

THE WOMEN'S ADVOCATE

A CATALYST FOR 2004

Women and the Law Section Newsletter
www.txwomenlawsection.org

October 2004

Vol. 27, No. 4



2004-2005 WAL OFFICERS AND COUNCIL

CHAIR

Teresa Oxford
Law Office of Teresa A. Oxford
519 S. Presa
San Antonio, Texas 78205
Office: 210/227-3200
E-Mail: teresaoxford@sbcglobal.net

CHAIR-ELECT

Mara Aysa Blatt
500 E. San Antonio, 12th Floor
El Paso, Texas 79901
Office: 915/546-2240

VICE-CHAIR/MEMBERSHIP

D'Metria Benson
Law Office of D'Metria Benson
1920 Abrams Parkway, LB 398
Dallas, Texas 75214
Office: 214/320-4853

VICE-CHAIR/NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Lisa Smith
David Van Os & Associates, P.C.
1606 N. Alamo Street
San Antonio, Texas 78215
Office: 210/225-1955
E-Mail: lisa@vanoslaw.com

SECRETARY

Avo Stevens Butler
100 N. Travis Street, Suite 402
Sherman, Texas 75090-0016
Office: 903/893-3581
E-mail: avobutler@hotmail.com

TREASURER

Ralph Brock
P. O. Box 959
Lubbock, Texas 79408-0959

CHRONOLOGIST

Suzanne Duvall
Burdin Mediations
4080 Stanford Ave.
Dallas, Texas 75225
Office: 214/361-0802

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

Judy L. Ney
12242 Brookvalley Dr.
Houston, Texas 77071
Office: 713/723-1937
E-Mail: judylneyjd@aol.com

EMERITUS VOTING MEMBER

Louise B. Raggio, Dallas

COUNCIL TERMS EXPIRING 2005

Georgina Benavides, McAllen
Kathy Cannon, Austin
Ronnie Harrison, Houston
Carolyn Moore, Lubbock
Carmen Samaniego, San Antonio

COUNCIL TERMS EXPIRING 2006

Lisa Hernandez
Sherry Wetsch
Tonya Carter
Laura Benitez

BOARD ADVISORS

Ophelia F. Camina, Dallas
Velva L. Price, Austin

CHAIR'S CORNER

Another year gone by, and a new year to look forward to. We can not move forward without thanking our immediate past chair, **Judy Ney**, for her leadership and generosity over the past year. Judy proved to be a wonderful leader who guided the Women and the Law Section through one of its most successful years. Congratulations also go out to Judy for her election to the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors as a mid size section representative. In this capacity Judy will continue to support our section and the legal profession. Congratulations Judy and thank you for a great year.

Our Annual Meeting was held on June 24, 2004 in San Antonio. We had a wonderful turnout for the meeting and our CLE program. At the annual meeting two new council members were elected. We look forward to working with **Tonya Carter** of Houston and **Laura Benitez Geisler** of Dallas. In addition we are fortunate to have **Mara Blatt**, **D'Metria Benson**, **Lisa Smith**, **Avo Stevens Butler**, **Ralph Brock**, **Suzanne Duvall**, **Judy Ney**, **Gina Benavides**, **Kathy Cannon**, **Ronnie Harrison**, **Carolyn Moore**, **Carmen Samaniego**, **Lisa Hernandez**, **Sherry Wetsch** and **Louise Raggio** as returning officers and council members.

Our CLE program was well received. We were graced with the presence of **Charlye O. Farris** and **Judge Pamela Mathy**. Ms. Farris discussed the professional responsibility of women attorneys and judges in today's workplace. Ms. Farris discussed the changing role of women attorneys and how that has affected their professional responsibility in today's workplace. Ms. Farris discussed how this professional responsibility relates to the attorney's relationship with her clients and how to avoid ethical pitfalls. Judge Mathy authored an article published in the Winter 2003 *The Public Lawyer*, an edition subtitled "Diversity and the Public Law Office" and based her remarks on this article. Judge Mathy addressed the professional responsibility that female lawyers have to the public and how to assure that lawyers are addressing this professional responsibility. Judge Mathy provided some "do's and don'ts" that women attorneys should follow to avoid any unethical perceptions and to avoid a grievance.

In addition to our annual meeting and CLE, the incomparable **Ronnie Harrison** again chaired our annual fundraiser to benefit the Women's Advocacy Center. Ms. Harrison collected thousands of books throughout the year and had them delivered to the convention center for sale to attendees at the SBOT Annual Meeting. As always, it was a popular project and generated a net contribution larger than any past year to the Women's Advocacy Project. If you have not participated in this fundraiser check us out again next year at the annual meeting. For a small donation you will be given a large bag and can fill it to overflow capacity with books. Fiction, non-fiction, children's books, travel, health, old, new, you name it we have it thanks to Ronnie's efforts. Thank you, Ronnie!

This year we look forward to a major change in our newsletter. In an effort to provide our members with quality information and a wide variety of articles and information our newsletter will now be provided via email to our members. Just make sure we have your correct email address and a notice will be sent directly to your email alerting you that the newsletter is available for reading at your convenience on our website at <http://www.txwomenlawsection.org/> We hope that you will enjoy this new format and encourage you to provide us with input and the new newsletter.

I look forward to a wonderful year and appreciate the opportunity to chair this section.

Teresa A. Oxford
Chair

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 24, 2004 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WOMEN AND THE LAW SECTION OF THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS

Call to Order

Judy L. Ney of Houston, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. in San Antonio at the Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center. She welcomed those attending, announcing that there would be a short business meeting prior to the continuing legal education program. She encouraged attendees to have refreshments, which were provided by Bexar County Women's Bar Association.

Attendees

Teresa Oxford of San Antonio, Chair-elect; D'Metria Benson of Dallas, Vice-chair/Membership; Lisa Smith of San Antonio, Vice-chair/Newsletter; and council members Georgina Benavides of McAllen, Ralph H. Brock of Lubbock, Ronnie E. G. Harrison of Houston, Carolyn F. Moore of Lubbock, and Carmen Samaniego of San Antonio were present. Also attending were Kristie Brasfield, State Bar staff liaison, many members of the Section, and many guests.

Mara Blatt of El Paso, Secretary; Lisa Hernandez of Plano, Treasurer; Suzanne Mann Duvall of Dallas, Chronologist; Misty Ventura of Dallas, Immediate Past Chair; Louise B. Raggio of Dallas, emeritus voting member; and council members Avo Stevens Butler of Sherman and Sherry Wetsch of Houston had excused absences.

Not present was Deborah Ingraham of Austin, emeritus voting member.

Ney said that Moore would act as secretary during the meeting.

Secretary's Report

Upon motion by Beryl Crowley and second by Brock, the minutes of the April 3, 2004 meeting of the Section council were approved by voice vote.

Treasurer's Report

Ney stated that the Section has a balance of \$1427.54 as of June 23, 2004.

Pro Bono Report

Ney said that Harrison, along with Leo Ney, long time volunteer for the Section, and Victoria Corcoran, Development Director for Women's Advocacy Project, were selling bags for \$20.00 to attendees at the State Bar Annual Meeting in the convention center. She said that once attendees purchase bags, they could fill the bags with an assortment of books that Harrison had collected during the year. Proceeds from the sale will go to Women's Advocacy Project. Ney encouraged everyone attending the meeting to purchase a bag and fill it with books.

Membership Report

Benson said that she would continue to work on getting more lawyers to join the Section.

Nominations/Elections

Ney announced that the nominations committee had sub-

mitted the following Slate of Officers for the Women and the Law Section for 2004-05

Officers

Chair	Teresa A. Oxford (San Antonio)
Chair-Elect	Mara Blatt (El Paso)
Vice-Chair of Membership	D'Metria Benson (Dallas)
Vice-Chair of Newsletter	Lisa Smith (San Antonio)
Secretary	Avo Stevens Butler (Sherman)
Treasurer	Ralph H. Brock (Lubbock)
Chronologist	Suzanne Duvall (Dallas)
Immediate Past Chair	Judy Ney (Houston)
Emeritus Voting Member	Louise Raggio (Dallas)

Council Positions Expiring 2006

Lisa Hernandez (Dallas)
Sherry Wetch (Houston)
Tonya Carter (Houston)
Laura Benitez Geisler (Dallas)

Council members who have positions that will not expire until 2005 were voted into office last year and will continue their positions until June of 2005. Those council members are:

Georgina Benavides (McAllen)
Kathy Cannon (Austin)
Ronnie Harrison (Houston)
Carolyn Moore (Lubbock)
Carmen Samaniego (San Antonio).

Ney said that officers who will be voted on include the chair-elect, vice-chairs, secretary, treasurer, chronologist, and all council members whose terms will expire in 2006.

Moore moved that the nominations cease and that the slate of nominees from the nominations committee be accepted by acclamation. The motion passed.

Ney then turned the meeting over to Oxford, who gave Ney a plaque to commemorate her service to the Section and thanked her for all that she had accomplished for the Section. Ney, who has been elected to be a Section representative to the State Bar Board of Directors, and Brock, who is also on the State Bar Board of Directors, left the meeting to attend a State Bar Board of Directors meeting.

Announcements

Oxford gave all attendees who were presidents or representatives from local women's bar associations a rose and asked that they join together for a photograph. The roses were compliments of Esquire Deposition Services. Oxford said that the next meeting of the Section council would probably be the second Saturday in September in Austin.

Smith stated that the Section's newsletter, **The Women's Advocate**, which has been sent by mail to members, would be sent by e-mail to all members who have listed their e-mail addresses with the Section. Members who do not have e-mail or who prefer to receive the newsletter by mail, will continue to receive the newsletter by mail.

Samaniego asked attendees to consider signing up as organ donors, explaining that more information on the subject was available in the exhibit hall of the convention center. She suggested that the Section might want to work on a continuing legal education program about women's health with the Insurance Section and the Health Law Section.

Beryl Crowley, Executive Director for the Texas Center for Legal Ethics and Professionalism, said that Louise Raggio was one of two winners of the first Sandra Day O'Connor Award. She congratulated the Section for nominating Ms. Raggio. In addition, Crowley suggested that in the future the Section might want to work with the Center in making the award, which she predicted would be an annual event.

Awards

Oxford presented the Section's Sarah T. Hughes Award to Charley Farris of Wichita Falls, Texas. Ms. Farris accepted the award, expressing appreciation for recognition from the Section. She said that she had known Judge Hughes and was very honored to receive the award.

Oxford announced that Beverly Tarpley of Odessa was the recipient of the Section's Ma'at Justice Award. Ms. Cynthia Allen accepted the award on behalf of Ms. Tarpley who was celebrating her 50th wedding anniversary in Iceland.

Continuing Legal Education Program

Oxford introduced both Charlye O. Farris, attorney from Wichita Falls, and the Honorable Pamela Mathy, U.S. Federal Magistrate Judge of San Antonio who spoke on **Women and the Law: Today's Issues, Today's Struggles**. Attendees of the program received one hour of ethics credit of continuing legal education

The meeting adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn F. Moore, Acting on behalf of
Myra Blatt, Secretary
July 2, 2004

AROUND THE STATE

The Houston Association of Women Attorneys will host its 2004 Judicial Reception honoring the Harris County Civil Court Judges on Wednesday, October 27, 2004 at the Four Season Hotel, 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm.

The reception will provide the opportunity to meet and greet local attorneys and judges. In addition to honoring the judges, the Association of Women Attorneys will award scholarships to six female law students from area law schools.

AWA President, Katherine McCollough Yzaguirre encourages TWL members to attend. Reception tickets are \$45.00, including hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. Tickets may be reserved by contacting Sorcha Landau at 713-758-2460 or slandau@velaw.com.

The October 8th program for the Lubbock County Women Lawyers Association concerned a lawsuit over lost or mis-identified graves brought against the City of Lubbock, the City of Lubbock Cemetery, and Lubbock County. The cemetery was originally seven or eight separate racially or religiously segregated cemeteries. The lead plaintiff used to visit the grave of a relative every Sunday. She moved to Colorado, and when she returned, she could not find the grave, and the cemetery's records did not show that it existed.

Louise Raggio was the special guest and speaker at a reception October 13th for the Lubbock County Women Lawyers Association and Women in Law, the women law students' organization at Texas Tech University School of Law. The reception was held at the home of Dean Walt Huffman and his wife, Anne.

Stephen Hamilton of Boatwright & Hamilton, spoke to the Lubbock County Women Lawyers on September 10, 2004, concerning orders issued by Judge Jim Bob Darnell toward

Hamilton's criminal defendant in trial. Because the defendant was disruptive, the judge ordered the defendant removed from the courtroom, and later ordered duct tape to be placed on the defendant's mouth so that no one in the courtroom could hear the defendant screaming obscenities and threats. Hamilton said that the jury never saw the defendant with duct tape over his mouth but could see marks from the duct tape when the defendant was returned to the courtroom. Hamilton explained that the defendant had to be physically removed from his jail cell and transported to the courtroom via a wheel chair as a result of the defendant's refusal to leave his jail cell voluntarily on the day of sentencing.

Nicky Boatwright, law partner of Hamilton's, stated that national news media, including CNN, ran stories about the case.

Newly elected officers for the association are:

Co-presidents are Charlotte Bingham of Chrenshaw, Dupree & Milam, L.L.P. and Janis K. Vaughn of the Texas Attorney General's Office.

Co-secretaries are Rebecca Crump of Legal Aid of Northwest Texas and Cathy Givens of the Criminal District Attorney's Office.

Treasurer is Jackie Hampton who is a solo practitioner. She agreed to be nominated for a second term, having just completed the first term.

Prior to the end of the meeting, Ms. Hampton presented Kelly Pharr Tesch, outgoing president, with a plaque of appreciation from the association. Lisa D. Ratzke, outgoing secretary and local attorney, was recognized for her contributions to the association.

SPOTLIGHT ON WAL SECTION CHAIR, TERESA A. OXFORD

The Women and the Law Section Council is fortunate to have outstanding lawyer Teresa A. Oxford as our Chair. Teresa was first elected to the WAL Council in 2000 and has served in several capacities since that time. Teresa has a diverse background including having had the privilege to serve as an intern for Federal Judge Fred Biery and served as an Assistant District Attorney for Bexar County. Currently she is a solo practitioner in San Antonio whose practice centers on family law and criminal defense.

Teresa has vast experience in the securities industry, most recently as Associate General Counsel for U.S. Global Investors, Inc., an international money management firm with 1.3 billion dollars under management. Prior to that, Teresa spent approximately 12 years as director of compliance and/or operations for several national brokerage firms. Teresa continues to keep her finger on the pulse of the securities industry by augmenting her practice serving as an arbitrator for the National Association of Securities Dealers.

Teresa is well known for her commitment to the community. In addition to her work with the WAL she has served on numerous boards including the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Bexar County Women's Bar Association, Texas Women Lawyers and Musical Bridges Around the World. In 2002 she was the recipient of the Belva Lockwood Outstanding Young Lawyer award in recognition of her many significant contributions to the improvement of the status of women in the law.

When time allows, Teresa enjoys traveling. In addition to travel throughout the United States, Teresa has traveled to Canada, France, Belgium, Italy, Greece, Croatia, and Turkey.

Teresa is a graduate of St. Mary's University School of Law. She received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration-Finance for the University of Texas at Arlington.

ON THE MOVE

The Women and Law Section would like to invite you to share information on your latest move, promotion, or accomplishment. Please email this information to the section for inclusion in the newsletter.

Sherry Wetsch is pleased to announce that she has recently been admitted to the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service's Roster of Arbitrators.

2004 ANNUAL MEETING



Teresa A. Oxford, Chair presents Immediate Past Chair Judy Ney with a plaque to commemorate her service to the Section.



Honorable Pamela Mathy, U.S. Federal Magistrate Judge from San Antonio and Charlye O. Farris, attorney from Wichita Falls.



Charlye O. Farris of Wichita Falls, Texas accepts the Section's Sarah T. Hughes Award from Teresa A. Oxford.



Teresa A. Oxford, Chair announced that Beverly Tarpley of Odessa was the recipient of the Ma'at Justice Award. Ms. Cynthia Allen accepted the award on behalf of Ms. Tarpley.



Teresa Oxford presented representatives from local women's bar associations a rose in recognition of their achievements. Bar representatives included Tonya Carter, Houston, Beryl Crowley, Texas Center for Legal Ethics and Professionalism, Carolyn Moore, Lubbock, and Carmen Samaniego, San Antonio.

STATE BAR OF TEXAS
P.O. Box 12487
Austin, Texas 78711-2487

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 1804
AUSTIN, TEXAS