

Law school hosts career seminar

By Natalie Worthen/Staff Reporter

The Criminal Trial Lawyer's Association sponsored the 12th annual Career Seminar Saturday at the Texas Tech School of Law. The event featured speakers from several areas of criminal law.

Robert Nigh, criminal defense attorney for Timothy McVeigh, was a guest speaker. Other speakers included David Guinn, private criminal defense attorney; Helen Liggett, from the federal public defender's office; Tanya Pierce, from the U.S. attorney's office and Joe Carrico, of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Nigh said representing criminals was a stressful but meaningful job.

"It is stressful when you hold your client's life in your hands," Nigh said. "We have to choose very carefully the information we believe in these types of situations and what we do with it."

Nigh said an important aspect of criminal defense is informing the public

so they will not have a biased opinion.

"There is a suggested obligation as a defense attorney that justice doesn't operate on a slanted scale on highly publicized cases," he said. "Bad cases make bad law."

Nigh said the McVeigh case, although difficult, was a learning experience.

"The impact of what happened is something I do not believe can be overstated," he said.

Nigh said his job was satisfying and he sometimes believed he was making a difference for a client or a whole group of people.

"My job has been very rewarding," Nigh said.

Michele Tapia, vice president of the CTLA and a second-year law student from Dallas, said the event was beneficial to students because it covered varied areas for criminal law.

"People go to the seminar and are more aware of the different areas, helping them to make decisions when they graduate," she said.

Guinn said the seminar gives law students the opportunity to interact with professionals who are doing what the students are aspiring to do.

"The seminar is good for anybody," Guinn said. "You listen to people who have been in the work force for a while and learn as much from their scar tissue as you can."

Melinda Thompson, a first-year law student from Island Village, said she enjoyed listening to the speakers to gain insight on the deviations that may occur in a case.

"I think Nigh revealed things the public doesn't usually get to hear," Thompson said. "I think it's important to talk about the deviations that happened because most people don't realize that happens all the time."

Thompson said most of the public is biased and has a general negative opinion of criminal defense attorneys.

"They don't understand the government is flawed and unethical in many ways," Thompson said.