

Georgia Defense Lawyers Association
Spring 2005 Board of Directors Meeting Highlights
Hamilton, Bermuda
April 21, 2005

The meeting was called to order by President Grant Smith. In attendance at the meeting were board members: Salty Forbes, Johnny Foster, Warner Fox, Ted Freeman, Mel Haas, Steve Kyle, Steve Milano, David Nelson, Clay Ratterree, Lynn Roberson, Jimmy Singer, Grant Smith, Bob Travis, Bruce Welch

A motion was made to approve the Winter Board Meeting minutes which had been circulated amongst the board previously and this motion was adopted.

Treasurer's Report

Warner Fox gave the treasurer's report, including the association's assets and liabilities.

Amicus Committee Report

An Amicus Committee report was given by Ted Freeman, Chairman of the Committee. It was determined that the requirements for Amicus Briefs on the part of GDLA would be posted in the web site in the Member's Only Section.

Membership Report

Salty Forbes, Chairperson of the Membership Committee reported that 37 new members were being recommended for membership by his committee. The list was read and discussed and all 37 members were approved for membership. Forbes notified the board that committee Member David Hanks had resigned from the committee and was being replaced by David Whitworth. Membership recruitment and retention were discussed and it was noted that the association is doing an excellent job this year of bringing in new members. All board members were encouraged to keep up the efforts so as to continue to grow the association. It was also discussed that membership retention is enhanced by demonstrating that the GDLA provides valuable resources to its members such as the web site and ability to send GDLA blast emails. Additionally, the necessity of continuing excellent CLE programs was discussed.

Sponsorships and Exhibitors

Committee chair Clay Ratterree discussed sponsorships and exhibitors. The necessity of keeping these sponsors and exhibitors was discussed, and attempts will be made on the part of committee members to ensure that sponsors and exhibitors all feel that they have the attention of the GDLA and its members. The importance of trying to send business to the sponsors and exhibitors was also discussed and all members are encouraged to send as much business as possible to our sponsors and exhibitors, understanding that they provide valuable services to the organization.

Workers' Compensation Academy

Steve Milano gave the report on the Workers' Compensation Academy. The Academy this year was oversold and made a minimal profit, which resulted in no expense to the GDLA. Dates for the next Worker's Compensation Academy were discussed as well.

Trial Academy

A discussion was held about the upcoming Trial Academy. The new Chairman of the Academy will be Tom Magill. There will be a meeting at the Annual Meeting in Ponte Vedre to discuss the Trial Academy in more detail. A contract is in place with Calloway Gardens for next year's Trial Academy.

Future Meetings

Steve Kyle led a discussion regarding the Annual Meeting and Long Range Planning Committees. It was noted that for the 2005 Annual Meeting, the Ponte Vedra Inn is sold out, but extra rooms have been retained at The Lodge in order to handle overflow capacity. We expect this to be one of the best Annual Meetings in years, and the early attendance figures support that.

Next year's Fall Board Meeting was also discussed and it was determined that the meeting will take place on October 8 at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina. The 2005 Spring Board Meeting is being held at the Southampton Fairmont in Bermuda and the meeting is serving as a site visit for the members of the Board.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the attributes of the hotel and whether or not it should be considered as the location for the 2006 Annual Meeting. After some concerns about the hotel were discussed, it was determined that Steve Kyle would discuss those concerns with the management of the hotel, but that it was fully expected that the Annual Meeting would occur at the Fairmont Princess next year from June 7 through June 11, 2006.

It was noted that due to the cost of holding a meeting in Bermuda, we need to heavily promote this event and get as much information out to the members as early as possible regarding it. It is anticipated this will be more of a "couples" meeting, and a discussion was held regarding the possibility of making every third annual meeting a "couples" event as opposed to a more family-oriented event. The cost of presenting a program in Bermuda was discussed and the Board is hopeful that between sponsors and members, we will be able to utilize internal speakers in order to save expenses.

Finally, it was determined that the likely site of the 2006 Spring Board Meeting will be in Key West, Florida.

Newsletter

A report was given on the newsletter and the Spring Newsletter was being prepared at the time of the meeting. It was anticipated that it would go to the members within several weeks.

Law Journal

Jimmy Singer discussed the Law Journal. It was determined that the Law Journal will be submitted to the membership on CD's, but that judges will actually get a printed copy of the book. Various issues regarding the cost, benefits and alternatives of the Law Journal were discussed. It was determined to keep the Law Journal in its current format for the foreseeable future. Finally, status of various articles were discussed.

Web Site

The web site was briefly discussed. It was noted that traffic on the web site is much higher than in prior times.

Younger Lawyer Section Membership/Recruitment

YLS membership recruitment in the Younger Lawyer's Section of the GDLA were discussed. Plans are being made for a winter CLE program for younger lawyers and, additionally, at the next judge's reception there will be an attempt made to have a younger lawyer's reception prior to the judge's reception.

DRI

Salty Forbes discussed the DRI and the upcoming Southeastern Regional Meeting of the DRI which will be held in conjunction with the Alabama Defense Lawyers Association Meeting. Several members of the Board indicated that they may attend the Alabama Defense Lawyers Meeting which would include the DRI Southeastern Regional Meeting. Mr. Forbes also discussed briefly the DRI Meeting in Chicago meeting for State Representatives which was held in the Fall of 2005.

Old Business

Under old business, the status of DNO or liability insurance for GDLA and its agents were discussed. Salty Forbes is currently looking into this on behalf of the organization and will offer a report at subsequent meetings.

New Business

It was noted that the GDLA has been asked by the Judicial Nominating Commission to meet briefly with the commission prior to interviews regarding the vacancy to fill Atlanta's Judicial Circuit Superior Court bench opening created by the tragic death of Judge Rowland Barnes. Additionally, the GDLA has been asked to participate in evaluating the various nominees for the Supreme Court position of retiring Justice Fletcher. It was determined that the GDLA will participate in this process to the extent allowed.

A discussion was held as to whether a slogan or motto is needed for GDLA marketing purposes. This boils down to the question of how does the GDLA brand itself and do we really need a "brand" or slogan. This will be a subject of continuing consideration. Additionally, the issue of continuing tort reform legislation was discussed. Included within this discussion was the potential impact on defense lawyers from the recently passed legislation as well as potential impact on legislation that may come before the Legislature in 2006. Because of varying issues, including the Association By-Laws, there was no consensus on how to respond to these issues.

Finally, a discussion was held regarding a gift for Al Shurley. It was agreed that Al will be provided a gift certificate and an engraved piece of crystal or other memento for her home as a tribute to her many years of service to the GDLA.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30 a.m.