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Honorable Terry R. Means Addresses Class of 2008

FORT WORTH, Texas – The Honorable Terry R. Means of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas was the commencement speaker at Texas Wesleyan University School of Law’s spring hooding ceremony on Friday, May 9.

Addressing the topic of decorum within the law, Judge Means told graduates about a graduation ceremony he once attended that lost all sense of decorum due to the many distractions and lack of respect for the occasion. He then described the distinguished elements of the courtroom and the attitudes and appearances that have been upheld by legal practitioners throughout the decades.

“I suggest that these formalities are still in place to demonstrate to ourselves, and to all who enter, that this is a place of importance,” Judge Means said. “There are times and places when good and decent people must take a stand [for decorum]. Where better to start than here at your graduation?”

The ceremony took place at the Will Rogers Memorial Auditorium in Fort Worth. One hundred sixty students were presented with an academic hood in recognition of completing the requirements of a *juris doctor* degree.

Graduate Alexis Hoff received the Equal Justice Award in recognition of her outstanding *pro bono* service during her time at the law school. Hoff accumulated 720 hours of *pro bono* work for the Wesleyan Innocence Project. Graduate Jim Graham received the MacLean Boulware Award for his accomplishments as director of operations for the Wesleyan Innocence Project and as a member of the law school’s mock trial teams.

Interim Dean Cynthia Fountaine, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Vickie Rainwater, and Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Patti Gearheart Turner, presented each candidate with an academic hood, the colors of which are representative of the university and the academic discipline: purple, for law. Texas Wesleyan University President Dr. Harold G. Jeffcoat conferred degrees.

Judge Means received his J.D. from Southern Methodist University School of Law and practiced at the firm of Means & Means in Corsicana, Texas, prior to entering the judiciary. He served as a justice with the Texas Court of Appeals in the 10th Appellate District from 1989-1991 and was appointed to his current position with the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas in 1991 by former president George Bush. He is a past-president of the Eldon B. Mahon Inns of Court, and a member of the State Bar of Texas.

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