



## 2009 Janet Spragens Pro Bono Award Recipient: Elizabeth Copeland

The Section of Taxation presented its annual Janet Spragens Pro Bono Award to San Antonio lawyer Elizabeth Copeland during a luncheon on January 10 at the Section's 2009 Midyear Meeting. Each year the Tax Section recognizes one or more individuals or law firms that have provided meritorious pro bono service in the representation of low-income taxpayers. The award is intended to encourage pro bono activities by all members through public recognition of the pro bono services of the annual award winners.

With this year's Award, the Tax Section is honoring Elizabeth for her work establishing the first state-wide U.S. Tax Court Pro Bono Program. The program encourages lawyer members of the State Bar of Texas to offer pro bono consultation services to unrepresented taxpayers—who make up a majority of the petitioners who appear before the U.S. Tax Court—at calendar calls, settlement negotiations, and final trial preparation, an often unfamiliar process for taxpayers.

Elizabeth worked closely with the U.S. Tax Court to set up a program in each of the cities in Texas where the court sits. As the point person for that state's

program, Elizabeth coordinates lawyers to appear at calendar call for S case dockets or hybrid dockets in order to provide assistance to pro se petitioners. The lawyers, supervised by Elizabeth at each calendar call location, serve as mediators between the IRS and the petitioners. In addition to these efforts, Elizabeth has generously assisted other state and local bar associations in setting up programs under new Tax Court pro bono assistance criteria.

Elizabeth Copeland is a shareholder in the Texas firm, Oppenheimer, Blend, Harrison & Tate, Inc. Since 1999, she has been an active member of the American Bar Association's Section of

Taxation, and has chaired several subcommittees, including the Low Income Taxpayer Committee's Tax Court Subcommittee. She currently serves as chair of the Texas State Bar Association Tax Section's Pro Bono Committee. She was recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* (2009), and named a "Texas Super Lawyer" in the area of tax law by *Texas Monthly* and *Law & Politics* magazines. She also received mention as one of San Antonio's Best Tax Law Attorneys in *Scene in SA* magazine.

Elizabeth received her J.D. from The University of Texas School of Law, and her B.B.A. with honors from The University of Texas at Austin. ■

### LEADERSHIP CHANGES

## 2009-2010 Leadership Changes

The Chair-Elect of the Section, Karen L. Hawkins, of Oakland, CA, submitted her resignation, effective April 12, 2009, to become director of the IRS Office of Professional Responsibility. The Nominating Committee met and elected Stuart M. Lewis, of Washington, DC, to become Chair-Elect, effective April 12, 2009, for the remainder of the 2008-2009 term. This election was then approved by Council. A new slate of nominees, including the two changes noted below, was submitted by the Nominating Committee and approved by Council. This slate will be voted on at the ABA Annual Meeting in August. The full report of the Nominating Committee can be found on the Section's homepage at [www.abanet.org/tax](http://www.abanet.org/tax).

*Chair-Elect:* **Charles H. Egerton**, Orlando, FL

*Vice Chair:* **Samuel L. Braunstein**, Fairfield, CT  
(Professional Services)