the disabled. The Texas APME named Ramshaw its 2009 star reporter of the year.

A native of Washington, D.C., Ramshaw graduated from Northwestern University in 2003 with dual degrees in journalism and American history. She serves on the board of the Pulitzer Prize and the American Society of News Editors.



David A. Reisman began his service as Chief Ethics Officer for the Health and Human Services Commission on February 23, 2015. He came from the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute (CPRIT) where he worked to establish an ethics and compliance program in an agency established to grant \$3 billion in public funds for cancer prevention, research and product development to entities located throughout the state of Texas.

Mr. Reisman was Executive Director of the Texas Ethics Commission from October 2004 to December 2013. In this role, Mr. Reisman worked to promote public confidence in government. He ran all operations of the Texas Ethics Commission and was responsible for the effective implementation of state campaign finance, lobby and ethics laws.

Prior to his role at the Texas Ethics Commission, he served from May 2002 to October 2004 as Special Assistant to the General Counsel of the United States Army. In that position, Mr. Reisman was responsible for providing opinions and advising the General Counsel and Army Secretariat on fiscal and policy issues involving the financial management of the Army.

Mr. Reisman has earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from West Virginia Wesleyan College, a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Kentucky and a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Kentucky College of Law.



Ron Steffa has served as the Deputy Chief Financial Officer for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) since June 2008. He works with the TDCJ Chief Financial Officer in managing the fiscal operations of the agency while overseeing the Business and Finance Division, which is comprised of the following departments: Budget, Accounting and Business Services, Contracts and Procurement, Payroll, Historically Underutilized Business Program, the Office of Space Management, Commissary and Trust Fund, and Agribusiness, Land and Minerals.

Ron joined the TDCJ in December of 1992 and received his Master of Business Administration from Sam Houston State University in 1993. Over his tenure with the agency, he has worked in a variety of roles to include the Director of Contracts and Procurement, as well as several other positions within Contracts and Procurement, Executive Services and Human Resources Departments.



David Timberger has worked at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality since 2000. He began his state service as an employment and ethics attorney in the General Law Division at TCEQ. For the past six years, he has served as the agency's Ethics Advisor and Director of the General Law Division, where he leads a team of talented attorneys, legal support staff and rule coordinators. David is a graduate of the Texas Tech School of Law in Lubbock and Trinity University in San Antonio. He is a member of the Board of Directors of Austin Wildcats Basketball, Inc., a nonprofit select basketball program. In his free time, you may find him cycling around Austin or floating down one of Texas' scenic rivers.



Benito Ybarra oversees TxDOT's Internal Audit and Compliance divisions. These functions are aimed at improving risk management, accountability and governance through value-driven audits, evaluations, investigations and advisory services engagements.

Prior to joining TxDOT in September 2011, Ybarra worked at Dell Inc. and Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation. He has earned designations as a Certified Internal Auditor, Certified Information Systems Auditor and Certified Fraud Examiner and has more than 18 years of audit, compliance, and investigations experience.

Mr. Ybarra is an active member of several professional organizations including the Institute of Internal Auditors' North American Board, the American Center for Government Auditing, and the State Agency Internal Audit Forum.



Cecile Erwin Young has almost thirty years of state government experience in Texas. Ms. Young began her state career as a lecture and research engineer at Texas Tech University. She served as the conference committee clerk for HB 7 which created the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) in 1991 and came to work at HHSC to implement the legislation.

From 2007 to 2011, she served as Associate Commissioner for Health Coordination and Consumer Services at HHSC and returned as Chief of Staff in January 2015. On June 1, 2016, Ms. Young was promoted to serve as the new Chief Deputy Executive Commissioner.

In her career in state government, Ms. Young has served four governors, an attorney general, and a state representative. She has performed budget and policy work since 1987.



Martin Zelinsky serves as the General Counsel and Ethics Officer for the Texas Department of Information Resources. He is responsible for providing legal services to all operational divisions in the agency, including the state's cooperative contracts program, consolidated data centers, web portal, telecommunications system, and information security operations. Before entering public service for the State of Texas in 2003, Martin served as corporate counsel in the wireless telecommunications and natural gas pipeline industries.

Martin has given presentations on IT procurement, technology and information security issues at various state agencies and forums, and served as an Adjunct Professor at St. Edwards University. He served as chair of the State Agency General Counsels subcommittee for the 2012/2013 biennium.

Martin is a graduate of South Texas College of Law and Rice University.