



GEORGIA DEFENSE LAWYERS ASSOCIATION FALL BOARD MEETING

**Brasstown Valley Resort
Young Harris, Georgia
October 20, 2012**

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by President Roberson at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, October 20, 2012.

Those present were: **Officers:** President Lynn M. Roberson, Swift Currie McGhee & Hiers, Atlanta; Secretary-Treasurer Kirby G. Mason, HunterMaclean, Savannah. **Vice Presidents:** Sarah B. Akins, Ellis Painter Ratterree & Adams, Savannah; Hall F. McKinley III of Drew Eckl & Farnham, Atlanta; Matthew G. Moffett of Gray Rust St. Amand Moffett & Brieske, Atlanta; **Board of Directors:** Jo Jagor of Hall Booth Smith, Atlanta; Craig Avery of Cowser & Avery, Athens; Robert R. Gunn II of Martin Snow, Macon; Christopher E. Parker of Miller & Martin, Atlanta; James D. Meadows, Balch & Bingham, Atlanta; .Wayne S. Melnick, Gray Rust St. Amand Moffett & Brieske, Atlanta; Brian T. Moore, Drew Eckl & Farnham, Atlanta; James W. Purcell, Fulcher Hagler, Augusta; Jeffrey S. Ward of Drew Eckl & Farnham, Brunswick; and James S.V. Weston of Trotter Jones, Augusta. **Past Presidents:** N. Staten Bitting, Jr. of Fulcher Hagler, Augusta; Morton G. Forbes of Forbes Foster & Pool, Savannah; Steven J. Kyle, Bovis Kyle & Burch, Atlanta; Walter B. McClelland, Mabry & McClelland, Atlanta; Robert M. Travis of Bryan Cave, Atlanta. **Also present** was Executive Director Jennifer M. Davis.

A motion was made and duly seconded to approve the minutes of both the 2012 Spring and Annual Meetings, and the motion passed unanimously.

Jennifer Davis advised that the Association currently has 676 members. The following 31 individuals were then proposed for membership and unanimously accepted; one applicant (David L. Selby, Law Offices of David Selby) was declined as his practice is not primarily defense.

David	M.	Abercrombie	Goodman McGuffey Lindsey & Johnson
Jessica	A.	Davis	Brennan Harris & Rominger

Matthew		Ericksen	Gray Rust St. Amand Moffett & Brieske
T.	Lawrence	Evans	Oliver Maner
James	Cullen	Evans	Hawkins Parnell Thackston & Young
Christopher	B.	Freeman	Carlton Fields
Elizabeth		Gearhart	Drew Eckl & Farnham
Stephanie	F.	Glickauf	Goodman McGuffey Lindsey & Johnson
Parker	M.	Green	Rutherford & Christie
Heather		Hammonds	Hunter Maclean
Jennifer	R.	Harbaugh	Weinberg Wheeler Hudgins Gunn & Dial
Jeffrey	E.	Hickcox	McLain & Merritt
			Young Thagard Hoffman Smith Lawrence & Shenton
Daniel	C.	Hoffman	
Sean	L.	Hynes	Downey & Cleveland
Matthew	T.	Jones	Drew Eckl & Farnham
S.	Megan	Klein	Drew Eckl & Farnham
			Young Thagard Hoffman Smith Lawrence & Shenton
Matthew	R.	Lawrence	
Adam		Maserek	Drew Eckl & Farnham
Lauren	K.	McCulloch	Crim & Bassler
Andrea		Neculae	Magill Atkinson Dermer
David	A.	Olson	Drew Eckl & Farnham
Steven	D.	Prelutsky	Hall Booth Smith & Slover
April		Robinson	Drew Eckl & Farnham
Joshua	S.	Ruplin	Downey & Cleveland
Megan	Michelle	Sheller	Hall Booth Smith & Slover
			Young Thagard Hoffman Smith Lawrence & Shenton
Charles	A.	Shenton IV	
Robert	W.	Smith	Hamilton Westby Antonowich & Anderson
			Young Thagard Hoffman Smith Lawrence & Shenton
J.	Holder	Smith, Jr.	
Mariel		Williams	Hall Booth Smith
Joshua	S.	Wood	Weinberg Wheeler Hudgins Gunn & Dial

A discussion was had about admission of captive members practicing in the defense field. Bylaws currently prohibit admission unless an in-house attorney gives work to outside counsel. There are currently two such GDLA members, who were previously with defense firms but now are with captive firms. Admission of true captive members would require Bylaw change. The matter was tabled until the Winter 2012 meeting.

Membership Committee Co-chair Dart Meadows discussed the final results of the RecruitOne membership drive, which increased our membership by 10 percent. The Board discussed repeating it, and decided to run it April to October of 2013 with the same prizes to be offered. Jennifer Davis presented a list of DRI members in Georgia who do not belong to the GDLA. She presented a sample e-mail to go to them announcing our being name best defense org by DRI to encourage their getting involved locally. will advise the Board when she sends the e-mail so Board members can individually contact people they know.

Wayne Melnick presented the Education Committee report. There have been two seminars since the last Board Meeting: 1) Skits & Suds – June 21, RiRa Irish Pub, Atlanta; and 2) Sweating the Small Stuff: How Nanotechnology is Changing Failure Analysis, October 9, 2012, Atlanta Fish Market (sponsored by Exponent). His committee is beginning to select topics for the next year, to include: medical and psychiatric issues; women and the law; mediation; spoliation; and beyond the reptile defense.

Brian Moore reported on the Substantive Law Committees. He has encouraged them to have meetings with members once a year, perhaps in connection with the Annual Meeting. They also continue to contribute case law updates and *Law Journal* articles.

Judicial Relations Committee Chair Bob Travis provided a report on filled positions and remaining openings on the bench.

Meetings Chair Staten Bitting presented the future meetings schedule.

- 10th Annual Judicial Reception – February 7, 2013, Sate Bar Headquarters
- Winter Meeting – February 8, 2013, State Bar Headquarters
- Spring Meeting – April 26-28, 2013, Ritz Carlton Reynolds Plantation, Lake Oconee
- Annual Meeting – June 13-16, 2013 The Breakers, Palm Beach, Florida
- Fall Meeting – October 25-27. 2013, Barnsley Gardens, Adairsville
- Annual Meeting 2014 – The Board elected to go the weekend of Father's Day, making it June 12-15, 2014

Jennifer Davis reported on behalf of *Law Journal* editor Peter Muller that he needs article commitments by the end of December, with a March deadline for articles.

Jennifer Davis reported on behalf of Website Committee Chair Dave Nelson and Vice chair Lance Greene. She had revised the “About Us” verbiage on the website to include recent happenings – DRI award, State Bar awards, etc. The Board agreed to create a LinkedIn group for the GDLA. Jennifer also presented a new design for the website to highlight current news and events, and make it easier for her to update. The Board agreed to spend up to \$2,000.00 for the Web designer to make the changes.

Newsletter Editor Sally Akins reported she received a note from Chief Judge Ellington about the newsletter, noting that judges are reading it. She also reported the *Daily Report* had offered to let us put our newsletter on their website. A discussion ensued as to the pros and cons. Jennifer Davis will ask the *Daily Report* if we could just post the first page as a teaser for potential recruits.

Sponsorships Chair Craig Avery reported we have a new in-kind Platinum sponsor – the *Daily Report* – since our last meeting. We have run comped ads in the paper and online as a result of that partnership. The Board was presented a spreadsheet of projected sponsorship revenue, in light of the 2013 increase in rates for long-time sponsors. (The Board had approved the rate increase for new sponsors in 2012, and grandfathered in then-current sponsors until 2013.) Sally Akins announced Collision Specialists was holding a CLE at her firm, giving them and the GDLA more exposure.

Trial Academy Chair Matt Moffett announced it is set for January 24-26, 2013 at Callaway Gardens Lodge & Spa. We will keep the same 2.5 days format at least for this year, but expand the mediation focus and how we demo opening statements. The Board reviewed the final financial report from the 2012 program where attendance was up from the prior year.

On behalf of DRI State Rep Bubba Hughes, Jennifer Davis reported on our winning the DRI Janata Award for Outstanding Defense Organization of 2012. We ran two ads in the *Daily Report* print edition and a banner ad online for a couple weeks announcing it. Jennifer also plans to e-mail the membership and the sponsor to thank them for their contributions to our success.

Committee Co-chairs Rusty Gunn and Jeff Ward reviewed a recent request to file a brief in *Villanueva v. First American Title*, which deals with whether legal malpractice claims should be assignable. The Amicus Committee had declined the request and the Board affirmed their decision. The Board discussed whether the

person drafting an amicus brief on our behalf should be a GDLA member or have a membership application pending. They agreed the person who requests it does not necessarily have to be a GDLA member.

Treasurer Kirby Mason provided good news that we are in the black, and ahead of last year at the same time despite an increased loss at the Annual Meeting. This is likely attributable to increased membership and CLE revenue.

President Lynn Roberson asked the Board to consider whether the GDLA needed to formalize its diversity efforts, as it already has a diversity statement in place. She explained the North Carolina Defense Association is willing to share their program materials to help us get started. Douglas Burrell, a GDLA member and head of the DRI Diversity Committee, has offered to help our group get going. The Board agreed with creating a Diversity Committee, and Jo Jagor volunteered to lead the effort.

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