

## **GDLA Winter 2006 Board Meeting Highlights Jekyll Island, GA April 29, 2006**

The Board of Directors of the Georgia Defense Lawyers Association met at the Jekyll Island Club at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 29, 2006. In attendance were Johnny Foster, Ted Freeman, David Melton, Staten Bitting, Jimmy Stringer, Steve Milano, Hall McKinley, Edward Hughes, Salty Forbes, Bruce Welch, Kirby Mason, Steve Kyle, Mel Haas, Amy Snell and Jamie Weston.

Johnny Foster opened the meeting and greeted our newest member of the Board, Jamie Weston and also welcomed Amy Snell who was invited to join us as Chair of the Appellate Practice Substantive Law Committee.

A motion was made and the Winter Board Meeting Minutes were approved.

Secretary/Treasurer Travis gave the Treasurer's Report which was also approved.

President Foster reported on the Richardson Award ceremony held on March 31. The mock courtroom was packed for the Law School 45 Spring Awards. Only 2 of the awards had representatives present to actually present the awards -- the State Bar and GDLA. We are going to publish the name of the winner of the Richardson Award in our newsletter.

It was noted that we will have in excess of 100 new members at the close of this meeting.

We have compared the Georgia list of DRI members to the GDLA and approximately 400+ members of DRI in Georgia are not members of GDLA. We have twice sent letters to those non-member DRI members. We we received few than 10 new members from that mailing the first year, and possibly double that the second. There is still a perception in the defense community that GDLA is primarily involved in insurance defense.

One way to reach DRI members is perhaps a joint letter from DRI urging them to join the State organization. A DRI letter that says GDLA works for us and you need to join the State organization.

A discussion on GDLA member benefits and membership attraction was held.

We had a report on our new and beginning substantive law committees. Johnny reported that all 24 chair and vice chair have been filled. When the dues notices go out in June, we will ask to select one, two or three committees and start work after we sort out numbers.

We have written outline for each committee including brief bank, case law updates, tort reform articles, newsletters, journal and jury charges. Johnny will continue after he leaves the presidency to monitor these substantive law committees.

We decided to invite four SLC leaders to each Board meeting, meet the Board and evaluate whether join the Board.

Kirby and David gave report from Web site Committee. We need to encourage members to send to contributions to the tort reform, brief bank and discovery tool areas of our Web site and suggestions were made for doing this, including holding a contest.

Doug Steward, past president of the State Bar, is the new chair of the GDLA Judicial Relations Committee. Walter McClelland, Fred Gleaton, Jamie Westin, Salty Forbes and Lynn Roberson expressed interest to present before the judges' councils. Luanne and Walter are trying to get retired judge ex officio member. We are considering how to provide CLE to judges' councils which would get us more exposure.

Our judicial reception in Savannah had 20 members and 20 judges. Frank Cheatham was honored and

presented the fabled "mint julep cup." We should have these in other parts of the state, socializing in Augusta, Columbus, Macon, etc. We could do five of them every year. Board members in each city would plan and schedule it. We can attract new members and law firms in areas where hold judicial receptions. Amy and Jamie will check Augusta reception and Mel and David in Macon.

Kyle reported on annual meeting, then reported that Barnesly Gardens is booked for our fall Board meeting. It was agreed to hold the spring 2007 board meeting in Charleston. Amelia Island will be our 2007 annual meeting; 2008 will be Ponte Vedra and 2009 is open.

We discussed going to an adults-only location out of the country (e.g., Bahamas, St. Thomas) every third year. A previous survey of GDLA members revealed that two of the reasons more members don't attend is thaty it is too far and too expensive. We had 43 attendees at San Destin and 60 at Ponte Vedra.

It was suggested that we have the workers' compensation academy the week before the Super Bowl, then the judges' reception the week after the Super Bowl. This will give the membership committee two weeks to go through the membership applications generated at that event.

We scheduled workers' compensation academy on February 1, 2007 and scheduled February 8 for judges' reception at the Capital City Club. The board will hold its winter meeting on February 9<sup>th</sup> in Atlanta.

Bubba Hughes reported on the status of the Law Journal. We are going to waive initiation fee and dues through the current year for those people contributing articles.

We have steering committee for substantive law committees which will assign calendars for submission to newsletters. Johnny assigned new members to the newsletter committee to help Staten.

Trial Academy's location is booked next year. We have better rooms and great faculty.

The board thanked Steve Milano for his hard work regarding sponsorships, which have steadily increased in recent years.

The Board approved resolutions of indemnification and exculpatory amendments to Articles (Steve Kyle and Clay Ratterree are covered in one capacity or another.) Salty will amend the Articles of Incorporation and put it in the newsletter.

Meeting adjourned.