

# GEORGIA DEFENSE LAWYERS ASSOCIATION FALL BOARD MEETING

October 22, 2011  
Grove Park Inn  
Asheville, North Carolina

## MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by President Haas at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 22, 2011 at the Grove Park Inn, Asheville, North Carolina.

Those present were: **Officers:** President Mel Haas of Constangy Brooks & Smith, Macon; Executive Vice President Lynn Roberson of Swift Currie McGhee & Hiers, Atlanta; Secretary-Treasurer Ted Freeman of Freeman Mathis & Gary, Atlanta; and Immediate Past President Bubba Hughes of Callaway Braun Riddle & Hughes, Savannah. **Vice Presidents:** Hall McKinley of Drew Eckl & Farnham, Atlanta; Kirby Mason of Hunter Maclean, Savannah; and Peter Muller of Goodman McGuffey Lindsey & Johnson, Savannah. **Board of Directors:** Sally Akins of Ellis Painter Ratterree & Adams, Savannah; Craig Avery of Cowser & Avery, Athens; Lance Greene of McNatt Greene & Peterson, Vidalia; Rusty Gunn of Martin Snow, Macon; Dart Meadows of Balch & Bingham, Atlanta; Brian Moore of Drew Eckl & Farnham, Atlanta; Jeff Ward of Gilbert Harrell Sumerford & Martin, Brunswick; and Jamie Weston of Trotter Jones, Augusta. **Past Presidents:** Staten Bitting of Fulcher Hagler, Augusta, Salty Forbes of Forbes Foster & Pool, Savannah; and Bob Travis of Bryan Cave, Atlanta. Also present were Education Committee chair Wayne Melnick and Executive Director Jennifer Davis. President Haas called the meeting to order. Before beginning, representatives of the Grove Park Inn gave a plaque to President Haas recognizing the GDLA's long commitment to meetings at the Grove Park Inn. On behalf of the GDLA, President Haas gratefully accepted the plaque.

Upon the departure of the Grove Park Inn representatives, a motion was made and dually seconded to approve the April, 2011 Spring Board Meeting minutes along with the June, 2011 Annual Meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Jennifer Davis presented a chart showing the attendance by each of the Board members over the course of the last three years, which will be shared with the Nominating Committee as they consider Board/officers positions in June. Jennifer asked Board members to verify their listing, and to report any corrections. On behalf of Warner Fox, Jennifer advised that the Association currently has 598 members.

The following individuals were then proposed for membership and unanimously accepted:

	<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Firm</b>	<b>Years Practicing</b>
1.	Adkisson, John E., III	Drew Eckl & Farnham, LLP	4
2.	Branch, Matthew Francis	Bendin Sumrall Ladner, LLC	4
3.	Byrd, Ben M.	Friend Hudak & Harris, LLP	7
4.	Dominy, Charles A.	Hall Booth Smith & Slover, P.C.	7
5.	duToit, Anne Marie	Drew Eckl & Farnham, LLP	3
6.	Florio, Ryan	Buckley & Brown	2
7.	Galis, Allan C.	Hunter Maclean Exley & Dunn, P.C.	1
8.	Green, Frederick R.	Goodman McGuffey Lindsey & Johnson	17
9.	Holdges, Lawanda N.	Ashe, Rafuse & Hill, LLP	9
10.	Ivey, Randall J.	Moore Clarke DuVall & Rodgers	4
11.	Kalfus, Shawn N.	Freeman Mathis & Gary LLP	10
12.	Kopaczewski, Karisa	Carlock, Copeland & Stair, LLP	2
13.	Koura, Catherine	Stone & Boehm, P.C.	10
14.	LaDouceur, Todd Michael	Galloway Johnson Tompkins Burr & Smith	16
15.	Lessinger, Howard M.	McLain & Merritt, P.C.	34
16.	Lowery, Kristi L.	Dillard & Lowery, LLC	4
17.	Murdison, Andrew	Fulcher Hagler, LLP	1
18.	Reeder, Matthew Lee	Galloway Johnson Tompkins Burr & Smith	3
19.	Smith, Sarah	Drew Eckl & Farnham LLP	1
20.	Steedman, Ann Cox	Hall Booth Smith & Slover, P.C.	3
21.	Stone, Andy	Moore Clarke DuVall & Rodgers	4
22.	Walker, Matthew	Drew Eckl & Farnham, LLP	5
23.	Whitlock, Christopher	Carlock, Copeland & Stair, LLP	19
24.	Willis, David W.	Vernis & Bowling of Atlanta, LLC	12

Dart Meadows presented the Membership Committee report. A lengthy discussion was had concerning attracting new members to the Association and, in particular, younger lawyers. It was noted that there had been discussions for a number of years over having a Younger Lawyers Section of the GDLA, but this had never gotten off the ground. Brian Moore commented that it was hard to get younger lawyers involved, even though there are several Substantive Law Committees that need a vice chair and this would be a great opportunity for younger lawyers to immediately participate. Staten Bitting said that until we have a framework, we cannot expect an increase in younger lawyer membership. He noted that we have a lot more CLE programs now, but we need someone to take charge of this effort. This would involve the setting of benchmarks.

The discussion evolved away from a Younger Lawyers Section of GDLA to a Younger Lawyers Committee. It was envisioned that the Younger Lawyers Committee could have

its own seminars and activities (within budget) and may want to run a column in the GLDA. President Haas suggested a Younger Lawyers Committee with a chair and two vice chairs, with the chair being invited to attend Board Meetings. Wayne Melnick suggested that one of the vice chairs be for Education and that that person be an ex officio member of the GDLA Education Committee.

The question arose as to who would qualify as a “Younger Lawyer,” and it was noted that the State Bar defined a Younger Lawyer as one being 36 years of age or less or having practiced for less than five years. Jennifer Davis volunteered to find out how many of our current members would qualify for such a designation, although we do not have birthdates on record for all members so it will not be a completely accurate number.

A motion was made by Salty Forbes that by the time of Winter Board Meeting, a Younger Lawyers Committee be established with a chair and two vice chairs. The chair of the Committee would be an ex officio voting member of the GDLA Board, and one of the vice chairs would be in charge of Education for that Committee. The motion further included the provision that the chair of the Younger Lawyers Committee be appointed by the GDLA president, and finally, that the designation of “Younger Lawyer” be limited to those practicing attorneys who were age 36 and under. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Dart Meadows also presented his Committee’s recommendation for a membership drive entitled “RecruitOne” whereby every member was encouraged to recruit another member. In order to encourage participation, it was suggested that for every new member recruited the name of the current member would be entered into a grand prize drawing for an iPad2—so recruit 10 new members and get 10 chances. Recruits will be entered into a drawing for a complimentary 2011 Annual Meeting registration.

Wayne Melnick presented the Education Committee report and discussed the very successful CLE seminars conducted in the past year. Wayne advised that in the upcoming year, there would be more educational seminars put on by GDLA sponsors and more webinars. The Deposition Boot Camp was scheduled for November 11-12, 2012 at the Sutherland Courtroom. Jason Wilcox is in charge of this effort, but the Education Committee is providing support. This year, Deposition Boot Camp will use the Trial Academy problem to bring continuity and enhanced learning to both programs; additionally, the curriculum itself is being changed completely and will include all pre-trial discovery tools. In addition, we will be repeating Skits & Suds in June, 2012 and if successful, this may be presented to audiences in other parts of the State. The July, 2011 Current Issues in Workers Compensation CLE was not very well attended, so a “workers’ comp” topic may be offered only when there is a hot topic.

Brian Moore then reported on the Substantive Law Committees. He noted that several committees are in need of vice chairs, and he is going to contact the committee chairs to encourage and emphasize the need for vice chairs. Jennifer Davis advised that it will soon be possible for the Substantive Law Committee members to send e-mails to their committee members only rather than via a blast e-mail.

Bob Travis reviewed the various judgeships that were open and the solicitations which had been received by GDLA since the Annual Meeting.

Meetings chair and past president Staten Bitting reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule, and it was decided that the 2013 Annual Meeting would be held at the Breakers in Palm Beach, Florida. The following is the current meeting schedule:

- Board of Directors Winter Meeting – February 10, 2012 at Hawkins Parnell Thackston & Young, Atlanta, Georgia
- Board of Directors Spring Meeting – April 13-14, 2012 at The Mills House, Charleston, South Carolina
- GDLA Annual Meeting – June 7-10, 2012 at Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, Ponte Vedra, Florida.
- Board of Directors Fall Meeting – October 19-20, 2012 at Brasstown Valley Resort, Young Harris, Georgia.

Website Committee vice chair Lance Green reported on behalf of Chair Dave Nelson, who had drafted a letter to the Substantive Law Committee leaders, asking for their help in contributing content to enhance their respective practice area resources in the Tort Reform Database & Brief Bank online.

Sponsorship Committee chair Peter Muller applauded the continuing efforts of Jennifer Davis to recruit and retain sponsorships for the organization. Peter announced the addition of Matson Driscoll & Damico Financial Accountants as a new Platinum sponsor for the remainder of 2011. The Board then reviewed the current benefits and pricing structure for the three sponsorship levels and voted to increase the rates for each level, while grandfathering the current sponsors for one more year.

Education Committee chair Wayne Melnick and Executive Director Jennifer Davis presented the Trial Academy report on behalf of Program chair Matt Moffett. The 2012 Trial Academy agenda was updated to include a mediation component featuring two GDLA Platinum sponsors, Bay Mediation & Arbitration and Miles Mediation & Arbitration. A discussion was had concerning the low turnout experienced in 2011 and whether this was an anomaly. A discussion ensued, and it was decided that the Board will review whether to maintain the annual schedule of the Trial Academy after we see the turnout for 2012.

DRI State representative Lynn Roberson reported that past president Bubba Hughes will take over her role when her term ends in October, 2011. Jennifer Davis reported that DRI has asked for a judicial liaison from each state, and Dart Meadows volunteered his services.

Secretary-Treasurer Ted Freeman reported on the financial condition of the Association and advised that we have opened a business savings account to earn a higher yield on our monthly balance.

Rusty Gunn and Jeff Ward, Amicus Committee co-chairs, advised that there had been one request for an amicus brief since the Annual Meeting. The Amicus Committee agreed to submit a brief on behalf of the GDLA.

Mel Haas gave the President's Report and advised that "it will be a robust year."

There was no old business.

Under new business, Wayne Melnick proposed creating a new membership category for paralegals, noting that GTLA has such a division. Past president Salty Forbes pointed out that such a proposal would require a by-law change which would have to be voted on at the Annual Meeting. The Board voted to table discussion until February and asked various Board members to poll their paralegals for interest.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.