

SOUTH CAROLINA WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
May 6, 2005 – 2:00 p.m.

- I. The Board of Directors of the South Carolina Women Lawyers Association met at the Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart Law Firm in Columbia. Present at the meeting were:
- Katherine Dudley Helms, President; Alice Paylor, President-Elect; Rosalyn W. Frierson, Secretary; Toya Hampton Greene, Treasurer; Immediate Past President, Kathryn (Kif) Cook; Barbara Barton, Elaine Fowler, Natalie Bluestein, Jenny Horne, Catherine Kennedy, Stephanie Nye, Cheryl Bullard, Sarah Leverette, Tara Shurling, Liz Zeck, Webmaster, Eleanor Kellett; Administrator, Angel Warren
Present by phone: Liz Crum, Cathy Dunn, and Zandra Johnson
- II. **Minutes** of March 11, 2005 Meeting. The Minutes were approved. President Helms asked the Board to approve a plan to listserv the most recent Minutes to members and also provide a link to the Website for members to review past approved Minutes. The plan was approved.
- III. **Treasurer's Report.** Toya Green reported dues collected in 2005 totaled \$25, 250.00. The current balance is \$25, 232.38.
- IV. **Regional Reports.** May Day events. Natalie Bluestein reported that fifty women lawyers attended the **Low Country** May Day photo/lunch event, and another photo opportunity may be scheduled for those who could not attend on May 2. The mentoring program with Women In Law at the Charleston Law School continues and the brown bag lunches are on hiatus over the summer. Cathy Dunn reported that the Spartanburg branch of the **Upstate** had a great May Day turnout including press coverage of the fifty women lawyers who were photographed and the thirty-five who attended the lunch. Cathy reported that several women lawyers from Cherokee County attended. President Helms reported that 108 women lawyers attended the **Midlands** May Day lunch and many more turned out for the photo shoot on the steps of the Supreme Court with Chief Justice Toal. The Midlands event was covered in the State Newspaper and on two network news programs where those interviewed voiced their support for the future selection of more women judges. The **Old English** Region women lawyers were photographed at the Moss Justice Center where Regional Representative, Jane Randall provided for the photographer. The **Grand Strand** also had an excellent turnout for their photo shoot and luncheon. President Helms thanked Amie Clifford and Cathy Dunn for coming up with the idea for the May Day event and everyone agreed that this should become an annual tradition.
- V. **Committees.**
- a. **Membership.** No report.
- b. **Career Development.** Stephanie Nye reported that the Career Development Committee has compiled a list of mentors and catalogued their areas of practice and interest and the committee is ready to match them up with the new admittees as soon as she receives a list of those who want mentors. We are waiting for the newest edition of the SCWLA brochure to send out the inquiry letters to the new admittees. Board members not included on the list were invited to add their names and to also ask friends and colleagues to consider becoming mentors. Stephanie asked for recommendations from the board on how to get more women to be speakers at CLEs. There was discussion about ways to encourage women lawyers to serve as CLE speakers. It was suggested that the Bar make use of the *Areas of Practice* section in the *SCWLA Directory* to solicit speakers for future seminars.

c. **Education.**

The 2005 CLE Chairs: Liz Crum and Amie Clifford. The date is October 14, 2005 at the Embassy Suites in Columbia. A listserv will be sent out soon to request additional ideas for CLE topics. Kif Cook, Cheryl Bullard, and Alice Paylor volunteered to serve on this committee.

Supreme Court Trip – Liz Zeck asked that anyone with photos from previous trips please send them to her.

Documentary –Kif Cook reported that she has reviewed the files regarding the film. Attorneys Elizabeth Christian, Kathleen Harleston, and Tami McKnew will be contacted to assist with resolving copyright issues. Kif is also in contact with a Myrtle Beach production company to help her understand what is technically possible once we get the raw footage.

d. **Awards and Nominating.** Rosalyn Frierson stated that the announcement of the opening of nominations for the **Jean Galloway Bissell Award** will be announced via listserv, the website and in the Summer edition of the *Briefcase*. The committee plans to submit at least three nominees to the Board for a vote at the September Meeting. Judge Cameron Currie, Corky Harper and Tara Shurling have offered to host the Bissell Reception on October 13, 2005. Cathy Kennedy will confirm the location of the Bissell reception.

Firm Awards. Two new awards - honoring a firm where women are given the significant leadership roles (*the Ladder Award*), and honoring a firm or company that promotes a family friendly workplace are being developed. The Committee will develop criteria and present it to the Board for approval. These awards may be presented at the CLE lunch in October, if the awards are finalized in sufficient time.

e. **Editorial Committee.** **Website-** President Helms commended Eleanor Kellett for the recent changes to the website, especially the addition of SCWLA's Mission Statement and Purpose as stated in the bylaws, and the recent May Day photos.

Briefcase – There was a reminder of the deadline for submissions for the summer edition.

Directory –The committee is researching the option of providing the Directory in an electronic format to be accessed and updated by members only.

f. **Bylaws.** No report.

g. **Diversity.** No report.

h. **Community Outreach.** Tara Dawn Shurling reported on the planned listserv to ask members to contribute a gently used suit plus accessories, to be donated to a selected regional charity such as Sistercare. Donations of gift certificates to Sears or Penny's will also be requested to provide outfits to larger size women. Also requested would be luggage or carry-alls for the children who are shifted around by DSS. A DSS contact in each region will be identified to facilitate this contribution.

i. **The Ladder Group.** Bebe Barton reported that the Ladder Group continues to do all they can to help women assume judicial, governmental, and leadership roles. **Resume Bank:** The Group asked members to continue to identify women they believe should be appointed to a board, run for an office, or be appointed to a judgeship – and to ask these individuals to forward their resumes to the Ladder Group. In this way, when a position becomes available, the Ladder Group will be able to recommend appropriate candidates from the resume bank for that position. Additionally, the Ladder Group, with the help of SCWLA Webmaster, Eleanor Kellett, plans to have the ability to track and project when these leadership positions will become available, and will post these openings on the website. The goal is to have candidates ready to go when these positions become available and to give them sufficient time to prepare and field a successful candidacy. The resume bank will also be helpful in identifying qualified candidates. Anyone

with knowledge of available leadership positions or knowledge about early retirements, etc. was asked to share that information with the Ladder Group. **Candidate support:** The Ladder Group plans to assist prospective candidates by providing support, including a “how-to” roadmap on how to apply for these leadership positions. Carolyn Matthews has written articles on “How to Run for a Judgeship” and “The Makeup of the Judicial Selection Committee” which are now posted on the SCWLA website.

Current: Next meeting is May 12th. Bebe reported that the Judicial Reform Bill seems to have stalled for this session. The Ladder Group plans to form alliances with other women’s groups in order to speak with a larger voice, to propose legislation to impact the makeup of the Judicial Merit Selection Committee with the goal to increase consideration of qualified women and diverse candidates. Bebe noted that Debra Gammons has been found qualified and nominated for a circuit court judgeship and on May 11th at noon she can start lobbying for votes. Bebe also reminded everyone that Inez Tenenbaum is running for Superintendent of Education. Bebe also noted that Laurie Funderburk is the only female lawyer in the legislature and she would be a wonderful panel member at the next CLE. **Bebe ended the report by announcing her own candidacy for the 3rd Bankruptcy Judgeship for South Carolina**, created by the recently passed Bankruptcy Reform Bill. This news was well received and Bebe then described the process required to be selected.

j. Long Range Planning. No report.

VI. New Business. Celebration of Women - Art Museum, including Chief Justice Jean Toal –May 12th. **The National Conference of Women Bar Associations (NCWBA)** will be held in Chicago, August 5, 2005, in conjunction with the ABA Convention. Former SCWLA President, Mary Sharp is on the NCWBA Board and Kif Cook will be assisting Mary at the CLE titled *Why Women Bar Associations Matter*. The CLE will include a panel on getting women into leadership roles. Bebe Barton was recommended to speak on that panel.

Emergency Issues. In response to the recent CDV controversy - Kathy Helms stated that she greatly appreciated the support of her decision to get information out in order to allow members the opportunity to react as they individually chose given the diverse views on the issue. Sarah Leverette recommended putting together an advocacy committee to look at our bylaws, tax status, mission statement, etc., in order to see what parameters we are constrained to act within whenever an issue or controversy confronts us. Elaine Fowler volunteered to have someone in her firm look into how tax laws constrain the actions of a 501 C 6 corporation and whether any bylaw changes are needed. President Helms recommended that the Bylaw Committee work with the Long Range Planning Committee to look into this matter.

VII. Member News. Sarah Leverette extended her deepest thanks to everyone for allowing her to be a part of all that SCWLA does, for the beautiful front-page article about her that appeared in the spring edition of the *Briefcase*, and for everyone who attended the 85th Birthday Party for her and the League of Women Voters this year.

VIII. Next Board Meeting: July 22nd in Columbia at 2:00 p.m. at Ogletree Deakins Law Firm, 6th floor.

IX. Adjournment. There being no further business, the motion to adjourn was adopted.