

RHONDA HOEHN BRINK



2020

REPTL Probate Lifetime Achievement Award

The Real Estate Probate and Trust Section of the State Bar of Texas
Presents the 2020 Distinguished Probate Attorney Lifetime Achievement
Award to Rhonda Hoehn Brink of Austin, Texas

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LEGAL CAREER AND EDUCATION

Rhonda specializes in estate and trust law and her practice addresses all aspects of family wealth management and disposition. Before starting with the predecessor firm to Brink Bennett Golden in April of 2015, Rhonda had been the supervising shareholder of the wealth-transfer section of a major Austin law firm, Clark Thomas, where she clerked while in law school. After approximately 25 years with that firm, she opened her own solo practice as the Law Offices of Rhonda H. Brink in 1998.

After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in economics from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, in 1971, and completing her J.D. at the University of Texas School of Law in 1973, she was admitted to the State Bar of Texas in 1974.

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Rhonda is Board Certified in Estate Planning and Probate Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. In 1984 she was admitted as a Fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel ("ACTEC"). She served as Past Chair and board member of the Estate Planning and Probate Section of the Austin Bar Association, Past President of the Central Texas Estate Planning Council, and Past President of Austin Lawyers Care (the initial Travis County pro bono legal services referral organization). She is a frequent speaker at State Bar of Texas Professional Development programs and spoke regularly in the past at ALL-ABA Estate Planning and Administration Programs around the nation, often on topics of Post Mortem Planning and Estate Administration, particularly "Handling Business Interests". She has twice served on the faculty of the University of Miami, Heckerling Institute on Estate Planning speaking on "Planning Perspectives for Creditor Conscious Clients" (then a taboo topic) in 1988, and "A Glimpse Through the Planning Window of the Young, Terminally Ill" (dismissed by some as the "HIV-AIDS" speech"). She served as Director of the 1999 State Bar of Texas Professional Development Program--Advanced Estate Planning Strategies Course in San Francisco. She has presented at national ACTEC meetings on topics ranging from "Non-Marital Status Issues in Estate Planning for Committed Couples" (2012 Annual Meeting with co-speakers, Joshua S. Rubenstein, New York, NY, and Anne Wynne, then of Ikard Wynne, LLP, Austin, TX) and "Until Divorce Do Us Part" – the impact of divorce in estate planning (2014 Summer Meeting with co-speaker, the late and loved Dennis Belcher, formerly of McGuire Woods, Richmond, Virginia).

Rhonda has been listed in the Best Lawyers of America in the area of Trusts and Estates since 1995 and has been recognized by Texas Monthly as a "Super Lawyer" in her field of expertise since 2002. She has been selected for membership in the inaugural and recurring editions of the Martindale-Hubbell Bar Registry of Preeminent Women Lawyers. She was selected as one of 2015's Women Leaders in the Law, as published in the March 2016, Best Lawyers, first-ever Women in the Law Edition. The Law Offices of Rhonda H. Brink was named in U.S. News and World Report's publication "2011-2012 Best Law Firms," and has repeated this designation, now awarded to her current firm for 2020. Chambers and Partners High Net Worth 2018, gave her a Private Wealth Law Band Three ranking. She is proud to have been selected a 2020 Woman Leader in the Law and named as one of the approximately 50 Super Lawyers - 2019 Texas Top Women in Estate Planning and Probate. She has served on the Austin Gift Planning Advisory Council of the University of Texas at Austin since its inception. She is proud to be one of four Texas attorneys selected to receive the Standing Ovation Award for 2008 – a recognition of CLE volunteers by the Texas Bar CLE staff.

Why Rhonda Is Being Recognized

“Play it by ear.” That was condition to Rhonda’s being offered this award, in this year at the first on-line Advanced Estate Planning and Probate Course. “No problem,” she said, “those are guiding words I used to rear my children. You can ask and they will tell you I always pulled my earlobe and said it - even when I knew exactly what was next!” As for being the first to receive this award by webinar, Rhonda asks, “If an award is given in cyberspace and no one is there to share it, does it mean as much?” Her answer is, “Yes! Carry on, virtually.”

FAMILY, FORMATION AND FAITH

Rhonda is a “BOI” (born on island), who started life in 1950 on Galveston Island, Texas. Middle of three daughters of Arthur and Jean Hoehn, Rhonda recalls her formative days as a “beach baby.” Her dad left the Navy after WWII to become a teller with one of the two major Galveston banks, and went on to become founder and first president of Lockwood National Bank in Houston in 1957. Her formative years in Houston included a multi-dimensional (read: too many activities) high school career following which she travelled in Europe for much of the summer.

Rhonda then moved to San Antonio for her undergraduate studies and participation in the social revolution that followed the life-shaking events of 1968 - the year she started college. Her move to Austin to attend law school brought with it a short-lived job she got because she thought she was knowledgeable about “economics and law”. It was hand-stamping date cancellations on state checks at the office of the State Treasurer, who was then Jessie James!! Being told she was too efficient for that state job, she was quickly asked to leave. Six weeks into her law school career Rhonda was offered a clerkship with the Clark Thomas law firm at which she spent over 27 years.

After a short first marriage and plans to relocate her life and practice to New York City, Rhonda met her husband, Robert Lynn Green, Jr., and has been with him since. She has been supported in her efforts by both her husband and their three children: Brian Green, Principal Partner Development Manager Amazon Web Services, and his two children living in Austin, Texas; Lynn Green-Ivey, a Doctor of Veterinarian Medicine with Chisholm Trail Veterinary Clinic of New Braunfels, living with her husband, Chris Ivey and Rhonda's youngest four year-old grandson at Canyon Lake, Texas; and Leslie Green, social media Campaign Manager at HubSpot, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, living with her beau, Justin Taylor.

Rhonda has been a member of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas, for nearly 40 years. She has twice served as a Deacon and as a former member of the Foundation Board and Strategic Planning Committee. She is listed as the first volunteer with the Street Youth Ministry (started by a member of her church) a mission to care for homeless college age and young adults, which she continues to support. She has travelled to Mexico and Cuba on mission trips with her church and starting in the Fall of 2018, she participated in a near year-long Cohort in the Fuller Seminary Institute of Spiritual and Missional Formation through her church.

LIFE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND GOALS

As part of her legacy, Rhonda is pleased to share that she -- received the first Girl Scout Award (now the Gold Scout award) given to a female in Harris County, Texas to parallel the Eagle Scout for men -- was the first generation of her family who received a college degree -- "AmJur-ed" Charles Allen Wright's constitutional law class at UT LAW and was not male -- was one of the first women to become active in the SBOT Probate and Trust Section, largely by invitation from Ed Smith -- was the first woman to eat lunch at the Citadel Club at the Driskill Hotel in Austin, by invitation of Jake Pickle -- was one of the first speakers on topic of the 1980 Texas Constitutional Amendment authorizing pre-marital agreements and then became a participant in a lawsuit testing it after her marriage in 1981 -- become the first female Fellow of ACTEC in the state of Texas in 1984 -- was the first female to give birth as a partner at the Clark, Thomas law firm -- as a result of the last item, was the first partner at Clark Thomas to own a "pc" (that cost her personally over \$5,000, a sum thought reasonable to prove she could "work at home") -- was a participant in and co-author of the Fifth Circuit brief in connection with the multi-state death tax issues in connection with the Howard Hughes estate, representing California -- was the ninth female speakers at the Heckerling Estate Planning Institute, largely at the sponsorship of J. Chrys Dougherty -- developed a practice specialty in planning for committed couples before same gender marriage recognition -- tries to introduce herself to every person of color at every CLE and seminar she attends -- stepped out of partnership at one of Austin's finest law firms to start her own practice -- is enriched to have mentored many women on their legal path -- was the only female estate planner on the committee that recognized Stanley Johanson and helped to endow his Chair in Teaching Excellence in 2014 -- planned the first Clark Thomas reunion in 2019 -- married Bob nearly 39 years ago and has travelled life's journey and many foreign and domestic places with him since -- is grateful to have reared three kind and successful children -- eulogized with deep love both her parents -- took both of her daughters to Paris in 2018 -- is fortunate to have met or known all of the former recipients of this award, to have practiced law with two of them and to have been mentored by many of them -- and, finally, survived breast cancer after surgery, almost 10 years ago to the date of this honor.

Rhonda has projects on the "drafting table" and looks forward the possibility of teaching the value of wealth management and offering estate planning for those who cannot otherwise afford it in connection with non-profit charitable organization development. She is working with educators, development officers and technology wizards to accomplish both goals. She relishes the thought of writing and reading -- not about the law, but for her own entertainment. She looks forward to distant travel again, but while restricted, she hopes to spend more time at her little bird sanctuary in the woods, the Brierpatch, in Burleson County, Texas, and at the coastal home of the Green family on the bay in Rockport-Fulton, Texas.

Rhonda has heartfelt gratitude to her family, mentors, peers, friends, and the distinguished attorneys who recognized her with this award.