



GEORGIA DEFENSE LAWYERS ASSOCIATION SPRING BOARD MEETING

Ritz-Carlton Reynolds Plantation
Lake Oconee, Georgia
April 27, 2013

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by President Roberson at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 27, 2013.

Those present were: **Officers:** President Lynn M. Roberson, Swift Currie McGhee & Hiers, Atlanta; Executive Vice President Ted Freeman, Freeman Mathis & Gary, Atlanta; and Secretary-Treasurer Kirby G. Mason, HunterMaclean, Savannah. **Vice Presidents:** Sarah B. “Sally” Akins, Ellis Painter Ratterree & Adams, Savannah; Matthew G. Moffett, Gray Rust St. Amand Moffett & Brieske, Atlanta; Peter D. Muller, Goodman McGuffey Lindsay & Johnson, Savannah. **Board of Directors:** Craig C. Avery of Cowser & Avery, Athens; Troy Lance Greene, McNatt Greene & Peterson, Vidalia; Robert R. “Rusty” Gunn II of Martin Snow, Macon; Andrew Holliday, Fulcher Hagler, Savannah; Jo Jagor, Hall Booth Smith, Atlanta; James D. “Dart” 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; and Jeffrey S. Ward, Drew Eckl & Farnham, Brunswick. **Past Presidents:** N. Staten Bitting, Jr., Fulcher Hagler, Augusta; Warner S. Fox, Hawkins Parnell Thackston & Young, Atlanta; W Melvin Haas, III, Constangy Brooks & Smith, Macon; Edward M. Hughes, Callaway Braun Riddle & Hughes, Savannah; and Robert M. Travis, Bryan Cave, Atlanta. Also present were Premises Liability SLC Chair C. Shane Keith Hawkins Parnell Thackston & Young, Atlanta; and Executive Director Jennifer M. Davis.

A motion was made and duly seconded to approve the minutes of the Winter Board Meeting and the motion passed unanimously.

Warner Fox presented 12 new member applications. A motion was made to approve 11 of the applicants. It was seconded, and the motion passed. Consideration of the remaining applicant is tabled until a proposed Bylaw change to membership criteria can be considered at the Annual Meeting, as she is with a captive firm and, therefore, ineligible now.

A proposed Bylaw change was presented to the Board to admit those in a captive firm or governmental agency to full, active membership in the GDLA. After discussion and amendment to some awkward language in the current Bylaws, a motion was made and seconded to accept the draft Bylaw change; it passed after a hand vote. The matter will proceed to vote at the Annual Meeting during the Business Meeting on Saturday, June 15.

Co-chair Dart Meadows, on behalf of the Membership Committee, reported on the DRI Recruitment program, and encouraged Board members to review the list of DRI members who do not belong to the GDLA and encourage those they know to join. The Board approved renewing the RecruitOne membership drive to run June 1, 2013, to February 1, 2014, and offering the same prizes as last time – with one addition. The member who recruits the most new members will automatically receive an iPad2. If two or more who recruit the same number, there will be a drawing.

Chair Wayne Melnick reported that the Education Committee had three successful CLEs—Skits and Suds in Macon, lunch and learn about Bankruptcy in Buckhead, and a Spoliation seminar in Atlanta. The next

one is The Changing World of Slip-and-Fall Defense set for May 7th at the Atlanta Fish Market. Upcoming topics include: Ethics and Professionalism (Atlanta and Savannah); Mediation from All Perspectives - plaintiff's counsel, defense counsel and mediator; Common Perils in Architectural Engineering; Medical and Psychological Issues; Women Defense Litigator's Issues; Legal Writing; Strategies for Bagging "The Reptile"; Handling Spoliation Claims; and Appellate Practice. These events will be publicized as upcoming events.

The Judicial Relations Committee chair, Bob Travis, reported that there are no pending vacancies on the bench at this time. He asked the Board to be considering a successor to fill his role.

Chair Brian Moore reported on the Substantive Law Committees (SLCs). SLC Chairs are contributing updates and articles for the newsletter and Law Journal. He is encouraging the Chairs to sponsor a CLE in connection with the Education Committee. The Auto Liability Committee needs a Chair and Vice-chair.

Meetings Chair Staten Bitting discussed upcoming meetings:

- Annual Meeting – June 13-16, The Breakers, Palm Beach, Florida
- Fall Meeting – October 25-27, 2013, Barnsley Gardens, Adairsville
- Winter meeting 2013 will be at State Bar headquarters
- Spring 2014 under consideration. Proposed at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Hilton Head, SC if they can accommodate weekend of April 25-27.
- Annual Meeting—June 12-15, 2014, Ponte Vedra Inn & Club

The Board discussed the President's Reception at the Annual Meeting, which historically has been for the Board, Past Presidents and sponsors only. The Board decided to open it to all members, but keep it adults only.

Editor Peter Muller indicated that the *Law Journal* is coming together. The articles will be submitted to Jennifer this week. The Board decided to continue including the dues notice in the mailing, even though many members report not seeing it there. Jennifer will also e-mail the dues notice, as she did last year.

Editor Sally Akins reported that there has been a good response for the Newsletter and gave kudos to Brian Moore for prompting the Substantive Law Committees to send case law updates. The next edition will be out within the month, and the next deadline is June 15.

A review of sponsorships was presented by Chair Craig Avery. It was noted that DecisionQuest has returned, but at a lower level (Gold). We also added a new Silver Sponsor, Gottschalk Technical Services. The Board was reminded that telling sponsors that our use of them is due to their support of GDLA is helpful.

The Trial Academy is set for January 23-25 at the Lodge & Spa at Callaway Gardens. Chair Douglas Burrell suggested Bill Casey for Vice-chair and he was appointed by President Roberson.

Bubba Hughes reported that DRI is pleased with the GDLA's efforts to increase DRI membership through the SLDO free year promotion.

Co-Chair Rusty Gunn provided an update of the Amicus Committee. Bill Custer requested that the GDLA provide an amicus brief in connection with the *Langdale* case involving interference with a fiduciary relationship. Sally Akins volunteered to draft the brief.

Diversity Chair Jo Jagor sought guidance as to how the GDLA should participate with minority bars. It was suggested that she become involved with the Atlanta Bar Association's Multi-Bar Leadership Council

(MBLC), to participate as part of a joint Bar collaborative. President Roberson will connect Jo with the MLBC to see whether we qualify for membership.

The Treasurer's report was given by Kirby Mason. Financially we are ahead of last year due to increased membership and sponsorship fees. We have secured insurance for the association for workers' compensation, general liability and property, and D&O. Kirby and Jennifer are in the process of developing a budget for the association going forward. The Board discussed exploring investment opportunities for our reserves, while keeping enough cash on hand for emergency.

Lynn Roberson gave the President's report. She noted that she and Jennifer represented the GDLA at the University of Georgia's School of Law Awards Day, where the "Dick Richardson Student Award for Outstanding Advocacy" is presented annually by the GDLA. It was noted that UGA selects the winner based on academic performance.

The second Speaker Lunch Series is planned for May 30 at Nelson Mullins where Rep. Edward Lindsay will present a legislative recap.

The Board agreed to continue to participate in the ESI Charity Golf Tournament. This does not cost the organization, but provides publicity.

A change in address for the organization was noted. This will be publicized in upcoming dues notices and in newsletters. A change of address has already been filed with the U.S. Postal Service.

Andy Holliday, Young Lawyers Committee Chair, reported they are trying to put together an Atlanta Braves game outing. Andy's term expires in June, so the incoming GDLA President will appoint his successor possibly from one of the two Vice-Chairs, Jason Logan or Pamela Lee. It was noted that this is a Board position.

The Meeting was adjourned at noon.