



Minutes of March Meeting of Women and the Law Section  
State Bar of Texas  
May 21, 2020  
Zoom Videoconference

Nikki Chargois-Allen, Chair, called the May board meeting of the Women and the Law Section to order at 12:05 P.M. after it was determined that a quorum was present.

Council members in attendance via Zoom Videoconference: Nikki Chargois-Allen, Kirby Drake, Deborah Race, Leigh Hunt Goodson, Deborah Cordova, Judy Ney, Denise Alex, Danae Benton, Teresa Schiller, Betsy Johnson, Elizabeth Cantu, Nadia Medrano, Tuhina Sharma and Sharon Hemphill. Ali Colvin, Board Advisor, was also present.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES/SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The minutes of the April 16, 2020 teleconference which had been previously emailed to the Council for review were presented. Deborah Race moved to approve the minutes with a second by Judy Ney. The minutes were approved as presented unanimously.

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Judy Ney reported \$92,381.37 in available funds at the end of April. There is \$2093.83 in outstanding bills to be paid which includes the \$1,500.00 approved to be paid to the writing award winners with the balance allocated to CLE and quarterly section dues. Deborah Race moved to accept the Treasurer's Report with a second by Elizabeth Cantu. The Treasurer's report was approved unanimously.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Membership.** Deborah Race has not received the member update from Lindsey at SBOT yet. Nikki drafted a congratulations announcement to new bar members and sent to SBOT for email blast.

**CLE Report.** Kirby Drake reported that the May 6 CLE on employment issues related to recent Congressional acts was attended by 120 members. This was the last CLE for this fiscal year. Discussion was held regarding sending surveys to past attendees to measure their likes/dislikes and receive recommendations for speakers and topics in the coming year. Monthly telephonic CLE's are scheduled to start again in August.

**Annual Meeting.** The Annual Meeting will be held via videoconference this year. Each section was given the option to shorten CLE to 45 minutes and pre-tape to submit to SBOT or opt out

this year or wait and hold a live CLE later. WAL will be recording the CLE panel presentation the first week of June with panelists Erin Geiger Smith, Ellen Yarrow and Sharon Hemphill.

SBOT has waived the requirement for an in-person section meeting this year. Due to size, WAL annual meeting will be done by email. A 30-day notice of the date of the annual meeting and request for nominations of council members and officers will be sent to members via email. SBOT will send link for members to approve/disapprove the budget and the proposed 2020-2021 Slate of Officers and Council Members.

**Chronologist PowerPoint.** Natasha Martinez reported she needs the Council/WAL members to send her pictures of past award winners, receptions, CLE's etc. She will email Kirby to confirm past CLE's and request will be sent out with the email blast about the WAL annual meeting.

**Awards Committee.** Deborah Race reports there is still only one nomination for the "Sarah T. Hughes Award". This award was described as a "lifetime achievement" type of award for women who have paved a way in their careers. Someone who has received recognition and a high degree of excellence that has opened doors for others.

The "Louise Raggio Award" still has no nominations. This award is for women who have contributed to the furtherance of justice in society and had a large contribution to their community for law professions.

Discussion was held regarding the lack of nominations and possible resolutions since the Annual Meeting was cancelled. In other years, we have received 20-30 nominations. Judy Ney recommended and Danae Benton concurred that we should present the awards to all of the female attorneys in the state as a group to honor them during this unprecedented time and highlight all of the roles female attorneys have had to take on due to the COvid pandemic. Deborah Race moved to forego specific individual recipients this year and recognize past winners and all women attorneys in Texas. Deborah Cordova seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Scholarship Update.** Teresa Schiller will tell recipients we will mail them their checks and awards.

**Newsletter/Website.** Danae Benton reported that she wants to publish the newsletter no later than June 15<sup>th</sup> and requested all content be sent to Itzel Martinez via email by June 14<sup>th</sup>. Tuhina Sharma suggested we reach out to members via an email blast and "check in" – see how members are coping during this time. Danae will reach out to Lindsey at SBOT. Danae has also been in communication with Lindsey to find out who has admin access to the Website. Website contact is MIA - Nikki will also check to see if we are using 3<sup>rd</sup> party or specific SBOT person.

**Upcoming Meeting Dates and Events.** The next meeting is a section meeting and will be held via email. Nikki will work with Teresa on the email blast. We are hoping for an in-person meeting later this year.

**Old Business.** Houston Women's Bar responded to our request to host a reception in Houston. WAL is hoping to schedule something in the fall of this year.

**New Business.** Nikki thanked Elizabeth Cantu for all of her hard work on closing out/cancelling the Annual Meeting reception. Ideas for the reception will be submitted to Teresa as chair next year. No funds were expended on the reception.

No further business was declared and Denise Alex moved to adjourn the meeting, with a second by Danae Benton. The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.