



★ TEXAS SUPREME COURT ★ DOLLAR DOCKET

In Texas, 48% of judges and 79% of lawyers say contributions significantly influence judicial decisions. - Texas Supreme Court poll

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Mister Brister:

Perry Appoints Judge With Biggest War Chest

Remember when judicial campaign money just shook confidence in *elected* judges? Now it's an issue with some top judicial appointees, too.

If Governor Perry's sole criteria for judicial appointments was to promote that member of his party who raised the biggest appeals court war chest in recent years, then he would have appointed Scott Brister to:

- Be chief of Houston's 14th Court of Appeals in 2001; and
- Replace Supreme Court Justice Craig Enoch last month.

In the last four elections, no other GOP intermediate appeals judge raised more than the \$243,708 that Judge Brister stockpiled in 2000 to win a contested open seat on Houston's First Court of Appeals. Brister ran again last year as the Perry-appointed chief of Houston's other appeals court, raising another \$62,236 as an unopposed incumbent in that race.

Led by lawyers and law firms that often appear in his court, Justice Brister got 89 percent of the \$305,944 that he raised for these races from attorneys. The top supporters of Justice Brister are five law firms that also gave the other eight Supreme Court justices \$785,061 over the past decade. The four corporate defense firms among them contributed an additional \$150,900 to Rick Perry since he became governor in late 2000.

Judge Brister's Top Boosters Since 1999

Top Brister Donor Sources	Amount To Brister Since '99	Amount To 8 Justices Since 1993	Amount To Gov. Perry Since 2001
Vinson & Elkins	\$23,900	\$282,935	\$52,400
Andrews & Kurth	\$15,900	\$93,610	\$10,000
Fleming & Assoc.	\$15,000	\$8,500	\$0
Baker Botts	\$14,267	\$217,028	\$49,000
Fulbright & Jaworski	\$11,375	\$182,988	\$39,500
TOTAL:	\$80,442	\$785,061	\$150,900

Meanwhile, the two other court justices who will face voters in 2004 filed their first campaign reports of the season. Justice Harriet O'Neill reported \$161,750 in contributions, far ahead of the \$12,000 reported by Justice Steven Smith.

The Dollar Docket

Cases heard by the Texas Supreme Court in November and the corresponding contributions to justices from the parties and/or attorneys.

November 5, 2003

George Alexander v. \$250
Lynda's Boutique \$0

Garland Community Hospital v. \$93,600
Debi Rose \$0

Southwest Bank v. \$750
Information Support Concepts, Inc. \$0

November 12, 2003

Harris County v. \$0
Faye Sykes \$0

In re Entergy Corp. \$25,064

In re Kansas City Southern Ind. \$1,758

November 19, 2003

Lakeshore Utility Co v. \$62,375
TNRCC \$0

In re Houston Northwest Partners \$95,610

Consolidated with
Gonzalez v. \$1,000
Reliant Energy \$261,328

In re Adel Sheshtaw \$0

Grand Total for November: \$539,977

Fulbright & Jaworski was a top source of O'Neill's political money, giving her \$5,500 on the same day in October that her court heard oral arguments involving Fulbright client Diamond Shamrock. O'Neill also received \$5,000 from both Baker Botts and Godwin Gruber, which each had clients face Supreme Court oral arguments in November.

In this close-knit family, neither the governor, nor the justices nor the law firms object when judges take political contributions from lawyers and litigants with cases in their courtroom. ■