

JULY/AUGUST 2026

THE Houston LAWYER

HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION

INSIDE

The Texas Business Court
Its Purpose, Origins, and a Look
Back on Its Inaugural Year

Welcome to the New Bar Year
An Interview with HBA President
Gregory C. Ulmer

Signing Principle Into Practice
Five Lessons from the Declaration at 250



MEET YOUR NEW HBA PRESIDENT

Gregory C. Ulmer



Gregory C. Ulmer

Tell us about your family.

GREGORY: I'm lucky to have a wonderful family—my wife Sandy and our 11-year-old son, Nicholas, who is a sixth grader at the St. John's School. They're my foundation, and they've shaped how I think about leadership—especially the importance of service, balance, and showing up for others. As for my immediate family, I am the second oldest child of four, all of whom live in the Houston area with their spouses. I am also fortunate to have my mother here in Houston, as well.

Where did you go to college and law school? What prompted you to pursue a career in law?

GREGORY: I am a proud graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Houston Law Center. I finished my last semester of law school at the University of Texas Law School while clerking at the Texas Supreme Court.

I didn't choose the law because I had a single defining moment—it was more of a gradual pull. I've always been interested in how decisions get made and how conflicts get resolved. The law gave me a framework

Mentorship isn't just about advice—it's about creating opportunities for others. That's something I take seriously in my practice and in my life.

for both. But what's kept me in the profession is the people—the clients who trust me with important problems and my colleagues I work alongside to solve them. That combination of challenge and purpose made it the right path for me.

What are your areas of specialty and what firms have you worked with in your legal career?

GREGORY: I am a partner at BakerHostetler, where I serve as the deputy chair of the National Litigation Practice Group, as well as the leader of the National Product Liability and Toxic Tort Practice Team.

Over my three decades of practice, my practice consists of civil defense litigation with an emphasis on defending products, product manufacturers and distributors, as well as premises owners, in areas of product liability, premise liability, wrongful death, catastrophic injury, and toxic exposure.

Who are your mentors?

GREGORY: I've had the benefit of many mentors over the years who have opened doors, given me opportunities, and provided me with advice that has shaped my career and personal life. Those relationships left me with a clear obligation: to do the same for others. Mentorship isn't just about advice—it's about creating opportunities for others. That's something I take seriously in my practice and in my life.

What are some of your hobbies and interests?

GREGORY: My hobbies and interests primarily center around my family. Whether it's traveling and vacationing, grilling in the back yard, or coaching my son's sports teams, I cherish every opportunity to spend time with the people I care about.

Are you involved with other professional or community organizations?

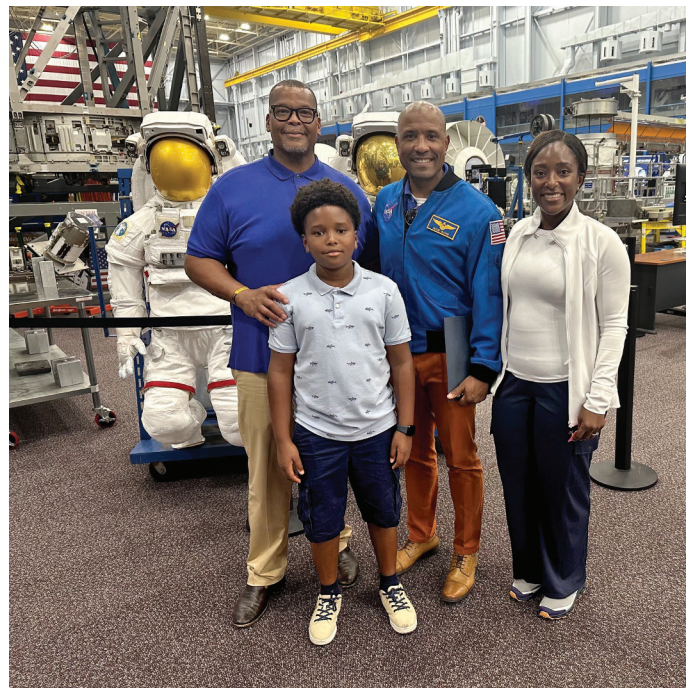
GREGORY: Yes. Community and professional service have been a consistent priority for me. In addition to my involvement with the Houston Bar Association, I stay engaged with several legal and civic organizations that focus on mentorship, professional development, and expanding opportunities and access to justice to those who are traditionally underrepresented. I remain particularly interested in programs and initiatives that support and empower boys and young men of color, such as the 100 Black Men of Metropolitan Houston.

What are some ways HBA members can make the most of their membership?

GREGORY: The real work of the Houston Bar Association occurs in our sections and committees. Accordingly, HBA members can make the



Gregory and Sandy Ulmer.



Gregory Ulmer, his wife Sandy, and their son Nicholas, pose with astronaut Victor Glover, the first Black astronaut to complete a long-duration stay aboard the International Space Station.

If attorneys view the Bar as just “one more thing,” it’s easy to opt out and not make the time. But when viewed as a strategic investment in their practice, reputation, profession, and the community, involvement in the Bar is one of the highest-return uses of a lawyer’s time.

most of their memberships by getting involved in section and committee work. Be intentional about section and committee involvement by joining 1–2 sections aligned with your practice (Litigation, Appellate, Corporate Counsel, etc.) Lawyers can also add one “stretch” committee (ABC, Professionalism, etc.) to broaden their network and profile. Lastly, volunteer for moderator roles, CLE planning, or speaking slots. These activities create visibility fast. Section and committee work builds relationships and reputation.

One of the more common challenges for attorneys engaging with Bar activities outside of their practice is that their time is limited. Why should they make time for the Bar?

GREGORY: If attorneys view the Bar as just “one more thing,” it’s easy to opt out and not make the time. But when viewed as a strategic investment in their practice, reputation, profession, and the community, involvement in the Bar is one of the highest-return uses of a lawyer’s time.

The Bar is one of the few investments that pays dividends across every dimension of a lawyer’s professional life.

It strengthens their practice.

The Bar is a force multiplier. It expands networks, deepens referral

relationships, and provides access to judges and peers in ways that reading cases or attending CLE alone cannot. Those relationships translate into better advocacy and better outcomes for clients.

It enhances their credibility.

Active Bar involvement signals professionalism, commitment to the rule of law, and investment in the legal community. That reputation matters—with judges, clients, and other lawyers.

It is where lawyers can have real impact.

The Bar allows lawyers to give back—through pro bono work, improving access to justice, mentoring younger lawyers, and helping shape the future of the profession.

What is your message to HBA members as we head into a new Bar year?

GREGORY: As we head into a new Bar year, I want to start with a simple word: thanks.

Our members are the lifeblood of our organization, and the Houston Bar Association is only as strong as its members. This year, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to build on the HBA’s foundation and legacy of service to the community.

So my message this year is simple:

Stay engaged. Whether it’s a section meeting, a CLE, a pro bono clinic, or a committee project—your participation matters.

Invest in each other. Reach out to a young lawyer. Reconnect with a colleague. Be intentional about mentorship and sponsorship.

Lead through service. Our profession carries a unique obligation to our community. The HBA is one of the most powerful platforms we have to make a difference.

I’m honored to serve alongside you this year. I’m excited about what we can accomplish together. Let’s get to work. 🙌