



August 2024

TASC AWARDS

Recognizing excellence within the Texas Specialty Court community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Creuzot Award | 3 |
| Reyes Award | 4 |
| Covington Award | 5 |
| Bennet Award | 6 |
| Ladd Scholarship | 7 |
| Other Awards & Recognition | 8 |
| Nominations | 9 |

INTRODUCTION

Texas Association of Specialty Courts (TASC) builds and strengthens Texas specialty courts through collaboration, advocacy and education. The nonprofit organization was founded to:

- Increase local and statewide political, media and community awareness of the existence and success of drug courts.
- Support legislation authorizing funding for the operation of drug courts.
- Provide support for jurisdictions wanting to establish drug courts.

The Board currently consists of eight (8) Executive Committee members and twelve (12) Directors. Board members are sworn in each year during our annual training conference.

The conference attracts criminal justice professionals associated with the specialty court field from all over the State of Texas that are interested in serious issues facing the community in the fields of mental health, social work, counseling, community corrections, juvenile justice, law enforcement, substance abuse and other related fields. The purpose of the conference is to serve as an avenue of networking, resources and training to create a forum for dialogue on current issues and to provide professional input in an organized manner to the Texas Legislature.

During the conference, TASC recognizes individuals and programs excelling in the Texas specialty court field with five (5) legacy awards.

2024-2025 Leadership



President
Judge Larry Phillips



President-Elect
Judge Elizabeth Rainey

Judge John C. Creuzot Award for Judicial Vision and Leadership

“For Courage, Vision and Conviction in the Justice System”



Judge Kelli Johnson
2024 Recipient



Judge Yolanda Huff
2023 Recipient

Judge Creuzot is a pioneer of drug courts in Texas playing a significant role in changing the courts of criminal justice in Texas. Judge Creuzot recognized the need to steer the Texas criminal justice system in a different direction by giving repeat drug offenders an opportunity to change in the face of great opposition. Ignoring criticism and a new nickname, “let'em go Creuzot,” Judge Creuzot demonstrated courage, vision, and conviction to the belief that drug courts were an evidence-based practice worthy of establishing in Texas.

Established in 2010, the Creuzot Award honors a Judge who demonstrates visionary leadership and courage used to further the ideal and concept of problem-solving courts.

Past Recipients:

- 2024 – Judge Kelli Johnson
- 2023 – Judge Yolanda Huff
- 2022 – Judge Rosie Speedlin Gonzalez
- 2021 – Judge Peter Sakai
- 2020 – Judge Robert Anchondo
- 2019 – Judge Ernie Glenn
- 2018 – Judge Oscar Jesus Hale, Jr.
- 2017 – Judge Rayburn "Rim" Nall
- 2016 – Judge Brent A. Carr
- 2015 – Judge Robert Francis
- 2014 – Judge Timothy L. Wright
- 2013 – Judge Paul White
- 2011 – Judge Al Alonzo
- 2010 – Hon. John C. Creuzot

Judge Ruben G. Reyes

Outstanding Specialty Court Team Award

“For Effective Teamwork & Utilizing Best Practice Standards to Save Souls”



Bexar County Reflejo Court

2024 Recipient



Dallas County Divert Court

2023 Recipient

Judge Reyes is known for his passion and enthusiasm for specialty courts. To Judge Reyes, specialty courts are not only about saving lives but about saving souls. Anyone who ever heard one of Judge Reyes' presentations is familiar with his saying: *“Good intentions are not enough. The desire to help those addicted mandates the use of best practice standards – because the work of saving souls is too important.”*

And while the Judge may be the face of the specialty court, the Judge knows they must surround themselves with a great team. In fact, the specialty court idea is built on the team concept. An ineffective team results in an ineffective specialty court. Each team member contributes to the success of the specialty court.

This award, established in 2017, recognizes an outstanding specialty court team who epitomizes the idea that good intentions are not enough and reflects Judge Reyes' examples of passion and expertise.

Past Recipients:

- 2024 – Bexar County Reflejo Court
- 2023 – Dallas County Divert Court
- 2022 – Midland County Adult Felony Drug Court
- 2021 – Tarrant County Mental Health Diversion Program
- 2020 – Bexar County Felony Drug Court (Judge Ernie Glenn)
- 2019 – Williamson County DWI/Drug Court Program
- 2018 – Bexar County Adult Drug Court (Judge Stolhandske's Court)
- 2017 – Hon. Ruben G. Reyes

Mary Covington Outstanding Specialty Court Team Member Award

“Demonstrating Passion for the Specialty Court Team, Client and Recovery”



Jessica Lopez
2024 Recipient



Georgia Kimmey
2023 Recipient

This award was established in 2017 in honor of Mary Covington, a dedicated Specialty Court team member for 14 years. She has served as coordinator of several Specialty Court programs in Harris County and is a past president of the Texas Association of Specialty Courts. She is known for her passion of putting the client first and believes in recovery with her heart and soul. She promotes a positive attitude among her team and the clients.

Nominees for this award should go above and beyond to encourage a positive environment for the team and the court as a whole. They are seen as a support for clients while helping them truly believe that sobriety and recovery is obtainable for all.

Past Recipients:

- 2024 – Jessica Lopez
- 2023 – Georgia Kimmey
- 2022 – Tania Vargas
- 2021 – Amy Montero
- 2020 – Sylvia Araiza
- 2019 – Veda Wright
- 2018 – Laura Peveto
- 2017 – Mary Covington

The Joel Bennett Recovery Award

“For Outstanding Commitment to Helping Those in the Recovery Community”



Jessica Yeager

2024 Recipient



Faith Bowen

2023 Recipient

This award was established in 2010 to honor Judge Joel Bennett of Austin, Texas. In 2010, Judge Bennett was recognized by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals as the longest active serving drug court Judge in the nation. Judge Bennett is committed to helping people obtain a clean and sober lifestyle.

The Joel Bennett Recovery Award is given to an individual who demonstrates devotion to recovery by living a life of sobriety and/or helping others to obtain such a life. The award recognizes the discipline and courage to lead a substance abuse free life and honors those who assist individuals in regaining control of their life such that they achieve their full potential as human beings. Award recipients may be a graduate of a problem-solving court program, a Case Manager, Probation Officer or a Counselor.

Past Recipients:

- 2024 – Jessica Yeager
- 2023 – Faith Bowen
- 2022 – Paterra Warren
- 2021 – RaDonna Clark
- 2020 – Javier Rene Soto
- 2019 – Keith H. Liles
- 2018 – Tiffany Rhymes
- 2017 – Courtney Young
- 2016 – Pam Leary
- 2015 – Carolyn Harmon
- 2014 – Michaelynn Baudoin
- 2013 – Roberto Ruiz

Rusty Ladd Scholarship Award

“For Charity, Courage, and Heart”



Keith Liles

2024 Recipient



Ashlea White

2023 Recipient

The Texas Association of Drug Court Professionals Board of Directors approved this award in 2011 to honor Judge Rusty Ladd. This award recognizes an individual on a drug court team committed to the many values possessed by Judge Ladd.

Judge Ladd was a well-respected jurist who demonstrated a unique and magnetic personality as he served his profession, community and others. The Rusty Ladd Scholarship Award will be bestowed to an individual on a drug court team who manifests like characteristics of Judge Ladd.

In awarding this scholarship, TASC recognizes an individual who exhibits the initiative to do charitable work, the courage and heart to reach out to others, and who imparts in people the hope that change is possible for a better life.

Past Recipients:

- 2024 – Keith Liles
- 2023 – Ashlea White
- 2022 – Sara Michelle Barnett
- 2021 – Candace Ligon
- 2020 – Brad Clark
- 2019 – Justin Alexander
- 2018 – Trina Willis
- 2017 – Amy Brown
- 2016 – Linus Okahia
- 2015 – Eloy Fernandez
- 2014 – Mark Faust

Other Awards & Recognition

For Service, Leadership, and Excellence



Julie Turnbull

2024 Hall of Fame



Erin Morgan

2024 Appreciation for Leadership



Shay Rustam

2023 Appreciation for Leadership

The Hall of Fame award was created in 2021 and was prompted in large part by Judge Ruben Reyes's passing and his invaluable contributions to the field of specialty courts. The TASC Specialty Court Ally and Advocacy Award is named after Judge Paul White. Both of these awards are merit-based and not awarded annually. Each year, outgoing TASC presidents are recognized for their commitment and past contributions serving Texas Specialty Courts through their leadership.

Past Recipients:

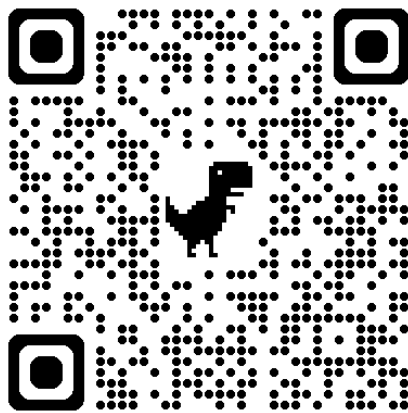
- 2024 – Hall of Fame: Julie Turnbull
- 2023 – Appreciation for Leadership: Erin Morgan
- 2023 – Appreciation for Leadership: Shay Rustam
- 2022 – TASC Specialty Court Ally and Advocacy Award: Judge Paul White
- 2022 – TASC Specialty Court Ally and Advocacy Award: Rep. Trent Ashby
- 2022 – Appreciation for Leadership: Judge Peter Sakai
- 2021 – Hall of Fame: Judge Ruben Reyes
- 2021 – Appreciation for Leadership: Hank Judin

Nominations

Process & Committee

Nominations are now accepted year round. The deadline to be considered for awards distributed during the 2025 annual conference is January 6, 2025. Nominations will be reviewed by the Nominations Committee. The Nominations Committee is chaired by a TASC Board Member and committee members are selected from TASC member volunteers.

Visit the TASC website at www.tasctx.org to nominate someone today!



August 2024