



**GEORGIA DEFENSE LAWYERS ASSOCIATION  
WINTER BOARD MEETING**

**State Bar of Georgia Headquarters  
February 8, 2013**

**MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order by President Roberson at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, February 8, 2013.

Those present were: **Officers:** President Lynn M. Roberson, Swift Currie McGhee & Hiers, Atlanta; and Executive Vice President Ted Freeman, Freeman Mathis & Gary, Atlanta. **Vice Presidents:** Hall F. McKinley III of Drew Eckl & Farnham, Atlanta; and Peter D. Muller, Goodman McGuffey Lindsay & Johnson, Savannah. **Board of Directors:** Craig Avery of Cowser & Avery, Athens; Robert R. Gunn II of Martin Snow, Macon; James D. Meadows, Balch & Bingham, Atlanta; .Wayne S. Melnick, Gray Rust St. Amand Moffett & Brieske, Atlanta; Brian T. Moore, Drew Eckl & Farnham, Atlanta; David N. Nelson, Chambless Higdon Richardson Katz & Griggs, Macon; Christopher E. Parker of Miller & Martin, Atlanta; and James S.V. Weston, Trotter Jones, Augusta. **Past Presidents:** N. Staten Bitting, Jr., Fulcher Hagler, Augusta; Jerry A. Buchanan, Buchanan & Land, Columbus; Johnny Foster, Forbes Foster & Pool, Savannah; W Melvin Haas, III, Constangy Brooks & Smith, Macon; Steven J. Kyle, Bovis Kyle & Burch, Atlanta; Walter B. McClelland, Mabry & McClelland, Atlanta; James E. Singer, Bovis Kyle & Burch, Atlanta; Grant B. Smith, Dennis Corey Porter & Smith, Atlanta; Robert M. Travis, Bryan Cave, Atlanta. **Also present** was Executive Director Jennifer M. Davis.

A motion was made and duly seconded to approve the minutes of the 2012 Fall Meeting, and the motion passed unanimously.

Judicial Relations Committee Chair Bob Travis reported on filled positions and remaining openings on the bench.

Jennifer Davis advised that the Association currently has 668 members. The following 26 individuals were then proposed for membership and unanimously accepted:

1	Barsness, Paul	Ashe Rafuse & Hill
2	Brizendine, Brad	Weinberg Wheeler Hudgins Gunn & Dial
3	Brown, Stephen W.	Bouhan Falligant
4	Cawley, Kristen	Goodman McGuffey Lindsey & Johnson
5	Cheek, Daniel	Strawinski & Stout
6	Clayton, D. Lee	Swift Currie McGhee & Hiers
7	Eisenberg, Seth R.	Bovis Kyle & Burch
8	Francis III, Charles Wesley	Waldon Adelman Castilla Hiestand & Prout
9	Freed, Gary	Thompson Hine
10	Hoying, Denise	Waldon Adelman Castilla Hiestand & Prout

11	Kandel, Jonathan	Freeman Mathis & Gary
12	Lynde, Amanda DiOrio	Hull Barrett
13	McClatchey, Margaret	Owen Gleaton Egan Jones & Sweeney
14	Purvis, W. Justin	Young Thagard Hoffman Smith Lawrence & Shenton
15	Rainey, Renee	Jones Cork & Miller
16	Reardon, Kevin	Waldon Adelman Castilla Hiestand & Prout
17	Reneau, Andrae	Swift Currie McGhee & Hiers
18	Segel, Melissa A.	Swift Currie McGhee & Hiers
19	Shannon, Robert L. (Jr.)	Hall Booth Smith
20	Sinton, Adam	Weinberg Wheeler Hudgins Gunn & Dial
21	Snow, Stephen T.	Bendin Sumrall & Ladner
22	Stewart, Marcia R.	Waldon Adelman Castilla Hiestand & Prout
23	Titus, Mathew K.	Bovis Kyle & Burch
24	Ward, Thomas B.	Swift Currie McGhee & Hiers
25	Wellesley, Skye	Waldon Adelman Castilla Hiestand & Prout
26	Wilson, David H.	Hawkins Parnell Thackston & Young

One applicant, Akua Coppock, who attended Trial Academy, works for the City of Atlanta Law Department. Since the Bylaws currently stipulate only lawyers in private practice can be members. The Board discussed the pros and cons of amending the membership requirements to include those in government practice. The Board also discussed the question of captive firm members, which had been tabled at the 2012 Fall Meeting for discussion at this meeting. Chris Parker and Jamie Weston volunteered to draft several options for a Bylaw change to address both the governmental and captive firm lawyers; their proposed options will be reviewed at the Spring Meeting.

Membership Committee Co-chairs Dart Meadows and Chris Parker asked the Board to again review the list of DRI members who are not GDLA members, which was presented at the Fall Meeting and provided again at this meeting. The Board decided that Board members will be asked to contact 3-5 prospects on the list and report those to Jennifer Davis, who will compile the list for presentation at the Spring Meeting. She will also resend the sample e-mail verbiage/talking points about the value of a GDLA membership to help Board members when reaching out to those on the list.

Chair Wayne Melnick presented the Education Committee report. He encouraged attendance at the upcoming Skits & Suds CLE set for February 28 at the Fish N' Pig in Macon. This is the first attempt to offer a CLE seminar outside of Atlanta. He also reviewed topics that will be offered this year, including medical and psychiatric issues; women and the law; mediation; spoliation; appellate; and "reptile" cases.

Chair Brian Moore reported on the Substantive Law Committees. He is working to ensure they contribute case law updates for the next newsletter, as well as articles for the 2013 *Law Journal*. He also hopes to

encourage one or more to sponsor a CLE in connection with the Education Committee, as the Premises SLC did last year.

Jennifer Davis reported on the success of the 10th Annual Judicial Reception, held the evening before. We had about 28 judges and 88 members attend. Meetings Chair Staten Bitting then presented the future meetings schedule below:

- 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 – June 12-15, 2014, Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, Florida

The Board also discussed the possibility of going to The Royal Sonesta in Hilton Head, which is opening in April of this year, for the Spring Meeting in 2014. They charged Staten and Jennifer with visiting the property prior to the upcoming Spring Meeting to report on whether it would be a suitable property.

Website Committee Chair Dave Nelson reported that the redesigned website is in production, working on the database compatibility, and will launch in the next couple months. Jennifer Davis is consulting with other state and local defense orgs on how they set up their LinkedIn group, and will accordingly establish one for the GDLA by the next meeting.

Jennifer Davis reported on behalf of Newsletter Editor Sally Akins that the next deadline is February 15.

Jennifer Davis reported on behalf of *Law Journal* editor Peter Muller that the article deadline is March 15.

Sponsorships Chair Craig Avery reported on changes to the 2013 line-up, including the addition of Elizabeth Gallo Court Reporting as a new Silver sponsor; South Georgia ADR moved up from Silver to Gold; Global Legal Discovery bumped up from Gold to Platinum; Trial Exhibits renewed this year at Gold, having dropped a couple years ago when they were Platinum; both private investigator firms – Delve and Norred – did not renew. Jennifer is still following up with some hold-outs, but our projected revenue is already higher than last year.

Trial & Mediation Academy Vice-chair Douglas Burrell reported on behalf of Chair Matt Moffett. The 2013 edition was a success, having attracted 25 students; we also had eight faculty. Several changes were implemented to this year's program, including the addition of a mock mediation and faculty demos of opening statements from their personal archives. Douglas presented several new faculty for 2014, which represents an effort at increasing diversity – Bobby Shannon, Philippa Ellis and Carrie Christie. We have reserved January 23-25, 2014, for the next one at Callaway Gardens Lodge & Spa. President Roberson has appointed Bill Casey to serve as Vice-chair, while Douglas assumes the Chair position.

Jennifer Davis distributed a written report from DRI State Rep Bubba Hughes, advising the GDLA was presented an award recognizing its recruiting more than 40 new members to DRI, beating the goal of 20.

Amicus Committee Co-chair Rusty Gunn led a discussion regarding the *Langdale* case that Bill Custer is handling. Jerry Buchanan was able to give some historical background, since he'd been involved at some points. The Board noted that the Executive Committee and Amicus Committee have the decision-making power on amicus briefs, but did acknowledge that it supported filing one in the *Langdale* case. There was also discussion about a case that Dart Meadows is handling; but, as no request had been made yet, there was no decision as the GDLA only responds to requests, rather than initiating briefs.

Jennifer Davis reported for Treasurer Kirby Mason, providing the Board with the Year End balance sheets for 2011 and 2012, as well as a Profit & Loss comparison for those two years. The GDLA continues to be in better financial health than it was at the same time the year before.

In the absence of Diversity Committee Chair Jo Jagor, a report from this committee was tabled until the Spring Meeting.

President Lynn Roberson announced that she planned to nominate Staten Bitting to chair the Nominating Committee for 2012. Her hope was that group would be able to meet by conference call at least once leading up to the Annual Meeting, and would include Jennifer Davis in those calls to gain any insight into members who are stellar volunteers and may warrant elevation to the Board.

Jake Daly, who developed the Speakers Series Luncheon concept, reported on the success of the first event, attracting 55 GDLA members, judges and plaintiff's lawyers. It also resulted in a front page article in the Daily Report, "A critical eye on Holt demands: Panelists at Georgia Defense Lawyers Association discuss need for legislation to regulate demands for settlement." Jake is now developing ideas for the next luncheon.

Jennifer Davis announced the GDLA address will be changing, as the current Post Office box is located too far from her office. Once she confirms the one closest to her will remain an "Atlanta" address, she will announce the new P.O. Box to the membership.

Jennifer Davis announced that she and Lynn would be attending the State Bar of Georgia-sponsored Bar Leadership Institute on February 22, 2013, at Bar headquarters. It brings together leaders from voluntary bars across the state to share ideas. Lynn encouraged any GDLA Board members with an interest to attend, and the GDLA would cover the registration cost.

Jimmy Singer suggested we consider meeting with the boards from contiguous state defense associations. For example, the Alabama and Tennessee Defense Lawyers Associations have combined for their Annual Meetings, which has boosted attendance for each.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.