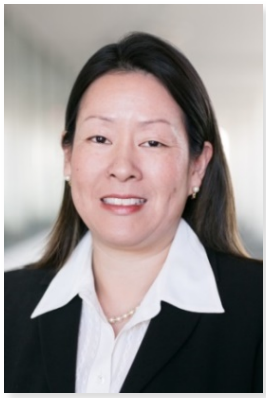
In the Section



Update From the Chair

By Hope Shimabuku

Recently, flags flew at half-staff in remembrance and honor of John Glenn, one of America's first astronauts. In 1962, Glenn became the first American to orbit the Earth, paving the path for future space exploration and scientific discoveries in space.

Born in Cambridge, Ohio, he served as a United States Senator from Ohio from 1974–1999. He is a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Congressional Space Medal of Honor, and NASA's Distinguished Service Medal. Glenn served as a fighter pilot in World War II and Korea, and retired as a Marine Corps colonel.

In 1998, 36 years after his first space flight, Glenn returned on his second mission to space to explore the effects of spaceflight on the elderly. He was 77 years old, making him the oldest astronaut and person to fly in space.

Just as Senator Glenn advanced the study of space science, NASA, through space exploration, has brought forth **many innovations** that impact us daily, such as memory foam, insulation, ribbed swimsuits, portable cordless vacuums, water filters, and even recreational water guns.

In 1998, Sen. Glenn became the oldest person to fly in space at 77.

In a similar vein, Texas inventors are moving the innovation ecosystem forward by submitting over 20,000 patent applications each year. In fact, Reuters **ranked the University of Texas System** the fourth most innovative university in the world in 2016. The UT System filed 941 patent applications between 2009–2014 alone.

In November 2016, the University of Texas at Austin named **Dr. Jonathan Sessler** the 2016 Inventor of the Year and **Dr. Hal Alper** the 2016 Emerging Inventor of the Year. Dr. Sessler conducts research to design and tailor molecules for medical and technological purposes. As an inventor, he has over 75 issued or allowed United States patents. Dr. Alper is a leader in the fields of metabolic engineering and synthetic biology, conducting research to revolutionize and redesign the fabrication of existing biological systems.

Like the pioneering work at the University of Texas by inventors like Dr. Sessler and Dr. Alper, Texans throughout the state are inventing new and groundbreaking ideas. As I mentioned in our last newsletter, some of those inventors do not have the means, ability, and know-how to bring those ideas and innovations alive. Therefore, I encourage you to volunteer as a pro bono attorney for **Texas Accountants and Lawyers for the Arts**, the pro bono organization servicing the Texas and Louisiana communities. You can find the attorney volunteer form at **http://www.tfaforms.com/351526**.

Furthermore, I am proud to announce two upcoming pro bono projects organized by the Pro Bono Tour Committee: (1) a one-day IP Workshop in Corpus Christi on January 21; and (2) a 2.5 day IP Workshop in the Rio Grande Valley area on March 23–25. Both of these pro bono projects will service communities that normally do not have IP resources or attorneys readily available.

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please feel free to reach out. I look forward to working with you to continue to serve the Texas innovation community.