Faculty

Donald Davis Seminar
November 19, 2026
Houston, Texas



Vik Vij

Attorney

Vik Vij is a graduate of South Texas College of Law class of 2009. He was an Assistant District Attorney in Galveston County from 2009-2013. He has practiced criminal defense in the Houston area since then. Vik is the President-Elect of HCCLA and has been a proud member since 2013. He is a partner in the firm Vij and Krell.



Jennifer L. Falk

Attorney

Jennifer L. Falk is a Partner at McCathern Law in Dallas, Texas, recognized for her work in Business & Commercial Litigation, Family Law, and Criminal Defense. Jen is a former prosecutor in both Harris and Dallas Counties. She is Board Certified in Criminal Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, she is a Texas Bar Foundation Fellow, and she serves as Co-Chair of the Criminal Law Section of the Dallas Bar Association. She was named to D Magazine's 2026 Best Lawyers in Dallas list and has been selected to the Texas Super Lawyers list for 2024, 2025, and 2026.



Neal Davis

Attorney

Neal Davis is a top-rated, experienced criminal defense attorney located in Houston, Texas, who handles cases across the state and country. For over 25 years , he has defended clients in all types of matters, including arguing before the Texas Criminal Court of Appeals and appearing as lead counsel in the U.S. Supreme Court. Before opening his law firm, Neal worked as a lawyer for more than ten years with Texas criminal defense legend Dick DeGuerin. Neal's superior qualifications, client service, and record of success have consistently placed him among the top criminal defense lawyers in the United States.



Andy Taylor

Attorney

Andrew Taylor is a native Texan who grew up in Burleson, TX, attended Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth, and earned a BBA in finance, risk management, and business from St. Mary's University in San Antonio. He later received his J.D. from Texas Tech School of Law in 2009. Before moving to Houston in 2012, Andy practiced in Lubbock at a general practice law firm. Andy currently runs a practice that centers on finding justice for the individual, equity for the small business, and practical solutions to complex problems.



Lott J. Brooks III

Attorney

Lott J. Brooks III is a Houston attorney with over four decades of experience in criminal defense. He was a close friend and associate of Donald Davis.

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Loretta Muldrow

Attorney

Loretta Johnson Muldrow has over 40 years experience in criminal defense, handling the most complex cases including Capital Murder. Her career reflects her commitment to public service, legal advocacy, and academic engagement, with a strong focus on criminal justice issues in Texas. Loretta was awarded HCCLA's Unsung Hero award in 2008 and Lifetime Achievement award in 2026.



Diana Olvera

Attorney

Diana Olvera recently retired from the Harris County Public Defender's Felony Trial Division. Prior to joining the Public Defender's Office, she was in private practice, including working alongside Donald Davis and Lott Brooks early in her career. She received her J.D. from South Texas College of Law and a B.A. in Political Science from Southwest Texas State University. Diana is a native of South Texas and bilingual in English and Spanish.



Mark Thiessen

Attorney

Mark Thiessen is a trial lawyer and the Chairman/CEO of the Thiessen Law Firm in Houston, Texas and Aspen, Colorado. Mark is Board Certified in (1) Criminal Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization; (2) DUI Law by the DUI Defense Lawyers Association; (3) DUI Defense Law by the National College for DUI Defense through the American Bar Association; and (4) a Board Certified Advocate in Criminal Trial Law by the NBTA Foundation. Mark earned the American Chemical Society-Chemistry and the Law (ACS-CHAL) Forensic Lawyer-Scientist designation, which is the highest form of scientific recognition available for lawyers. Mark is a frequent legal seminar lecturer, author of numerous published legal articles, and a faculty member for various organizations. Mark is on the Board of Directors for Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association (TCDLA), was the 50th President and on the Board of Directors for Harris County Criminal Lawyers Association (HCCLA) and a Past-President and Charter Member of DUI Defense Lawyers Association (DUIDLA). Mark is a 15-time Texas Super Lawyer and in the Top 100 Super Lawyers in Houston (2017-26). For the past 8 years, Mark has been named to the Top 100 Super Lawyers in all of Texas. Mark has won criminal trials from Misdemeanors to multiple Felony death cases. In 2024, Mark opened a personal injury branch and is looking forward to bringing his trial skills over to fight for the injured. But, better than all of this hard work, Mark treasures that he was supremely lucky to marry Taly and have wonderful adventures with his family.

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John O'Neill

EdD, LCSW-S, LCDC, CAS

Dr. John J. O'Neill's commitment to behavioral health stems from a lifelong love of helping others. He holds a Master of Social Work from Arizona State University and a doctorate in behavioral health, and for more than 35 years he has worked with individuals and families, helping them find their path toward restoration, resilience, hope, and connection. During his sixteen years at The Menninger Clinic, he walked alongside clients seeking hope as they navigated their stories, and that hands-on experience shaped his approach to care: treat everyone with compassion, focus on hope, and sprinkle in some humor.

For more than twelve years, Dr. O'Neill led the mental health program for the Houston Astros and Major League Baseball's Umpire Development Program. Long fascinated by the overlap between mental wellness and athletics, he has come to better understand performance and how we can all benefit from learning to regulate our emotions, stay resilient, and find balance. He has appeared on NPR, ESPN's Outside the Lines, SiriusXM, Great Day Houston, and many local television stations, discussing topics such as hope, recovery, attachment, relationships, and suicide prevention. He has also presented at more than one hundred conferences, where he teaches practical skills and tools people can apply in everyday life.



Sylvia Escobedo

Attorney

Sylvia Escobedo is a seasoned Houston-based criminal defense attorney with over 30 years of courtroom experience, formerly serving as Chief Prosecutor for the Harris County District Attorney's Office. After leaving the District Attorney's Office, Sylvia began representing defendants, which has been her full focus for the past 17 years. With experience on both sides of the system, Sylvia has unique experience in the Criminal Justice System. She currently serves as the Vice President of the Harris County Criminal Lawyers Association.



Kristina Persaud

Attorney

Kristina Persaud is a Houston criminal defense attorney with more than a decade of experience in the criminal court system. Kristina has established herself as a formidable presence in both district and county courts throughout Houston, Harris, and surrounding counties. Kristina is a 2011 graduate of the University of Houston School of Law. She began her career as a prosecutor at the Harris County District Attorney's Office where she served for 10 years, most recently as Chief Prosecutor of the Special Victims Bureau. As a defense attorney, Kristina's unwavering commitment to protecting the rights and liberties of those accused of crimes has earned her the respect of her peers and the gratitude of countless clients. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Harris County Criminal Lawyers Association.

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Bobby Caine

Attorney/TLAP Professional

Bobby Caine received his undergraduate degree from UTEP, where he played football and baseball. He also played professional baseball in Mexico. He attended law school at the University of Texas at Austin. He worked in the oil and gas industry fresh out of law school, but couldn't make it as a good 'ole boy, so he went to work for various State agencies – Texas Attorney Generals' Office, General Land Office, Texas Department of Agriculture, and Texas Water Commission. Unsuccessful as a "righteous politician" or a "humble state employee," he transitioned to private practice in 1991, where he practiced primarily in criminal and family law. Chasing a lifestyle of his "money for nothing . . ." --- disaster soon followed. Recovery from drugs and alcohol returned him to sanity! Before joining TLAP, Bobby was a LCL volunteer for 32 years, and more recently, Defense Counsel for a Veteran's Treatment Court. He is passionate about living life on life's terms --- one day at a time! He now appears as your "humble state employee!"



Staci Biggar

Attorney/HCCLA CLE Chair
Course Director

Staci Biggar is a highly recognized attorney in Harris County. With over two decades of experience, Staci specializes in Criminal law, Mental Health Court, Veterans Court, and Mental Health Probate law. She has received numerous honors, including HCCLA Unsung Hero Award in 2011. She is a member of the National Alliance on Mental Illness and currently serving on the Board of Directors of the Harris County Criminal Lawyers Association. She is the longest serving Board member of HCCLA and the current CLE Chair.