THE INFORMATION EDGE

Current Legal News from Collin County's Curt B. Henderson Law Library

Winter 2026

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Listen & Learn Hours

Our 7th Listen and Learn Hour, on **Thursday, January 7, 2027, 12:30 - 1:30 pm** will address **Divorce, with or without children**.

Our 8th Listen & Learn Hour, on **Friday, January 15, 2027, 12:30 - 1:30 pm** will address **Advance Care**, like Wills and Advance Directives.

An attorney from Legal Aid of Northwest Texas will lead these sessions.

To sign up or for more information, please contact:

lawlibrary@co.collin.tx.us

or Caroline Escamilla, Asst. Law Librarian/Pro Se Coordinator at:

cescamilla@co.collin.tx.us

214-491-4817

Pro Se Clinic

Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas provides legal help for qualifying low-income people on **Thursdays, 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.** in the **429th District Court**

Reminders

Hours of Operation:
Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Payment Policy: **CASH** only
Copies and Forms:
$0.10/page,
rounded down to the nearest dollar
Note: Computers delete downloads and shut off at 4:50 PM

Library Closures

The Law Library will be closed:
Thu, 11/26/26 - Fri, 11/27/26 for **Thanksgiving**;
Thu, 12/24/26 - Fri, 12/25/26 for **Christmas;**
Fri, 01/01/27 for **New Year;**
Mon, 01/18/27 for **MLK Jr. Day**

Contact Info

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Phone: 972-548-4255
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Passing of Judge Curt B. Henderson

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Judge Curt B. Henderson, who passed away peacefully at home on September 21, 2026, following a year-long battle with brain cancer.

Collin County is deeply grateful and honored to have been part of Judge Henderson's legacy. His contributions and service will be remembered with great respect and appreciation.

A memorial service celebrating Judge Henderson's life will be held on Friday, November 6, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. in the Chapel at Prestonwood Baptist Church, located at 6801 W. Park Blvd., Plano, Texas.

Here's the link to his Obituary:
https://ridgemontmemorials.mykeeper.com/CurtHenderson

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and all who had the privilege of knowing and working with him.



A Career of Service: Honoring Judge John R. Roach, Jr. as He Prepares to Retire



After more than a decade on the bench in Collin County, Judge John R. Roach Jr. is preparing to embark on his next chapter: retirement in December 2026. It was an honor and privilege to interview Judge Roach and reflect on a distinguished career defined by public service, leadership, and a lifelong commitment to making a difference.

A devoted conservative, Judge Roach has worn many hats throughout his life, including United States Marine, city councilman, adjunct professor, author, community volunteer, attorney, and judge. Through each role, he has dedicated himself to serving his country, his community, and the citizens of Collin County.

Judge Roach's interest in the law began at an early age. Growing up, he spent much of his childhood in the courthouse alongside his father, former attorney and Judge John Roach Sr. Those early experiences helped shape his aspirations and laid the foundation for a career in the legal profession. He pursued his undergraduate degree at The University of Texas at Austin before earning his law degree from St. Mary's University School of Law.

Before taking the bench, Judge Roach built a diverse professional background that reflected his commitment to service and leadership. He served in the United States Marine Corps from 1988 to 1996, an experience that contributed to his years of public service. Following his military service, he practiced law with Cowles & Thompson, P.C., and later served as managing partner of Roach, LLP. He also served as a Plano City Councilman, gaining valuable experience in local government and community leadership.

In 2007, Judge Roach assumed the bench of the 296th Judicial District Court in Collin County, beginning a new chapter in his career. Throughout his time in the legal profession, he has also shared his knowledge and experience through writing. His published works include Divorce in Peace: Alternatives to War from a Judge and Lawyer and Roach's Texas Rules of Evidence, reflecting his dedication to legal education, thoughtful dispute resolution, and the practice of law. Yet, beyond the titles, accomplishments, and years spent in the courtroom, there is a person whose story extends far beyond the bench.

As Judge Roach approaches retirement, we take this opportunity to look beyond the robe and explore the man behind the title: the experiences that shaped him, the values that guided his career, and the legacy he leaves behind in Collin County. Through this conversation, we hope to gain a deeper understanding of the person behind the public service and celebrate a career dedicated to the law, leadership, and community.

Judge John R. Roach, Jr.'s Responses to our Questions

Career Reflections and Wisdom:

What was your personal decision-making process when facing a tough case?

I listened first. Hard cases usually turn on one fact or one legal issue, and the lawyers will tell you which if you let them finish. Once the arguments were concluded, I looked to the law to guide the decision. I sleep well at night knowing I followed the law and was not persuaded by personal feelings, emotions or anything else.

Looking back, what do you wish you had known on your very first day on the bench?

How much of the job is people. Litigants forget your ruling and remember how you treated them. I would have slowed down more in those early years and spent more time on the person in front of me. The approach to the law stayed the same, but I would have approached the process a bit slower.

What advice do you have to maintain a healthy work-life balance and avoiding burnout?

Set a hard stop and keep a life that has nothing to do with the law or whatever your profession is. The docket never empties, so you have to decide when you're done for the day. Burnout comes from carrying every case home.

Perspectives on the Justice System:

Which trends or changes in the legal profession concerned you the most throughout your judicial career? What trend concerns you currently?

The decline of the jury trial. Fewer cases reach a verdict, and fewer citizens see their own courts at work. Today my concern is public trust. Too many people form an opinion of a court from a headline or social media and never see the record.

How did your view of the law and human nature change over the course of your career?

All most people want is to be heard and treated fairly more than they want to win. Even on their worst day, most are trying to do right by someone. A case may be one of a thousand for the Court, but that case is the one case for the litigant. Every case is important and every person is important.

Post-Retirement Plans:

Are you planning to transition into mediation or a visiting judge?

Mediation, Arbitration, Private Judging and Visiting Judge. After 20 years of deciding cases for people, I have gained an amount of legal knowledge and expertise to be able to be effective in each of these areas.

What do you want your legacy to be after you retire?

I hope everyone who came before me felt heard and felt the process was fair, whether or not they liked the result. That matters more to me than any ruling. Also, the North Texas Veterans Court and the VALOR Program have helped so many veterans in North Texas. I was proud to create these programs and proud of Collin County supporting them.

Any last thoughts you would want our readers to know?

Thank you. The jurors gave up weeks of their lives. The court staff kept the docket moving every day, and the lawyers made me better. Twenty years in Collin County gave me a career I never take for granted, and I owe it to the people I worked beside all across the County. It was an honor to serve you and alongside you.

Texas Elections Laws

We thought our readers would like to know where Texas election laws stand now before casting their ballots in the 2026 midterm.

This article from the Texas Tribune explains what voters need to know before the election including:

1) forms of photo identification that must be presented at the polling location;
2) limitations on voting by mail;
3) curbside voting capability for disabled persons;
4) countywide voting; and
5) the elimination of straight ticket voting and ban on drive-thru voting.

https://www.texastribune.org/2026/10/16/texas-voting-laws-what-to-know-midterms/

Rural Justice Initiative

The Texas Access to Justice Foundation announced that it received funding from the Supreme Court of Texas to launch the Rural Justice Initiative. The initiative will "establish a network of 170 rural legal outposts that will create a sustained legal aid presence in communities across the state."
https://www.teajf.org/news/releases/TAJF-Rural%20Justice%20Initiative.aspx

Celebration of Military Service

The Curt B. Henderson Law Library staff continue to celebrate and acknowledge the many men and women who served our Great Nation. Our very own Assistant Law Librarian - Faith Emerson Miller's ancestral uncle Thomas Emerson served in the Revolutionary War. Thomas was a Patriot who took the oath of fidelity and support in 1778 in Washington County, MD. He was a member of the Maryland Militia, who served as home guard local defense and emergency reinforcement for the Continental Army during critical engagements. After the Revolutionary War, Thomas purchased acreage and a mill in Hampshire County, Virginia. He was granted 50 more acres for his war service. He and his family later moved to Pickaway County, Ohio in 1806. He remained in Ohio until his passing in 1826, and he is buried in the Emerson Cemetery in Pickaway County.



Texas Attorney General Sues OpenAI

An October 23, 2026 Press Release states that Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has sued Open AI Global alleging that OpenAI "has failed to protect Texans, including children, from the many harms of relying on its artificial intelligence chatbot, **ChatGPT**." The Press Release explains: "**ChatGPT** works as a Large Language Model ("LLM") that outputs information based on what it receives from users. Without adequate safeguards, LLMs can output inaccurate or harmful information, without this risk being disclosed to users."

https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/attorney-general-ken-paxton-sues-openai-and-ceo-sam-altman-lying-users-and-harming-texans

New on the Shelf

Federal Criminal Code and Rules - Thomsen Reuters 2026 Revised
O'Connor's Federal Employment Codes Plus 2026-2027
O'Connor's Texas CPRC Plus 2026-2027
O'Connor's Texas Crimes & Consequences 2026-2027
O'Connor's Texas Criminal Codes 2026-2027
O'Connor's Texas Estates Code 2026-2027
O'Connor's Texas Property Code Plus 2026-2027

Legal Humor



"Listen, I sat, I stayed, and yeah, maybe I fudged the books a little, but only because I was told to and I obeyed. I'm a *good* boy! *Good boy!*"