

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Music copyright, technological shifts and Latin music are hot topics at Houston World Intellectual Property Day celebration

Event at UH Law Center will bring together lawyers, scholars, and musicians for discussion on latest trends and legal issues.

April 23, 2015 – When does sampling by music artists become copyright infringement? This will be one of the subjects to be covered at the World Intellectual Property Day celebration on Friday, April 24 at the University of Houston Law Center (UHLC).

“The Musical Flavors of Houston” will examine how technological innovations and other issues have impacted copyright law in the music industry, said UHLC Professor Michael A. Olivas, leader of a panel discussion at the event.

The greater event has been organized as a collaboration among the Law Center’s Institute for Intellectual Property and Information Law ([IPIL](#)) and a volunteer group of local intellectual property law attorneys. The local attorney group is led by Bill Ramey of the firm [Ramey & Browning](#).

“This will be a very unusual and interesting program for UHLC,” Olivas said. “Our panel is planned as a general discussion of current musical trends in Houston, with particular emphasis upon Latin music. Houston is almost 40% Latino, with a dozen Spanish language commercial radio stations. We believe that local attorneys will find this of interest, and have also invited non-lawyer groups such as students and community members. A member of the Grammy-winning Tejano group La Mafia will also attend, and participate informally.”

Olivas, the William B. Bates Distinguished Chair of Law at UHLC, is also the host of [“The Law of Rock and Roll,”](#) a public radio program on the Albuquerque, NM, National Public Radio station KANW, where as “the Rock and Roll Professor” he reviews legal developments in music and entertainment law.

“These issues are constantly in play,” Olivas said, pointing to recent copyright infringement flaps involving popular recording artists Pharrell Williams, Sam Smith, and Tom Petty.

“Many people have heard about the interesting cases that arise from popular music in court—artists copying from others’ work, rap lyrics being used in criminal proceedings, and the fast-moving business issues about streaming music and delivery systems. We have assembled some interesting viewpoints and personalities, and we think people will be impressed with the thoughtful program,” he said.

Dr. E. Michael Harrington, music business department chair at SAE Institute in Nashville, will give the keynote speech, “Copyright Myths and Musicology: How copyright assumptions are almost always wrong and what can be done about it?” [Harrington](#) will discuss some of the broader issues at play, including claims of “misappropriation” by musical artists over the years.

Following Harrington’s talk, Olivas will moderate a panel discussion on music law and professional responsibility issues for lawyers who represent clients in the music industry.

Scheduled panelists are: Ezequiel “El Cheque” Gonzalez, program director of Liberman Broadcasting Inc. and a popular broadcaster on Houston radio stations [LaRaza](#) 98.5 FM and KTJM 103.3 FM; Yocel Alonso, a UHLC adjunct professor and Houston entertainment lawyer; and Justen Barks, an entertainment lawyer with the Houston intellectual property firm [Craft Chu](#).

“We’re trying to leave lots of room for discussion,” Olivas said.

The event will be held from 2 p.m. to 4:45 p.m., with a reception immediately afterward.

World IP Day is sponsored by the World Intellectual Property Organization ([WIPO](#)) each year on April 26. In the U.S., events take place during the week leading up to that day in various host cities around the country. The U.S. events are often in collaboration with the American Intellectual Property Law Association ([AIPLA](#)) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office ([USPTO](#)).

For more information on the UHLC event and to register, click [here](#).

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About the University of Houston Law Center

The [University of Houston Law Center](#) is the leading law school in the nation's fourth-largest city. Founded in 1947, it is a top-tier institution awarding Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees. The Law Center is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools.