

# The TASC Connection



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## New TASC Lifetime Membership

TASC is now offering a Lifetime Membership option for \$300. As a THANK YOU to all past presidents of TASC, a Lifetime Membership will be given. For all membership options, <http://www.tasctx.org/members.html>.



## 2020 TASC Conference

Mark your calendars for next year's conference in Dallas, April 8<sup>th</sup> – April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020. It will be held at the Omni Hotel, 555 South Lamar, Dallas, TX 75202.

## Tarrant County Veteran's Court

The Tarrant County Veterans Court Program was featured on several news channels on 6/5/2019. Check out the links to several of the articles below!

<http://www.fox4news.com/news/97-year-old-war-vet-speaks-to-tarrant-countys-diversion-court-on-d-day-anniversary>

<https://dfw.cbslocal.com/2019/06/05/fort-worth-d-day-veteran-recalls-carnage-witnessed-beach-littered-dead-people/>

***Mission:***  
*The Texas Association of Specialty Courts (TASC) builds and strengthens Texas specialty courts through collaboration, advocacy and education.*

## Legislative Updates

During the TASC Annual Business meeting in Galveston, a Legislative Committee Report was presented on four pending bills that, if passed, would impact future funding for specialty courts. The 86th Legislature ended in May with the following two bills passing each Chamber, now awaiting signature of the Governor:

SB 346 is a comprehensive court cost reform bill that provides funding for specialty courts through court cost collections as in the past, but with a new distribution formula at both state and local government as follows:

The \$60 Court Cost previously collected on certain alcohol and drug cases pursuant to Article 102.0178, Code of Criminal Procedure, is repealed and in its place, Article 133.102, Local Government Code, is amended whereby all felony and misdemeanor court costs paid to the State are increased with 1.0377% of collections deposited into a designated Specialty Court Account for distribution through Criminal Justice Division grants. Article 134.101, Local Government Code, is created whereby all felony and misdemeanor court costs paid to local governments are increased with 23.8095% of felony court cost collections and 16.2602% of misdemeanor A & B court cost collections are retained locally for deposit into a County Specialty Court Account only to fund specialty court programs established by the Government Code and to be administered by or at the direction of the County Commissioners Court.

SB 1180 as initially filed would impose \$2 cost on all felony and misdemeanor criminal cases solely for funding Veteran Treatment Courts. However, a substitute bill was passed which amends Article 124.007, Government Code, and merely imposed reporting mandates reflecting program completion rates and the amount of grant funding received by each program. SB 1180 will have no funding impact.

### BILLS THAT DID NOT PASS:

HB 4244 amended an existing statute, Article 42A.304, CCP, authorizing Judges to permit offenders to make a donation to “a charitable organization engaged primarily in performing charitable functions in the community in which the defendant resides for defendants under community supervision or for veterans”.

HB 4244 was favorably reported out of the House Corrections Committee on May 1st but never proceeded to the House Committee on Calendars for floor vote in the House.

HB 1243 amended Section 183.051, Tax Code, whereby 1% of revenue collected from Mixed Beverage Taxes would be deposited in the Specialty Court Account (as created by SB 346) to be awarded through the Governor’s CJD grants.

HB 1243 passed in the House by a 137-3 vote and was favorably reported by the Senate Appropriations Committee and placed on the Senate Calendar. Regrettably, though the bill was stalled awaiting a third reading and floor vote where it died notwithstanding sufficient votes to pass in the Senate. If passed, HB 1243 would have provided \$10 million of sustainable annual revenue designated solely for specialty courts, and together with the \$2.1 million from the 1.0377% of felony and misdemeanor court costs paid to the State by SB 346, state funding would have been immediately restored to 2013 levels.

With the exception of the newly created funding mechanism for local retention of court costs paid to local governments into “County Specialty Court Accounts”, the 86th legislature did not provide any increased State funding for specialty court programs. Once again, our programs will be dependent upon the favor of the Governor’s CJD grants in excess of the 1.0377% of court cost collections (\$2.1 million) paid to the State for deposit into a designated Specialty Court Account.

## Drug Court Month Celebrations

### *Bexar County Felony Drug Treatment Court Spring Graduation*



### *Dallas County Commissioner's Court presenting National Drug Court Resolution*

*May 9th Bexar County Family Drug Court graduation. Under Judge Peter Sakai's leadership, the Bexar County Family Drug Court has reunited over 250 families impacting the lives of over 700 children.*



*Judge Hector Garza, court staff, participants, and family members gathered at the Double D Ranch to celebrate Dallas County DIVERT Court Graduates at the Annual Picnic on May 18th. Judge John Creuzot joined us as our guest speaker, as we congratulated the graduates for their accomplishments and wished them a long-drug-free-life. All had a good time.*

*The South Dallas Drug Court celebrated the National Drug Court Month with a bang. Each week the court hosted a mini event to celebrate recovery. They started the month with an ice cream social, partnered with local organizations such as APAA for a night at the movies. The Drug court graduation rounded the month out with food, cake, and a celebration for recovery.*



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## SAMHSA Grant Funds Increase for RISE19

Treatment courts with grants from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) are permitted to use grant funds to attend NADCP RISE19! This year, SAMHSA is not limiting the number of court staff treatment courts can send using grant funds.

In addition, SAMHSA is not holding a grantee meeting in conjunction with the NADCP conference this year. However, SAMHSA's Criminal Justice Team staff is planning to attend this year and will hold a breakout session for SAMHSA drug court grantees that choose to attend. The breakout session will be for project directors only, or their designee.

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## TASC Board Retreat

Your TASC Board and Legislative Committee will meet in August for a Retreat to discuss new strategies for the 87th Legislature in 2020 as we continue pursuit of increased and sustainable funding for our programs. Additionally, the conference committee will meet during this time to start planning for the 2020 conference. The retreat will be held in Huntsville at Sam Houston State University.

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## BJA Launches Opiate Resource Center

America's opioid crisis continues to place a heavy burden on justice systems throughout the country, including treatment courts. To help communities, the U.S. Department of Justice, through the Bureau of Justice Assistance, launched the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program Resource Center.

The online library contains resources for state, tribal and local governments looking to improve their community's response to the opioid crisis.

Visit the resource center at <https://www.coapresources.org/>

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## Send Us Your News!!

We want to hear your news! Do you have anyone you would like to recognize or is your court or program celebrating an anniversary? Or if you would like to write an article related to the field and work we do, we would love to include in the newsletter. Please send submissions to [kimberly.duran@dallascounty.org](mailto:kimberly.duran@dallascounty.org) and



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**We're on the Web!**  
<http://www.tasctx.org>

**Check us out on Facebook!**

## Meet our 2020 TASC President – Judge Chitty



On January 29, 2004, B. Michael Chitty was appointed by Governor Rick Perry to serve as the first Judge of the newly created 422nd Judicial District Court of Kaufman County, Texas. He was elected to a four-year term in November of 2004, and re-elected in 2008, 2012, and 2016. He served as the Local Administrative Judge for Kaufman County from 2013 through 2018.

Prior to his serving as Judge of the 422nd District Court, Judge Chitty was engaged in the general practice of law from 1973 to 2004, representing both plaintiffs and defendants in a broad variety of cases, including probate, real estate, deceptive trade practices, torts, criminal, commercial, construction, family, municipal, water, securities, employment, tax, and bankruptcy.

He is a member of the State Bar of Texas and licensed to practice in all state courts, as well as the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and the U.S. District Courts for the Northern and Eastern Districts of Texas. Judge Chitty has previously served as Special Counsel to the State Republican Party and President of the Kaufman County Bar Association. He is a Life Fellow of The Texas Bar Foundation, a member of the College of the State Bar of Texas, and has received a Presidential Commendation from the State Bar.

In May, 2008, Judge Chitty was the keynote speaker at the 22nd Annual Texas Jail Association Conference, addressing the topic of mental illness and criminal justice. He is a 2010 graduate of the Texas College for Judicial Studies. Judge Chitty is the Kaufman County representative on the Board of Directors of the North Texas Behavioral Health Authority, the local mental health authority for Dallas, Ellis, Hunt, Kaufman, Navarro, and Rockwall Counties; and has served four terms, as Chairman of the Board, and is presently serving as Vice-Chairman. He is also a member of the Terrell State Hospital Board and Pro Bono Advisory Board of Legal Aid of Northwest Texas.

A life-long resident of Kaufman County, Judge Chitty was born and reared in Terrell and graduated from Terrell High School, where he was student body president and salutatorian. He graduated from Southern Methodist University receiving his BBA, with high honors, and Juris Doctor degrees. While at SMU, Chitty was a Student Senator, Chairman of All-Men's Judiciary, a member of the Blue Key national honor fraternity, a Hatton W. Sumners Scholar, and a member of the SMU Law School Admissions Committee.

Judge Chitty is a member of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Terrell where he has served as a lay reader, Vestry member, Good Shepherd Foundation Chairman, Senior Warden, and Good Shepherd School Board member and chairman. He is a member of the Rotary Club of Terrell having served as President and Director, and is a Paul Harris Fellow. He is also a member of the Kaufman Lions Club. Chitty has served as a member of the Charter Revision Committee for the City of Terrell and as Chairman of the Downtown Advisory Board. Other community involvement includes service as the President of the Terrell Alliance for Education and the Arts, Chairman and board member of the Terrell Public Library, a former member of the Kaufman County Historical Commission, former President of the youth baseball program in Terrell, former member of the State Board of Directors of the American Cancer Society, former member of the Ethics Committee at Terrell State Hospital, and member of the Clinical Advisory Board of Mental Health America of Greater Dallas. In 2011, Judge Chitty was the recipient of the Carmen Miller Michael Mental Health Advocate Prism Award.

During his service on the 422nd District Court bench, Judge Chitty has presided over more than 17,000 family, civil and criminal court proceedings. At his request, the 422nd District Court was established as a mental health and drug diversion court in 2010, and Judge Chitty has implemented, supervised, and conducted programs related thereto since its inception. He serves as President and Board member of the Texas Association of Specialty Courts. He is committed to the fair, efficient, and timely disposition of cases, consistent with justice, while affording all citizens the courtesy and dignity they deserve in our courts.

Judge Chitty is married to Elise, his wife of 42 years, and they have three grown children, Lauren, Katie and Michael.