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ANGELINA LAWYERS RECOGNIZED AS TOPS IN TEXAS

By Christine S. Diamond - *The Lufkin Daily News*

Angelina County holds claim to three of the newly announced "Texas Super Lawyers."

Baylor University Law School graduates George E. Chandler, Reich Chandler and Clayton E. Dark Jr. were ranked, by their peers, among the top 5 percent of those practicing law in Texas. George Chandler ranked among the top 100 lawyers in Texas, and Dark was one of only 85 sole practicing attorneys honored.

Dark, 56, has dedicated the past 30 years, since passing the bar exam in 1973, to practicing civil trial law.

"I had an interest in government to begin with," Dark said of his career choice. But several experiences he encountered as a teenager were what sparked his desire to "help people" and guided his choice into law.

"I saw people I thought were mistreated because they didn't have representation," he said.

A member of the American Board of Trial Advocates, Dark has previously served as president of board's East Texas chapter and as director of its Texas chapter. Currently, Dark is serving as secretary/treasurer for the bar association for the federal Eastern District of Texas.

The Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers has also recognized Dark's legal skills in general civil practice, personal injury and insurance defense.

George Chandler, 64, and his son Reich represent people in personal injury, commercial and insurance litigation. Currently, George is serving as the 2003 Texas Trial Lawyers Association president. Last year his son served as East Texas Trial Lawyers Association president.

Although their office is based in Lufkin, the father-and-son team is familiar with courtrooms across the nation. Among their legal accomplishments cited by Law and Politics Media survey team, the Chandlers in 1999 won the largest personal injury verdict in Angelina County history.

While the Chandlers have made the practice of law a family tradition, George was the son of two teachers. Graduating from Victoria High School, George said he decided at the time to study law and dedicate himself to helping the little man caught in the corporate cogs.

"For some reason I always felt the little guy never had a chance," George previously told The Lufkin Daily News. "He was paid in script that was only good at the company store and if something went wrong he just had to accept it. The little guy got the short end of the stick."

The triumphs that have followed in his wake George attributes to his love and passion for what he does and "a deep abiding belief in jury trial."

George passed the bar exam in 1963 and returned to East Texas in 1971 to practice law.

"Growing up as the son of a trial lawyer, I always wanted to follow in my father's footsteps," said 36-year-old Reich Chandler.

Reich passed the bar exam in July 1992 and moved to Houston where he practiced with one of Texas' largest law firms, Andrews & Kurth. Three years later the younger Chandler returned to Angelina County.

"I moved back to Lufkin to learn from and practice with my father, and to represent people, as opposed to corporations," Reich Chandler said.

The top 5 percent Texas Super Lawyers were determined by Law and Politics Media Inc. through a survey dispersed to more than 65,000 Texas attorneys.

"We asked attorneys to vote for the best lawyers they have personally observed in action -- whether as opposing counsel, as co-counsel, from first-person observation in the courtroom, etc." stated the publishers of Law and Politics Media Inc. "Our intent was to discourage lawyers from voting for others based purely on reputation."

Out of the 20,000 nominations returned, surveyors immediately disqualified candidates who only had votes from their co-workers.

"We also kept track of who voted for whom. We did this to watch for what we call back-scratch voting -- two lawyers voting for each other. If we noticed a disproportionate number of back scratch votes, we eliminated that lawyer from our list of candidates," Law and Politics Media Inc. publishers said.

Candidates were then divided into their special areas of practice such as construction, bankruptcy, real estate, tax, anti-trust litigation and criminal prosecution.

The results were published in the [November issue of Texas Monthly magazine](#).

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