

DARLENE PAYNE SMITH RECOGNIZED AS A 2019 TEXAS TRAILBLAZER

HOUSTON – October 10, 2019 – Darlene Payne Smith, shareholder and mediator with Houston-based Crain Caton & James, was recognized as a 2019 Texas Trailblazer by *Texas Lawyer* for her work defending elderly and disabled people against financial exploitation and abuse.

Smith's passion for protecting this large and increasingly vulnerable population developed after hearing from countless Baby Boomers, many of whom live alone and spend a lot of time online, who have been victimized. Her work has resulted in criminal prosecutions and the recovery of stolen assets and has made her a prominent expert on elderly exploitation. She co-authored an article with former Prosecutor and now Judge Claudia Laird, on Criminal Aspects of Guardianship that appeared in the *Community Property Law Journal* and was subsequently quoted in a Texas Supreme Court opinion.

"I have seen so much abuse, even by family members," said Smith. "It's becoming an epidemic."

Smith represents fiduciaries and beneficiaries in trial and appellate courts across the State of Texas in matters relating to probate, guardianship, trust administration and litigation. Because of her knowledge and skill, Smith is often sought to help resolve disputes or to improve the knowledge of fellow attorneys. She is a frequent speaker for the State Bar and other resources and serves as an adjunct professor at South Texas College of Law. She is a co-author of the Texas Jury Charge publication for Probate and Trust and a continuing member of the Pattern Jury Charge Committee.

Smith has been honored many times over the years for her accomplishments, including being selected to the 2006-2011 and 2014-2018 Texas Super Lawyers lists by Thomson Reuters.

Texas Trailblazer is the 2019 inauguration of an annual publication recognizing legal professionals who have made a significant impact on the practice, policy and technological advancement in their field. The full list of winners can be viewed [here](#).

Crain Caton & James provides legal counseling and client-focused solutions locally and around the world. Their attorneys are recognized for their contributions to the legal community, their practical expertise, and their legal scholarship by contributing to standard legal texts and presenting papers and speeches to lay and legal audiences.