Frank A. St. Claire

The Real Estate, Probate and Trust Law Section of the State Bar of Texas is proud to announce that Frank A. St. Claire has been awarded the Texas Real Estate Lawyer Lifetime Achievement Award for 2008. This award will be no surprise to anyone who has an awareness of Frank's achievements, many of which are described below. And as the author of this brief biography of Frank's achievements, I am particularly proud to see Frank receive this award that he so richly deserves.

Frank's college education was at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where after first majoring in theoretical mathematics and then philosophy, he graduated with a degree in business from MIT's Sloan School. He then trained as an actuary in Boston, and subsequently went to NYU Law School, where he was an editor on the Moot Court Board and the first 1L ever elected President of the Student Bar Association.

Upon graduation from law school in 1975, Frank joined the author of this biography, then a solo practitioner in the area of commercial real estate law. After two and one-half years, Frank and I became partners and our law firm expanded to five attorneys, all practicing commercial real estate law. By 1980, Frank had utilized his skills in computer programming to design a word processing and accounting program for our 5-person law firm that was substantially better than the word processing and accounting program that was being used by the large law firm that I joined in 1981. After I departed for that large law firm, Frank elected to continue practicing in his own specialty law firm, which through his efforts and ability he built into a firm that was well known nationally and that continued for almost two decades.

During Frank's law career, he has remained active in CLE speaking on topics such as usury, condominiums, non-recourse loans and carve-outs, synthetic leases, workouts, letters of intent and of course computer and Internet topics. In addition, Frank is a past course director of the State Bar Advanced Real Estate Law Course and a past chair of the University of Texas Mortgage Lending Institute. He has authored over 100 published articles, two books, over half a dozen law journal articles with several citations to them by the Texas Supreme Court, and two books on real estate and condominium law. And his service to the Real Estate, Probate and Trust Law Section (REPTL) has been monumental, both in his serving as its Chair during the Section's 1998 - 1999 Section year and in his single handedly having created the REPTL Website. It was due to Frank's vision and initiative that the REPTL web site provides information for REPTL members, including of course free CLE articles and materials and electronic delivery of the Reporter to the Section's members.

Frank has been listed for many years in THE BEST LAWYERS IN AMERICA and WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA and was one of the first attorneys Board Certified in Commercial Real Estate Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Texas Monthly named him one of Texas's Superlawyers, and D Magazine named him one of the 250 Best Lawyers in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. He was one of the youngest lawyers ever elected to the American College of Real Estate Lawyers, where he was the founding chair of the Practice Technology Committee; and he has also been a member of the American College of Mortgage Attorneys.

Most recently, Frank has expanded into other business endeavors, helping to launch several companies, including a digital signature encryption company and a wireless encryption company. And for recreation, he is investigating number theory and attempting to reconcile the Big Bang Theory of the origin of the Universe without the use of either string theory or an early inflationary period (a prize goes to the REPTL member who can explain what that means).

Frank's wife Mary says that whenever she asks him if he will really grow up, his answer is "never". For the good of both REPTL and our community at large, let's hope that my good friend is true to his word.

Jim Wallenstein
Dallas, Texas