

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF THE
WOMEN AND THE LAW SECTION OF THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS
APRIL 30, 2003 VIA TELECONFERENCE

Call to Order/Welcome

Misty Ventura of Dallas, Chair, convened the meeting by telephone at 6:05 P.M., determined a quorum was present, and welcomed those attending the meeting. The following officers were present: **Judy L. Ney** of Houston, Chair-Elect; **Teresa Oxford** of San Antonio, Vice-Chair-Membership; **Susan R. McMenemy** of Lubbock, Chronologist; Hon. **Deborah L. Ingraham** of Austin, Immediate Past Chair; and **Carolyn F. Moore** of Lubbock, Secretary. The following council members were present: **D'Metria Benson** of Dallas, **Jennifer Rustay** of Houston, **Christy Drake-Adams** of Austin, **Ralph H. Brock** of Lubbock, **Ronnie Harrison** of Houston, **Sherry R. Wetsch** of Houston, and **Mara Blatt** of El Paso. **Linda Butter**, alternate State Bar Board Advisor, was also present.

Lisa Smith of San Antonio, council member provided notice of a conflict before the meeting and thus had an excused absence.

The following people were absent: **Cynthia Reppert** of Austin, Vice-Chair-Newsletter Editor; **Lisa R. Hernandez** of Plano, Treasurer; **Louise B. Raggio** of Dallas, Emeritus Member; and **Kim J. Askew** of Dallas, State Bar Board Advisor.

Absence at February 22, 2002 Meeting in Austin

After a motion by Ms. Ingraham and a second by Mr. Brock, the council voted to excuse Ms. Blatt's absence at the February meeting due to an emergency.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Moore said the only one who submitted a change to the February 28, 2003 e-mail with minutes of the February 22, 2003 meeting was Ms. Butter, who said that she had sent an e-mail to Ms. Ventura explaining that she would be absent from the meeting. Ms. Moore said that she changed the minutes accordingly.

After a motion by Ms. Blatt, with a second by Ms. Oxford, the council voted to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2003 meeting of the council.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Hernandez, treasurer, who has recently given birth to a son, was not available to present a report.

Chair-Elect's Report

Annual Meeting Committee Report – the Section's Annual Meeting will be on Thursday, June 12, 2003, from 3 P.M. until 5 P.M. in Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center. Nancy B. Rapoport, Dean of University of Houston Law School will speak on "Images of Women Lawyers in the Media."

Ms. Rustay is getting donations for the Section to use to fund the annual meeting reception and other Section activities from the Association of Women Attorneys in Houston as well as Houston law firms. She requested that the Section send thank you letters to all donors and recognize donors at the Section's annual meeting and in the Section's newsletter.

Awards will be made at the annual meeting to the winner of the Sarah T. Hughes Award, the Honorable Alma Lopez of the Fourth Court of Appeals in San Antonio, and to the winner of the Ma'at Justice Award, Carolyn F. Moore of Lubbock. Ms. Wetsch, Chair of the Sections Awards Committee, will send letters to the winners, notifying them of their selection and informing them they can, if they wish, request up to \$100.00 from the Section as reimbursement for travel to Houston to accept the award.

Nominating Committee Report – Ms. Ney said that the Nominating Committee would submit the following slate of officers and council members at the annual meeting:

Teresa Oxford	Chair-Elect	San Antonio
D'Metria Benson	Vice-Chair Membership	Dallas
Lisa Smith	Vice-Chair Newsletter	San Antonio
Mara Blatt	Secretary	El Paso
Lisa Hernandez	Treasurer	Plano
Suzanne Duvall	Chronologist	Dallas

Council terms expiring in 2005

Ronnie E.G. Harrison	Houston
Charlotte Harper	Austin
Carolyn F. Moore	Lubbock
Carmen Samaniego	San Antonio
Kathy Cannon	Austin

Council term for one year, expiring in 2004

Georgina Benavides	McAllen
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The slate of nominees will be listed on the Section's web site in an attempt to meet the requirement that the Section's membership be notified of the slate at least 30 days before a vote is taken.

On a motion by Ms. Ney, with a second by Ms. Blatt, the Council approved the expenditure of funds, if necessary to fax and/or e-mail the slate of nominees to members of the Section to meet the 30-day notice requirement.

In addition to the slate of nominees, Judy Ney of Houston, elected chair-elect last year will assume duties as chair for the coming year. Misty Ventura will assume the position of Immediate Past Chair, and Louise B. Raggio will continue as emeritus voting member during the coming year. Council members Ralph H. Brock of Lubbock, Avo Stevens Butler of Sherman, Jennifer Rustay of Houston, and Sherry Wetsch of Houston will continue their positions, having already been elected for a term to end at the end of the 2004 State Bar year.

Ms. Ventura will talk with Louise Raggio about having copies of her new book **Texas Tornado; The Autobiography of a Crusader for Women's Rights and Family Justice** available for purchase at our annual meeting and/or about purchasing copies of the book so that the Section might give them to various people during the year.

CLE Report

Ms. Drake-Adams reminded Council members to volunteer as speakers at CLE events by filling out and returning the CLE form in the Section's most recent newsletter.

Newsletter/Mailing

Ms. Ingraham said that most, but not all, Council members have received the most recent edition of the Section's newsletter that was mailed several weeks ago. She said that the next newsletter should go out in mid-May. Council members agreed that both Ms. Ingraham and Ms. Smith have produced excellent newsletters.

Ms. Moore said that she would forward to Council members an e-mail that she received from Tony Alvarado, Executive Director of the State Bar, saying that he thought the entire newsletter was very good.

Membership Report

Ms. Oxford said that the Section has 524 members, making it a mid-sized Section of the State Bar.

She said that several Section members should attend the induction ceremony for new lawyers in Austin on May 19, 2003, to hand out information about the Section. She will have new brochures printed that include the Section's website. Ms. Ingraham and Ms. Drake-Adams volunteered to be at the ceremony.

Pro Bono Report

Ms. Harrison said she would be selling something, which will be very nice, at the State Bar Annual Meeting on behalf of the Section. Proceeds of the sales will go to the Women's Advocacy Project.

Chronologist Report

Ms. McMenemy interviewed Mary Lou Robinson, Federal District Judge of the Northern District of Texas, sitting in Amarillo, as part of the chronology project of the Section. She also prepared a summary of the interview for the Section's newsletter.

Web Site Report

Ms. Ingraham stated that when the Section's web master has sent invoices to the Section's treasurer, the invoices did not explain all of the work he did on the web site. She said that since the web master has completed all of the written instructions she has given him in the past, she will ask that he include those written instructions, along with a note that the instructions were followed and completed, to the Section's treasurer when he sends an invoice requesting payment for work done on the web site. She also explained that both she and the web master are having problems with their computers, which has made it difficult to complete all the work needed on the Section's web site.

Gender Bias Task Force Liaison Report

Ms. Ingraham said that the task force would be meeting soon.

Texas Women Lawyers Association Representative Report

Ms. Ingraham said that TWL had a continuing legal education program in February in Austin. TWL has also proposed a resolution of no sex with clients that will be voted on at the Resolutions Committee of the State Bar at the Annual Meeting in Houston.

After Mr. Brock explained that the resolution has some major misstatements and might prompt the State Bar Board to rescind its approval of a resolution sent by Women in the Profession and this Section, the Council asked Mr. Brock to contact TWL's leader, Susan Morrison, to discuss our concerns and explain that we are in favor of a resolution that prohibits attorneys from having sex with their clients and we believe that the proposed rule approved by the Board has a chance of being adopted by the lawyers of Texas once the State Bar calls a referendum that requires only a majority of those voting to decide the issue. Currently a referendum requires 51% of the entire bar to vote before it is passed. If the Legislature approves the proposed change in vote on a referendum, then only a majority of those voting could decide the issue.

New Business

Section Report (due May 1) – Ms. Ventura will prepare the Section’s annual report for the State Bar of Texas. She requested that council members send her any comments they might have for the annual report.

Council of Chairs Meeting (April 4th) Ms. Ventura was ill and did not attend the meeting. Mr. Brock said that Demetrius Bivins was re-nominated to be the representative to the State Bar Board from small sections and that David East, law professor at the University of Houston Law School, was nominated to be a representative from large sections. Mr. Brock complimented the work of both men, saying that Mr. Bivins was already well respected as a representative and that Professor East had implemented a much needed handbook that will help members of the Council of Chairs understand the council and their function.

National Council of Women Bar Associations (NCWBA) Board Member/Delegate – Ms. Ventura reminded the council that the Section had already voted to allot \$500.00 of next year’s budget to help fund expenses of an NCWBA Board member who is also a member of the Section. Lee Baldwin, a Texas lawyer currently on the NCWBA Board, spends between \$1500 and \$2000 year on expenses for travel, food, and lodging to meetings.

Ms. Ventura said that we would know in mid-May if Ms. Baldwin’s nomination of Ms. Oxford as a Board member of NCWBA was approved.

Ms. Moore said that she and Mr. Brock would be willing to help defray expenses by giving the NCWBA Board member a Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards round trip ticket and suggested that other members of the council might do the same. Ms. Ventura said that she would contact local bar associations for donations. Other council members suggested that the Section have a fundraiser, solicit individual contributions, and use any money that might be left over from donations made to the Section for the annual meeting.

Resolutions Committee Delegate - Ms. Harrison, previously named as the Section’s alternate voting member to the Resolutions Committee, will be the Section’s voting representative at the Resolutions Committee Meeting in Houston at the Annual Meeting. Since the Resolutions Committee will meet at the same time that the Section will have its annual meeting, Ms. Ventura, previously named as the Section’s voting member of the Resolutions Committee, will need to chair the Section’s meeting.

Old Business

Awards Committee – Ms. Moore said that she sent the Section’s nomination of the Women’s Advocacy Project for the 2003 State Bar Pro Bono Award to the Legal Services to the Poor in Civil Matters Committee of the State Bar, which will name the winner at the Annual Meeting in Houston. Amy Wright, Executive Director of the Women’s Advocacy Project, sent the Section a thank you note for the nomination.

Women's Legislative Days, March 3-4, 2003, in Austin – Ms. Ingraham said that very few people attended the event in Austin. She believes that the next Women's Legislative Day's, which will be chaired by Malinda Gaul, former President of this Section, from San Antonio, will be an event worth attending. The next legislative days will be in 2005.

Ms. Ingraham added that she had attended a very interesting event, Equal Pay Day, on April 15, 2003, and learned that women lose a lot in wages over their working life as a result of unequal pay.

Task Force/Conference on Women's Bar Organizations – Ms. Blatt did not have a report.

Council Member Job Descriptions – Ms. Ventura said that she is still working on the job descriptions.

ABA Commission Report (April hearing in Houston) – None of the council members attended any of the meetings.

Announcements – Ms. Ventura reminded council members to attend the Section's annual meeting in Houston on Thursday, June 12, 2003, from 3:00 P.M. until 5:00 P.M. at the George R. Brown Convention Center. Ms. Ventura, whose first child is due on June 5, 2003, plans to attend the meeting with her spouse and new baby girl.

Ms. Ventura adjourned the meeting at 7:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted

(Original signature on file)

Carolyn F. Moore
Secretary

May 7, 2003