

SOUTH CAROLINA WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Saturday, January 26, 2008– 12:00 noon, at Blossom Restaurant in Charleston

The Board of Directors of the South Carolina Women Lawyers Association met in Charleston for a lunch board meeting at Blossom Restaurant. Present at the meeting were:

President, Rosalyn Frierson; President-Elect, M. Elizabeth Crum; Secretary, Jenny Horne; Treasurer, Liz Zeck; Immediate Past-President, Alice F. Paylor; *Briefcase* Editor, Stephanie Nye; Bebe Barton, Natalie Bluestein, Cheryl Bullard, Amie Clifford, Toya Hampton Green, Karen Huelson, Kelly Jolley, Carolyn Cason Matthews, Tara Dawn Shurling, Abigail Walsh, Ayesha Washington, SCWLA Historian, Ruth Cupp, and SCWLA Administrator, Angel Warren.

Also present were Past Presidents: Malissa Burnette, Corky Harper, and Mary Sharp

President Frierson called the meeting to order, and welcomed Past Presidents, Bebe Barton, Malissa Burnette, Corky Harper, Alice Paylor and Mary Sharp and thanked them for all they had done over the years for SCWLA. President Frierson acknowledged and thanked retiring board member Cherie Blackburn who could not be present, and also welcomed new board member, Karen Huelson.

- I. **Election of New Officers.** The Nominating Committee's slate of officers for the 2008 Board was read: M. Elizabeth Crum, President; Jenny Anderson Horne, President-Elect; Elizabeth Zeck, Treasurer; Natalie Bluestein, Secretary; and Rosalyn W. Frierson, Immediate Past President. A motion was made and seconded to approve the slate, and the slate of officers was elected by acclamation. The meeting was turned over to newly elected President, Liz Crum, who welcomed the new officers individually and they were greeted with applause from the board.
- II. **Newly elected President, Liz Crum** -thanked Immediate Past President Rosalyn Frierson for her leadership role in making 2007 a truly incredible year for SCWLA. President Crum noted that in 2007, Past President Frierson had increased membership and the funds available for SCWLA endeavors, and had overseen an amazing CLE with Justice Ginsburg in Asheville, which was the first joint and most inspirational CLE that SCWLA had been involved in. President Crum then presented Rosalyn with an engraved crystal obelisk as a token of the organization's appreciation for her great year of service. President Crum stated that she would make every effort to make 2008 as impressive a year as 2007 had been.
- III. **The Minutes** of the September 21, 2007 meeting were read, moved and approved.
- IV. **Treasurer's Report.** Liz Zeck noted that everyone had previously received a copy of her report, which showed that: we were in excellent shape financially; dues in 2007 were up about 5% (\$32,000.00 to \$34,000.00); our significant balance was now earning interest (\$700.00) in money market funds; our own part of the Asheville CLE brought in significant funds directly to us and as a result of Bebe Barton's excellent efforts in getting law firms to contribute to the Bissell Reception – we actually broke even; the \$5,000.00 contribution we gave to participate in the NC CLE only really cost us \$1,500.00, since we normally spend around \$3,500.00 on the Bissell Reception each year; publishing the Briefcase online continues to save us money; SCWLA added almost \$9,000 to its reserves in 2007, and; our current net worth is approximately \$40,637.

V. **Regional Reports.** Natalie Bluestein reported that the Low Country - because of conflicts - had moved its monthly lunch to the third *Thursday* of every month at a new location, the *Circular Congregational Church's Event Hall*. The Low Country had a well attended holiday party (with their boy band) which Harriet Johnson attended because it was, of course, handicap accessible. The boy band is made up of 3 family court attorneys who are excellent musicians. They continued to have speakers every month on legal or general interest topics. They also continued to periodically offer free one hour CLEs to members for just the cost of the lunch.

Rosalyn Frierson reported that the Greenville area of the Upstate had its "social" on January 16th which was quite successful and they had started having monthly lunches which were very well attended. They also planned to offer free CLEs at their future monthly lunches.

The Midlands. President Crum reported that the Midlands continued to have its first Thursday lunch meetings with varying speakers, at the Palmetto Club. In January, the speaker was the Managing Editor of the State Newspaper, Tonnya Kennedy Kohn – who was quite adept at handling some very difficult questions that were asked of her. President Crum said there was a plan to meet with Ms. Kohn on January 30th to discuss issues of concern and to make available to Ms. Kohn the names of individuals who could offer her needed expertise and background on various topics, when needed.

Media Reports.

Website. Webmaster, Eleanor Kellett could not attend.

Briefcase. Stephanie Nye reported that the winter edition of the *Briefcase* was complete and that Eleanor Kellett would be posting it on the website within the next few weeks. The next edition would feature photos from the Asheville CLE and the Bissell Reception, as well as the text of Bebe's and Judge Williams' Bissell speeches. Stephanie also stated that Eleanor Kellett was hoping to retire from her current position as "SCWLA Webmaster," and President Crum said that she would try and talk Eleanor into remaining as webmaster for at least one more year – while we determined an orderly way to replace her. Stephanie said Eleanor was willing to continue to work on the *Briefcase* if the board wished her to. Amie Clifford asked what we could do to further investigate taking the website interactive, and Past President Frierson stated that we first needed to determine what we wanted our website to provide membership, and then we could move forward and get provider cost comparisons. Amie Clifford asked about the possibility of doing some paper copies of the *Briefcase* and a lengthy discussion ensued. President Crum asked anyone who had concerns to email them to the Administrator, and Amie would then be Chair of the committee that would consider the various views. Stephanie Nye would also serve on the Website Committee, as well as Abigail Walsh. It was noted that if the website was taken in a new direction, there probably would be few concerns about easily accessing the newsletter. Stephanie reminded everyone to email her their quarterly regional reports for the *Briefcase* – so she could keep members informed about regional activities.

VI. Committees. Board members need to contact President Crum re: their desired committee(s).

a. Membership. Natalie Bluestein reported that with two law schools now graduating a high proportion of women, she really believed that new membership would continue to increase. Natalie said that the Low Country had had a significant increase in membership for 2008 though the actual numbers wouldn't be available until February. Natalie also noted that offering free CLEs at lunches was still probably the best way to recruit new members, and that periodic happy-hours were also effective.

- b. Career Development. No report was available.
- c. 2008 CLE –potentially in October with NC in Charleston. President Crum stated that she and the Executive Committee were working on developing a plan for the fall CLE with the SC Bar. Past-President Rosalyn Frierson had spoken with the SC Bar and told them of our plans. The Bar suggested that we use the Francis Marion as the venue and Rosalyn said that she felt that we probably needed the Bar’s assistance to properly put together our joint CLE with NC. The plan would be to take turns with NC in doing future CLEs. Rosalyn stated that we hoped to have someone speak at our CLE who will be as big a “draw” as Ruth Bader Ginsburg was for the NC CLE. The NC Women have already indicated to us that having the CLE in Charleston would be a very big incentive for them to participate. President Crum said that she would be working to finalize the rest of the details, but thought that if we were lucky enough to get someone like Donna Brazile to speak at our CLE, we would have a fantastic event. President Crum also asked everyone to come up with suggestions for a great speaker for our CLE. Amie Clifford and Liz Zeck asked the board to still consider doing the CLE without the assistance of the SC Bar, in order to have more control and to actually make money on the event because we wouldn’t have the tremendous overhead costs that the Bar had. President Crum asked that Liz Zeck make a comparative cost analysis of SCWLA vs. the SC Bar doing our CLE.
- d. Supreme Court Trip 2008. Abigail Walsh and Toya Hampton Green. Toya reported that the May 2008 trip, on Memorial Day weekend, in conjunction with the Georgia Women Lawyers Association, was coming along very well, and they had reserved a block of rooms at the Phoenix Hotel. Twenty-three SCWLA members were already confirmed to attend and there would only be space for 2 more due to the division of available spaces. The Georgia women lawyers already had their 25 confirmed and had a significant waiting list. Abigail reported that all plans were set and they were just waiting for the last few to commit. The final concern was to make sure that everyone’s paper-work was in order so they could be admitted to practice before the Supreme Court. Plans for Sunday included a reception and a voluntary dinner which the Georgia women definitely planned to attend. On Monday, a joint breakfast was planned along with photo sessions. Toya noted that she would not be making the trip because she was expecting, and that Suzie Shannon would be the new Co-Chair. President Crum thanked Toya and Abigail for all their efforts.
- e. Mini-CLEs. Amie Clifford reported that the planned CLEs for November (07) had fallen through because the chosen venue was no longer available. New plans included having Lee Coggiola as a speaker, probably in March, with potential venues being county courthouses on Friday afternoons. The plan for each CLE would be to have a set of pre-made materials that could be used by a variety of speakers as the program moved through the various SCWLA regions. Everyone was asked to contact Amie with ideas for topics.
- f. Awards and Nominating Committee- Bissell Award. 2007 Chair, Bebe Barton reported on the overwhelming success of the Bissell Award Reception in North Carolina for Judge Williams. Bebe noted that it was exactly a year ago that we began working with NC on the Asheville CLE, and she was happy we had taken the opportunity to honor Judge Williams as the new Chief Judge of the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals, and combined it with selecting Judge Williams as the Bissell Award recipient. Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s attendance at the Bissell Reception completely

complemented the wonderful evening, and made the presentation and recipient speeches even more memorable. President Crum agreed that the evening was one that would always be remembered and thanked Bebe for her tireless efforts in making the evening a success.

- g. Documentary. Liz Zeck reported that she just started researching what could be done to fix the documentary. Liz said that since SCWLA had sufficient funds to pay for needed revisions, a good outcome was likely. Liz planned to get together with Bebe and Kif Cook to go over what was done in the past, what needed to be done now, and what goals would be pursued.
- h. The Ladder Group. Amie Clifford. Amie reported on two failed attempts to hold a meeting. Amie suggested that the board put together a core group to carry on the important work that the original committee had begun. Amie noted that the updated list of boards and commissions is still unavailable, but she would keep requesting it. Regarding the “resume bank,” Amie suggested that everyone submit new ones, since the ones on file were clearly outdated. Amie asked that we send out a request for all members to resubmit them and she would store them electronically. Amie again asked that people email her with names of those who would be effective committee members. Since 2008 had a lot going on in terms of elections, Amie hoped that everyone would do whatever they could to help the Ladder Group fulfill its potential.

VII. New Business. Since March 17th, 2008 would be Chief Justice Toal’s 20th Anniversary on the Supreme Court, President Crum suggested that SCWLA have a reception sometime in the spring to commemorate this and all female judges - and the board unanimously agreed.

Bebe Barton announced that she had been named as Chair of the Professional Potential Task Force, by the SC Bar. Bebe reported that she was fortunate to have Alice Paylor, Stephanie Nye, Rosalyn Frierson, and Carolyn Matthews serve with her on this committee. The purpose of the committee was to help ascertain why so many were dissatisfied and/or unhappy in their practice, and a survey would be conducted to find answers. Bebe said she was particularly interested in understanding why women at the peak of their careers, just left the practice of law. Bebe stated that she planned to use SCWLA as the original test group for the survey, and then they would refine the survey based on the initial results. The SC Bar would fund the survey.

Sarah Leverette could not be present, but Rosalyn Frierson presented her request to the board to have SCWLA collaborate with the League of Women Voters to have a Forum in the fall that would have an education event on Constitution Day concerning “How to Secure a Fair and Independent Judiciary-with Special Emphasis on Diversity” Sarah had written for and received a grant to help pay for this event and she hoped SCWLA would work with the League to make it happen.

Rosalyn Frierson encouraged the board to plan an event with Women In Law (WIL) from the USC School of Law, so future women lawyers could get to know SCWLA, better. Natalie stated that she would like to do something similar with the Charleston Law School’s group.

VIII. Member News. **Leah Moody** is running for the SC Senate. **Katherine Wells’** husband, Jim Flanagan was set to argue a very important case before the US Supreme Court on April 21st. It’s a hearsay case concerning *Crawford*. **Flo Lester Vincent** will be invested as the next President of the SC Bar on May 8th, and President Crum suggested that we consider doing a special reception for her in Columbia – or possibly in conjunction with the fall CLE. **Toya Green’s** husband, **Dwayne M. Green**, is also running for the SC Senate, and both Toya and her husband are “Liberty Fellows.” President Crum reported that many SCWLA members were running for judgeships on the SC Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Circuit Court and Family Court – and she encouraged anyone

who was so inclined - to do what they could to support our members. It was planned that brief notices would be put in the *Briefcase* concerning all SCWLA candidates.

IX. Next Board Meeting: No date was set.

X. Adjournment. There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn. It was seconded and voted upon favorably.