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Foreword for the SMU 2000 Annual Survey of Texas Law

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FOREWORD FOR THE SMU 2000 ANNUAL SURVEY OF TEXAS LAW

*Rick Perry**

THE practice of law, so intertwined with the making of it, is altered by a phenomenon that occurs once every two years: the completion of another legislative session in Austin.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, that tradition has held true to form once again. In the recent 76th legislative session, completed on May 31, 1999, a record 1,622 new laws were passed.

Some of those new laws address arcane legal nuances, such as legislation that eliminates obsolete provisions in the constitution. Others represent sweeping change, impacting virtually every citizen of the state, such as the telecommunications competition bill and the electric restructuring bill. And other new laws tackle emotionally charged concerns, such as the new parental notification law for minors seeking abortions.

As the presiding officer of the Texas Senate, I oversaw much of the unique democratic process that allows men and women of varied backgrounds and philosophies to debate and address the challenges of our time. With great consensus, legislators addressed wide-ranging concerns in public education, public safety, health and human services, and economic development.

The twenty million individuals we call Texans are an extremely diverse and unique people. To serve them is an honor, and quite humbling. But I know that the power of the office I hold is merely on loan from the people of this great state. It is not mine, but theirs. I urge all involved in the practice of law, whether trial court judges, lawyers or legal assistants, to see their calling as similar to that of elected officials: to help make Texas a better place with all due reverence, careful study and humility.

Toward that end, the *2000 Annual Survey of Texas Law*, like the surveys of the past 33 years published by the *SMU Law Review*, is an invaluable resource for the legal profession. It contains an analysis of the numerous new statutes and cases which will prove instrumental to the development of legal precedent. Those who rely on this book of refer-

* Lieutenant Governor Rick Perry was sworn in as Texas' 39th Lieutenant Governor in January of 1999. From 1991 until 1999 he served as the State's Commissioner of Agriculture, and prior to that he served three terms in the Texas House of Representatives. He was raised in the small West Texas town of Paint Creek in Haskell County, graduated from Texas A&M University in 1972, and served in the United States Air Force.

ence will be thoroughly grounded in the law and amply prepared to meet the dynamic, and sometimes complex, needs of their clients.

The goal of the *Survey* is to guide and assist Texas legal practitioners as they negotiate the recent changes in the vast field of law. The articles' authors include recognized and respected judges, academics, and practitioners. The *Survey* provides keen insight into the intent and application of the law. May it serve you well, and the people you serve even more so.

Articles

