2020 FEWA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Join us April 17-18, 2020 in Houston at the South Texas College of Law for the 2020 FEWA National Conference!

Learn more and register at www.forensic.org
This two-day educational event is intended to **address key topics and issues of importance to attorneys and expert witnesses**. The program features a faculty of 18 outstanding speakers including Chief Justice Nathan Hecht and keynote speaker Benny Agosto Jr., a personal injury trial lawyer in Houston and author of over 30 published works on law topics. Don’t miss this fast-paced program designed for both seasoned experts and beginners, with ample opportunities for interacting with faculty and experts throughout the event.

Earn up to 12.75 hours, including 1 hour of Ethics in MCLE credits. State Bar of Texas MCLE Accreditation Course #174075233

South Texas College of Law Houston  
1303 San Jacinto St,  
Houston, TX 77002

For questions or more information:  
info@forensic.org  
or  
312.981.6780

For registration and event information:  
forensic.org
SPEAKERS & TOPICS
Explore the topics and speakers of the FEWA 2020 National Conference educational program.

April 17 Speakers

Benny Agosto, Jr.
Role of the Expert in American Justice
Benny Agosto Jr., a partner with Abraham, Watkins, Nichols, Sorrels, Agosto & Aziz of Houston, will remind attendees of expert witness duty, emphasizing necessary attributes such as independent and objective assistance to the court and provision of specialized, legally reliable knowledge applicable to a particular subject matter, and more.

Benny is a board-certified personal injury trial lawyer. He has authored more than 30 published works and conducted over 40 presentations on law topics including several addressing expert services. His J.D. is from the South Texas College of Law.

Chief Justice Nathan Hecht
Expert Qualifications, Methodology, and Ethical Performance
Chief Justice Nathan Hecht will discuss the relevant legal precedents and case examples related to the expert’s ethical duties to the court and the participants of presenting truthful and well-supported opinions, as well as the role of the courts as gatekeeper to keep unsupported testimony and unqualified or unethical experts out.

Chief Judge Hecht, 27th Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, is a distinguished legal scholar and longest-serving Member of the Court in TX history. He served as a past Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy Reserve Judge Advocate General Corps. He holds a B.A. degree with honors in philosophy from Yale University, and a J.D. degree cum laude from the SMU School of Law.

Shannon Lang
How Attorneys Dig Up Dirt on Experts
Shannon Lang of Lang and Associates, PLLC will provide answers to an often surprising concern of experts regarding information on an expert’s background or past performance.

Shannon’s practice areas include commercial litigation, community association law and labor & employment law. Her J.D. is from the University of Virginia School of Law, and she has attained bachelor degrees in both biology and sociology and a master’s degree in forensic science.

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Robert Lemus
Communications in the Legal Field

Robert Lemus, senior associate at Hughes Arrell Kinchen LLP will discuss complications and problems that may arise in communications between counsel and experts including such areas as how best to comply with rules of discovery, maintain mutual understanding of the status of litigation, limitations of designation, connection at deposition and trial, and even avoidance of jargon.

Robert specializes in commercial litigation, internal investigation, and consumer protection. His J.D. is from the University of Houston Law Center.

Kelly Prather
Improving your Effectiveness with the Judge and Jury

Learn how to apply storytelling techniques in testimony to educate and inform the factfinder about the subject-matter and your opinions. Our brains are wired to learn easily from hearing stories. Storytelling predates writing.

Ms. Prather is a solo practitioner at The Greenwood Prather Law Firm PC, representing individuals who have been injured by careless and dangerous persons and companies. Areas of practice include oil field and on the job injuries, assault injuries, vehicle incidents, and fires and explosions. Her degrees include a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Texas and a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Houston Law Center.

Joe Jaworski
The Experts Role in ADR

Managing Partner of the Jaworski Law Firm Joe Jaworski will focus on the role of an expert witness in mediation, a preferred way to resolve any dispute even if the entire point of litigation is to prepare for and win at trial, and how expert participation in mediation can help resolve a case.

Joe is a managing partner of The Jaworski Law Firm, headquartered in Galveston, Texas. His bachelor’s from North Carolina’s Davidson College and his law degree is from the University of Texas at Austin.

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Chip Babcock

**Trial Preparation and Performance**

Chip Babcock, a partner at the Jackson Walker law firm in Houston will discuss key aspects of the trial preparation process for achieving the best results by the expert at a jury trial. Chip will reveal ways and means to improve witness performance at trial learned while representing major media defendants, including Oprah Winfrey, Dr. Phil, FOX Entertainment Group, Bill O'Reilly, and Univision.

Chip litigates at both the trial and appellate levels across the United States. He has tried over 100 cases to a jury and argued over 50 appeals. His J.D. is from Boston University School of Law.

Bill Morfey

**Tips on Deposition Preparation Before the Deposition Notice Is Issued**

Spencer Fane law firm partner Bill Morfey will talk about strategies and considerations of the expert witness that will streamline preparation for eventual testimony and help avoid embarrassing or problematic deposition testimony. Mr. Morfey will include real-life examples where good or bad expert performance in a deposition was a key to his success in trial and favorable case settlements.

Bill’s practice includes a broad range of commercial litigation, trial, and arbitration matters, primarily in the construction industry. He is a frequent speaker on the professional standard of care. His J.D. is from the South Texas School of Law.

Senior Federal Judge David Hittner

**A View from the Federal Bench, plus “Ask the Judge Anything”**

Federal Judge Hittner, the no-nonsense Senior Federal Judge for the Southern District will discuss real-world examples of great and not so great expert performances and how they impacted various trials, from his many years on the bench. He will also be engaging the attendees in an interactive discussion of the relevant legal topics of the current day. Following the initial lecture, will be a moderated Q&A session with open questions on topics or issues important to lawyers/expert relationships.

Judge Hittner is a current US District Court Judge and former Captain in the U.S. Army. His J.D. is from New York University School of Law.

Learn more and register at [www.forensic.org](http://www.forensic.org)
RW Bray  
**Expert Ethics – Doing the Right Thing**

R. W. Bray will discuss the ethical responsibilities of an expert and give parallel examples of how the great civil rights leaders had to have the courage to speak the truth even when under extreme pressure to conform with consensus opinions they disagreed with.

Sgt. Bray is a nationally recognized speaker on political and civil rights issues, a First Sergeant in the Air National Guard, a past JAG Corp Senior Paralegal, and has been the opening speaker for a US President.

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Rudy Robinson  
**Preparing for Cross-Examination at Deposition and Trial**

Rudy Robinson, a past president of FEWA’s Dallas chapter and seasoned expert witness will present an exhilarating talk on his experiences dealing with belligerent cross examiners. Attendees will be given examples of unfair tricks and tactics used by aggressive attorneys and suggestions to maintain control.

Rudy is a partner at Austin Valuation Consultants, Ltd., a Texas State Certified General Real Estate Appraiser and a member of the Appraisal Institute specializing in litigation support, expert witness testimony, and consulting on complex and challenging real estate problems.

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James Smith  
**Engagement Letters and Getting Paid**

James Smith, a Shareholder, Crain, Canton & James and six-time speaker at FEWA events will discuss best practices for contractual relationships involving experts, attorneys, and clients. Attendees will learn pro and con steps to help ensure the business relationship remains beneficial to all participants.

Jim’s practice focusses on environmental matters including counseling, supporting transactions, and trying cases. He has a degree in chemical engineering and a JD from the University of Texas School of Law.

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Stephanie Harp
How Attorneys Get You Off Your Game

Sole practitioner attorney Stephanie Harp will provide an overview of cross-examining attorney tactics to establish reduced believability of an opposing expert and use the expert to strengthen their own position in a case. Stephanie’s practice includes commercial and construction litigation.

Stephanie’s J.D. degree is from the University of Houston Law Center.

Debra Norris
Expert Designation

Attorney Debra Norris, a frequent speaker at FEWA events, will discuss the importance of a mutual expert/attorney understanding of the extent and limitations described in an expert designation informing the court what will be testified upon, and pitfalls that may result when a designation is submitted that varies in content to the expert’s understanding of planned testimony.

Debra practices as Debra Norris, P.C. and is both an attorney and electrical engineer. She specializes in the resolution of construction disputes in both oil & gas and chemical industry sectors. She has a J.D from the University of Texas School of Law.

James Smith
Docket Control Order’s and Deadlines

James Smith, a Shareholder, Crain, Canton & James and six-time speaker at FEWA events will provide insight for attendees to the pre-trial processes ongoing in a civil trial that may impact an expert’s performance.

Jim’s practice focusses on environmental matters including counseling, supporting transactions, and trying cases. He has a degree in chemical engineering and a J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law.
John Cahill
Conflicts and Conflict Checks
John Cahill, partner at the Lanza Law Firm in Houston will review best practice concepts for anticipating, avoiding and handling conflict of interest or bias issues arising during the litigation process. The discussion will include examples of when an expert should or should not take a new case and bring up potential bias issues that may arise during an engagement.

John represents architects, engineers, registered professional land surveyors and real estate agents and brokers in professional liability and construction matters. His J.D. is from Baylor University School of Law.

Larry West
Preparing the Expert for Deposition
West Mermis PLLC founding partner Lawrence West will discuss the many issues of this important phase of the litigation process. Larry will present his approach to key preparation areas such as reconfirming the theme of the case, information about and questions anticipated by opposing counsel, a review of key facts, unresolved areas of concern, means of stating opinions, organizing work product or files to be produced, dress, and even rehearsal of tactics to improve video testimony.

Larry practices complex commercial litigation, construction defect litigation, business litigation, insurance defense, and worksite accident. His J.D. degree is from the Southern Methodist University School of Law.

Anthony Spaeth
The Challenge of Being an Expert Witness - How Not to Get Struck
Anthony Spaeth of The Spaeth Law Firm will address unique hurdles facing expert witnesses, including limitations on engagements, file maintenance, and production, report requirements (State and Federal), Certificates of Merit and surviving Daubert/Robinson/Rule 702 Challenges.

Anthony is a specialist in construction law. His J.D. is from the University of Texas School of Law.

Special Panel Discussion by Lawyers & Experts on Expert Ethics
An interactive discussion addressing ethics requirements in attorney/expert relationships.

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