

GDLA Spring 2008 Board Meeting Highlights Hawkins & Parnell, Atlanta, GA April 4, 2008

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A meeting of the Board of Directors was called for April 4, 2008 at noon at the offices of Hawkins & Parnell in Atlanta.

1. The meeting was called to order by the President Bob Travis at approximately 9:00 am. A quorum was present. Board members in attendance included: Sally Akins, Staten Bitting, Jerry Buchanan, Joe Chambless, Evelyn Fletcher, Salty Forbes, Ted Freeman, Mel Haas, Bubba Hughes, Jo Jagor, Steve Kyle, Kirby Mason, Walter McClelland, Hall McKinley, Lynn Roberson, Jimmy Singer, Grant Smith, Bob Travis, Bruce Welch and Jamie Weston. Steve Milano, executive director, was also present.
2. The Winter Board minutes were approved.
3. Treasurer's report was provided. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.
4. Fiscal Year of the Association. There was discussion concerning change to the fiscal year of the organization. The fiscal year, previously July 1-June 30, was changed by a vote of the membership at the 2007 annual meeting to run from January 1-December 31. After discussion with the tax accountant who handles the GDLA's yearly return, Salty Forbes recommended changing the association's fiscal year back to July 1-June 30. A motion was made and seconded to change the bylaws at the 2008 annual meeting to move the GDLA's fiscal year back to July 1-June 30.
5. New Member Report. Salty Forbes, as chairman of the admissions committee reported the names and information on new applicants. This was seconded by Lynn Roberson. The applicants (copies of the applications are attached to these minutes) were approved as new members. Salty Forbes advised the organization that he would be resigning as the admissions chair at the annual meeting in June of this year. Bob Travis and Jimmy Singer will conduct a search for a new admissions chair and make the appointment.
6. Membership Recruitment and Retention. There was discussion as to the program for broadening the membership base among large firm, communications with marketing directors of firms, young lawyers and on trying to increase diversity. Evelyn Fletcher provided information on current activities in this regard. There was discussion concerning the possibility of new membership categories but no motion was made and no action was taken.
7. Younger Lawyers Section. There was discussion concerning the creation of a young lawyers section. Jo Jagor provided a report on the Skits and Suds program designed to introduce the program to new members.

Evelyn Fletcher attended the Alabama Defense Lawyers Association deposition boot camp to gain information. She presented ideas concerning the first deposition boot camp to be offered by the GDLA. January was targeted as the likely date. Steve Kyle indicated that he thought the organization should have a goal of providing an activity every 60 days or so to make it of value to the members and to make it attractive to others. Specifically mentioned were the deposition boot camp, the trial academy, Skits and Suds and the Forcon seminar. There was also discussion concerning the possibility of creating an education committee with Matt Moffett being involved in its creation. It was agreed that this is an idea worth considering but that the current organization has expanded significantly in recent years. There was concern that all current programs should be up and running properly in all fronts before

expanding again. No motion was made or action taken.

8. Workers' Compensation Academy. There had been some communication between Steve Milano and Rick Thompson, the chair of the Workers' Compensation Committee about getting a date and choosing a faculty. Staten Bitting was requested to follow-up with Thompson about trying to resume the academy. It was held for three years but is not being held this year while its future is considered by the Board.

9. Substantive Law Committees. Johnny Foster gave a report on the status of the functioning of these committees.

10. Web site Committee. This discussion was led by Kirby Mason and David Nelson. There was discussion concerning the expert data bank and the brief bank. It was also pointed out that the deposition bank apparently did not work and had little interest. No action was taken on this topic. It was suggested by Ted Freeman and agreed upon by the group that the disclaimer that precedes each GDLA blast e-mail should be moved to the end of the e-mail, now that GDLA members were more familiar with the fact that blast responses go into our public database. Because so many attorneys receive e-mails on hand-held devices, the extra scrolling to get past each disclaimer was a hindrance for many.

11. Judicial Relations Committee. Walter McClelland provided a report on the Atlanta reception at the Capital City Club. Attendance was good. There was concern about the cost. There was also considerable discussion about where to hold our next judicial reception outside Atlanta. The item was tabled. No action was taken with regard to this matter.

12. Upcoming Meetings. Steve Kyle led the discussion. The 2008 annual meeting report was provided. It will be at Ponte Vedra Inn. A report on the program was provided by Jimmy Singer.

Discussion was held concerning the future meeting. The annual meeting in 2009 will be in the Cayman Islands. Steve Kyle was given the authority to make the final recommendation on the resort.

There was also discussion regarding future board meetings. There was a general consensus that the 2008 schedule did not work well, with the Winter Board meeting scheduled in Arizona. The consensus was that board meetings should not be held at locations that are so remote that they require extensive air travel to attend. Additionally there was a consensus that the board should return to the rotation of having the Winter board meeting on a Saturday morning in a members office and having the Spring board meeting at a destination resort.

There was also discussion concerning increasing the frequency with which the association returns to Ponte Vedra. At present, the 2008 annual meeting is scheduled for Ponte Vedra. And it was determined that we should attempt to book the 2010 meeting also in Ponte Vedra.

13. Law Journal. It is reported that the law journal will be sent to all judges in a book form. All members will receive a compact disc version of the journal. There was some discussion as to which judges should receive the journal. It was agreed that it should go to all sitting judges except the 11th circuit, state court magistrate and administrative law judges.

14. Newsletter. Bubba Hughes reported that the newsletter would be out the following week.

15. Trial Academy. Lynn Roberson reported that the 2008 trial academy will be held December 4-6 at Callaway Gardens. The faculty is fairly well set and the academy is on track for this year.

16. Sponsorship and Exhibitors. There was a discussion and report on the level of sponsorship and exhibitors. Platinum sponsors are now \$3,000 and it was the consensus that the amount should be raised. Jimmy Singer suggested that while the executive director should "close" sponsorship sales, an attorney is more likely to have an impact on a potential sponsor and should make the initial contact and/or phone call. The discussion resulted in concluding Mel Haas would focus on the issue and follow up with the Executive Committee and report at the annual meeting.

17. Amicus Committee Report. Ted Freeman gave the Amicus committee report and indicated that the committee had participated in the appellate work associated with *Orr v. Seivert* which generated a substantial amount of interest.

18. DRI Report. Bruce Welch reported on the DRI meeting and the upcoming meetings.

Bruce Welch is retiring from practice this year and feels that another GDLA member needs to be the DRI State Representative. It was determined that Evelyn Fletcher would be nominated by the GDLA to become the DRI SE Region Director and that Lynn Roberson would be GDLA's State Representative to DRI. Bob Travis, as President, made the appointments in the best interest of the organization and asked Salty to meet with Evelyn and Lynn for the benefit of Salty's experience with DRI. Bob thanked Salty for his year's of service and devotion to DRI and Salty then described the history of the relationship between the state defense lawyers' groups and DRI.

Salty Forbes gave a history of the relationship among the state and local defense organizations, which are independent of DRI, but work with DRI in the interests of the defense bar. The GDLA's DRI liaison is a conduit from the Georgia Defense Lawyers and the relationship has improved.

Bruce Welch and Lynn Roberson attended the DRI North Central Region Meeting in Savannah and indicated it was well attended. Steve Milano attended the DRI executive director's meeting in March and volunteered to speak on membership recruitment and retention. Bruce Welch attended the State Reps meeting at the same time and location. There was a sea change within DRI and an interest in working with state organizations. Evelyn Fletcher, Bruce Welch and Jimmy Singer will attend the Southeast Region meeting in Destin, Florida.

19. Old Business. Name change of GDLA was discussed. No action was taken.

20. New Business. DRI annual meeting cost reimbursement policies were discussed. It was agreed that the Association would pay for the President and Executive Vice President to attend. If either of these cannot attend, the Secretary/Treasurer or another available officer should attend and have their costs paid by the association. President Bob Travis commented that he does not think we need six people to attend this meeting and thinks we need to send the president and executive vice president each year. The president may elect to send the executive director in years the program warrants it, or there is other benefit to the GDLA to send the executive director. It was agreed that there is a benefit to the GDLA to have an executive committee presence at the DRI annual meeting, and that the recent cocktail parties the GDLA has hosted at DRI meetings have improved GDLA's stature within the DRI hierarchy. Salty is to make contacts with other state defense legal organizations and report back at the annual meeting.

Florida/Alabama GDLA meeting attendance policies were discussed. The cost of the President, or one officer if the President cannot attend, will be paid by the association.

There was also discussion concerning a possible amendment to the by-laws to allow virtual attendance at Board meetings. It was discussed that at the spring board meeting in Phoenix, a quorum was lacking until adjustments were made. Lynn pointed out that we should wait and see if the problem happens again. It was pointed out that there are 26 board members plus past presidents and that attendance of only nine is required to achieve a quorum and therefore the problem should not be repeating. Salty pointed out that Phoenix was the first time we had gone somewhere for a meeting without an express vote and it was eventually determined that no vote favoring a change of the by-laws to permit virtual attendance at board meetings was felt to be necessary at this time.

Adjourned.