

Lynne Liberato for the Texas Bar Journal: History Revisited

By Lynne Liberato | May 4, 2016

"All records were shattered," proclaimed the Dallas Morning News on January 2, 1925, after Texas Gov. Pat Neff provided a "healthy New Year gift of recognition to the woman barrister of today." Neff had made U.S., Texas, and judicial history by appointing three women to a special court of the Texas Supreme Court.

Ninety-one years later, the Texas Supreme Court Historical Society and its journal will present a reenactment of an oral argument before this "all-woman court" at the State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting in Fort Worth from 10-11 a.m. on Thursday, June 16, 2016. It will demonstrate how the three special justices of the all-woman court decided *Johnson v. Darr*, 114 Tex. 516, 272 S.W. 1098 (1925), an insurance case Texas courts cite to this day. The coordinators of the program are David Beck, chair of the society's fellows program, and Warren Harris, a former president of the society.

The reenactment, which will center on the court's three women justices, is unique because of the society's access to previously unpublished archival documents, original photographs, and family records. Source materials include copies of original pleadings, motions, and correspondence among the Texas Supreme Court Clerk's Office and the justices and parties. To prepare for oral argument, the reenactors will use original party briefs and judicial records that were photographed at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission in Austin.

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