In response to your blast e-mail request, here you go.

        As a federal judge, I too am concerned about the vanishing jury trial and with it the vanishing trial lawyer.

        I, and some of my colleagues, have for some time included in our orders the strong suggestion that young lawyers on a case participate in the court hearings and trials.  (Even then, the senior partner sometimes refuses the hint.)  Clearly more needs to be done.

        Of course, the College has a tool readily at hand and that is the National Trial Competition.  Unfortunately, that exercise does not replicate the real-world experience.  For example, it is more of a speech contest than it is an actual real-life trial experience.  There is no scoring for successful arguments on motions; no scoring for effective use of visuals; and the coaches at the colleges have a different goal than to replicate the skills of a real-life trial lawyer.  I have suggested efforts be made to make this wonderful program more reflective of the real world, understanding that we need to compromise and work with the Texas Young Lawyers Association.

        The real area where effort is needed is in the law schools.  As you know, there is currently a strong push for a different curriculum in the law schools that is more reflective of producing lawyers who know what to do once they graduate.  This is especially so because the larger law firms are no longer mentoring as in the past.  Some law schools are now offering more clinic programs that allow students to intern.  I urge you to consider the efforts by the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (IAALS) working with changing law school curriculums, as well as publications on limiting motion practice.

        Locally, some of the law firms have “loaned” their young lawyers to the county prosecutor for trial experience.  Criminal cases still go to trial in contrast to civil cases.

        These are just a few ideas off the top of my head.  Happy to talk further.

