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In 1990, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division (YLD) in conjunction with the Center on Children and the Law established the Child Advocacy Award to honor lawyers for distinguished service on behalf of children. The award recognizes the contributions to the legal profession by child advocates who have actively labored on behalf of children. The award celebrates the often unheralded service that child advocates bring to children and the legal profession.

2008-2009 Winners

Each year two lawyers are honored for their distinguished service on behalf of children. Award recipients are selected based on the individual's personal achievement and commitment to child advocacy. This year's recipients are:

Young Lawyer Category: **H. J. David Ambroz**, Executive Director of the Los Angeles City College Foundation, Los Angeles, California

Lawyer Category: **Barbara Elias-Perciful**, Director of Texas Lawyers for Children, Dallas, Texas

H. J. David Ambroz



Mr. Ambroz is the Executive Director of the Los Angeles City College Foundation, which raises funds for the disadvantaged to attend college, and this fall will launch an innovative Guardian Scholars Program at City College. Mr. Ambroz is a graduate of the UCLA School of Law and Vassar College. Since emancipating from foster care at seventeen, Mr. Ambroz has remained intimately involved with foster care reform efforts. He serves as a Gubernatorial/Supreme Court Appointee to the California Child Welfare Council and as a member of the ABA Commission on Youth at Risk. Mr. Ambroz is a regular contributor to the www.huffingtonpost.com/david-ambroz/ news-website, writing extensively about foster care. He was a founding member of the National Foster Youth Advisory Council (CWLA) and is a member of a SAMHSA Advisory Committee, the CWLA/Lambda Joint Initiative and the Foster Care Work Group per the Youth Transition Funders Group. He has stated that his work is designed to advance his key passion – to remember and give back to the communities from which he comes.

Barbara J. Elias-Perciful



Barbara Elias-Perciful is the Director of Texas Lawyers for Children and also represents abused and neglected children as their court-appointed attorney and/or guardian ad litem. She graduated second in her class from Southern Methodist University School of Law in 1984. Barbara entered private practice and then, after taking a pro bono appointment to represent an abused child in 1993, she chose to leave "big firm life" to start a solo practice focusing exclusively on child abuse issues. Barbara was distressed to see the enormous disparity in resources, training opportunities, and access to mentors and experts available to lawyers and judges in commercial cases and those involved in child protection cases. Thus, in 1995, Barbara founded Texas Loves Children, Inc. (TLC), the nonprofit organization through which she planned and coordinated training programs for judges and attorneys on critical child abuse issues. In 2004, through TLC, Barbara launched the Texas Lawyers for Children Online Legal Resource and Communication Center, which includes a comprehensive child abuse library containing legal, medical, and psychological information, all organized by topic; secure, private communication tools allowing judges and attorneys to discuss best practices and court improvement and share expertise; and a pro bono attorney network that connects children's court-appointed attorneys with mentors in areas such as immigration law. This online center serves over 1300 legal professionals in Texas who handle the cases of over 36,000 children and is positioned to be a national model. TLC replicated its online center model for the State of California, and, through the [Improving Outcomes Network](#), Barbara provides free consultation to other states and organizations interested in creating an online vehicle for sharing best practice information. Additionally, Barbara serves as the Chair of the Texas State Bar Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect and is a member of the Collaborative Council for the Texas Supreme Court's Commission for Children, Youth and Families

Past Recipients

- PAMELA B. BANKERT, Lawson, Weitzen & Bankert, Brewster, MA
- ANDREW BLOCK, The Just Children Program of the Legal Aid Justice Center, Charlottesville, VA
- GAIL CHANG BOHR, Children's Law Center of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN
- HONORABLE FREDERICA BRENNEMAN, State Judge Trial Referee, Hartford, CT
- GLORIA M. BRUZZANO, Department of Education, New York, NY
- FRANK P. CERVONE, Support Center for Child Advocates, Philadelphia, PA
- DAVID COLE, Dallas Count District Attorney's Office, Dallas, TX
- PETER DAUGHERTY, Butler, Wooten, Overby, Cheely, Pearson & Fryhofer, Columbus, GA
- ANTHONY DE MARCO, Suffolk University Law School, Boston, MA
- ABIGAIL ENGLISH, National Center for Youth Law, Chapel Hill, NC
- KENNETH ENGRIGHT, Hawaii Attorney General's Office, Honolulu, HI
- ANA ESPANA, San Diego County Dept. of the Public Defender, San Diego, CA
- MICHAEL FINLEY, Youth Law Center, Washington, DC