

FEBRUARY 2006 BAR EXAM



Semper Fi!

By Lt. Brandon W. Barnett, U.S. Marine Corps

Included here are the remarks that Lt. Brandon Barnett, high scorer on the February Bar exam, delivered to the attorneys inducted into the State Bar of Texas on May 22. For a complete list of those who passed the February Bar exam, visit www.texasbar.com.

Good morning, Your Honors. Or should I say, “May it Please the Court?” I am honored to be able to speak in front of an outstanding crowd — the honorable justices, the deans of the law schools, members of the Board of Law Examiners, the soon to be newly licensed attorneys, and their family and friends.

I would like to start by thanking the Lord Jesus Christ, my savior, without whose grace I could not have even passed the Bar exam nor accomplished anything else that I have in my life. I know that some of my best study sessions for the Bar were when I put down the BAR/BRI books and picked up my Bible. In it, I found inspiration and encouragement that helped me considerably. I would also like to thank my wife, who was actually my fiancée while I was studying for the Bar. I neglected her for eight weeks and I cancelled her birthday, which fell on Feb. 22, the second day of the Bar — so I owe her for that. I would also like to thank Mrs. Molly Shortall, with whom I studied for the Bar during the final two weeks. Molly was pregnant while studying for the Bar Exam and she actually received word that she passed the Bar while she was in labor delivering her baby — so she received two wonderful gifts on the same day. I would also like to thank my family and friends from whom I have always received encouragement. They have repeatedly assured me that I could accomplish anything, and I thank them for that.

Lt. Brandon W. Barnett (above, third from left), the high scorer on the February 2006 bar exam, is pictured with Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson (left), Barnett’s wife, Crystal, and Justice Scott Brister. Barnett received his law degree from Texas Tech University School of Law. He is stationed in Virginia, where he is beginning a four-year service commitment to the U.S. Marine Corps.

Sen. Zell Miller of Georgia wrote a book titled *Everything You Need to Know, I Learned in the Marines*. I believe this book has some application for newly licensed attorneys. In 1883, the Marine Corps adopted the motto *Semper Fi*, which is short for *semper fidelis*, a Latin phrase meaning “always faithful.” It is significant because there are no ex-Marines, only former Marines. A Marine is called on to be always faithful to Country, God, Corps, and Family. Likewise, you never hear someone say that an individual *was* an attorney, or someone *used to be* a lawyer. When we take this oath today, we become attorneys for life. And that is something people will always say about you — your family and your friends will say you are a lawyer and they will look to you for advice.

Therefore, the question becomes, “To what will you be *semper fidelis*? To what will you be always faithful? And as we have

FEBRUARY 2006 BAR EXAM PASS RATES INFORMATION

The table below shows the number of graduates from each Texas law school that took the bar exam for the first time in February, the number that passed the exam, and the percentage that passed.

LAW SCHOOL	TESTED	PASSED	PASS RATE
Baylor	64	62	97%
St. Mary's	26	21	81%
South Texas	83	65	78%
S.M.U.	18	16	89%
Texas Tech	23	17	74%
Texas Southern	26	20	77%
Texas Wesleyan	40	33	83%
U. of Houston	47	37	79%
U. of Texas	37	34	92%
TOTAL	364	305	84%

heard this morning, the state is calling on us to be always faithful to our clients; to be always faithful to justice; to be always faithful to doing what is right; to be always faithful to standing up for what you believe in; to be always faithful to our families; and to be always faithful to the Lord. At the very core of being an attorney is helping people, so we should not be always faithful to chasing the almighty dollar. Although this profession offers certain financial perks, the root of those perks are found in helping others. That is a common theme that has been seen throughout the remarks today. The state is calling on us to help those who cannot help themselves.

My challenge to this group of newly licensed attorneys is to be *semper fidelis* to all of these things and in turn become outstanding attorneys. Go out there and get 'em and *SEMPER FI!*



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