



Minutes of October Meeting of Women and the Law Section  
State Bar of Texas  
October 26, 2019  
Live Meeting – Austin, Texas

Nikki Chargois-Allen, Chair, called the October board meeting of the Women and the Law Section to order at 10:08 A.M. after it was determined that a quorum was present.

Council members in attendance in Austin: Nikki Chargois-Allen, Deborah Cordova, Itzel Martinez, Denise Alex, Betsy Johnson, Sharon Hemphill, Kirby Drake, Deborah Race, Judy Ney, Leigh Hunt Goodson and SBOT Liaison Nicole Voyles.

Council Members in attendance via telephone: Sylvia Lopez-Shafer, Tuhina Sharma, Ellis Iverson, Danae Benton, Natasha Martinez, and .

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

The minutes of the September 19, 2019 teleconference which had been previously emailed to the Council for review were presented. Denise Alex moved to approve the minutes as presented, with a second by Sharon Hemphill. The minutes were approved as presented unanimously.

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

Judy Ney presented the Treasurer's report, which had been previously emailed to the Council. The Council reviewed the September financials and noted the financials as presented did not include the expense for the table at the Access to Justice Dinner. Deborah Race moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and approve the FY 19-20 budget with a second by Danae Benton. The Treasurer's report and FY 19-20 budget were approved unanimously.

Reimbursement forms should be sent to Judy within two weeks from the date of the event needing reimbursement. Send to Judy at her personal email address. Nikki will circulate FY 19-20 form to Council.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Membership.** Deborah Race reported WAL has 1,181 members, 345 non-renewals and 344 brand new memberships. The list of renewing, new and non-renewing members was circulated to the Council for review prior to the meeting. The Council discussed reaching out to non-members and non-renewing members. Recommendation was made for Council

members to tout benefit of membership by forwarding monthly CLE emails to friends and asking if they are members. Deborah Race will contact Lyndsay Smith at SBOT for full list.

Further discussion was held regarding ideas to increase member participation and benefits. Kirby recommended adding a checkbox to the membership materials for new members to check off committees of interest to them. Also recommended: an email blast to members with opportunities to participate on committees of interest.

**Newsletter/Website.** SBOT wants a section liaison for the proposed new disciplinary rules (Center for Disciplinary Rules). CDR will have a website with the proposed rule changes. Summary and links will be in the newsletter. Deborah Race volunteered to be the liaison. Brad Johnson is the SBOT contact.

Nikki Chargois-Allen will send pictures from the Access to Justice dinner to Danae for the newsletter. The Council agreed it was a great event and we should participate in the future.

Danae asked new Council members or Council members with to change their photos to send their headshots and the newsletter will go out next week. The Council members were asked to think of ideas for articles for the January newsletter and submit them to Danae.

The website is the primary focus this year. Danae is hoping to have it updated within the next six months if not by the end of the year. WAL is working with a third-party vendor per FY 18-19 budget approval.

**CLE Report.** Kirby Drake reported the October CLE – Tips for Wellness in the Practice of Law presented by TLAP staff attorney Erica Grigg was well attended. The topic was chosen in honor of October being Mental Health Awareness Month. The next telephone CLE is scheduled for November 12, 2019 and is titled Implications of Implicit Bias on Women in Law Practice: From our Careers, to our Clients, to the Courtroom. It will be presented by Mindy Gulati, President of Fundamental Advisory. The December CLE is still in process, but January is calendared. Melinda Gaul will be presenting on Closing the Wage Gap: Paycheck Fairness Act. Kirby asked anyone with ideas for topics or speakers to email her. The topics do not have to be limited to women related issues. Discussion was held regarding possibly upgrading to some sort of webinar platform in the future.

**Social Media.** Itzel Martinez is the new Social Media chair. She would like to update/freshen up the group Facebook page and create an Instagram page. Discussion was held regarding a spotlight on our members – a “women crush Wednesday” type of idea. Council members were asked to send suggested content and pictures to Itzel. Discussion was also held regarding a change to the Facebook page that would allow only administrator approved posts to be posted.

**Scholarship Program.** Teresa Schiller was not present at the meeting but discussion was held regarding increasing the scholarship awards for the upcoming scholarship competition in the spring. Deborah Race moved to increase the budget to include a \$1500.00 line item for the scholarships (\$1,000.00 for 1<sup>st</sup> place and \$500.00 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner). Deborah Cordova seconded the motion which passed unanimously. A motion to amend the budget which had been previously approved without the line item was made by Denise Alex and seconded by Deborah Race. The motion passed unanimously.

The announcement for the competition will be amended by the Scholarship committee to reflect the changes to the awards.

Judy Ney recommended advising Harriet Miers of the award in her name and inviting her to the awards ceremony. The idea was sent to committee to create letter and invitation.

**Fall/Spring Networking.** Discussion was held in regard to co-sponsoring hospitality event at the Texas Women Lawyers Annual Meeting on February 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in McAllen. Deborah Cordova is the chair of TWL this year and requested a \$750.00 donation to co-sponsor a reception. Deborah Race moved to approve, and Sharon Hemphill seconded. WAL co-sponsoring the TWL reception passed unanimously.

TMCP contacted Nikki to see if WAL wanted to set up a table at their upcoming conference in Las Colinas on November 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. Leigh Hunt Goodson and Kirby Drake volunteered to attend and man the table.

Judy Ney recommended we pass out brochures at the Family Law Conference and Bar Leaders Conferences.

**Ideas for Annual CLE.** Discussion was held regarding planning for the Annual Meeting in June in Dallas. The CLE and awards will be held on Thursday afternoon followed by a reception. The reception will most likely be onsite based on the location of the Anatole. Volunteers for the CLE committee are Nikki Chargois-Allen, Sharon Hemphill, Ellis Iverson, Kirby Drake and Nicole Voyles. Ellis recommended Erin Geiger Smith as a potential speaker. She is a freelance journalist and is publishing a book on the women's suffrage movement and 2020 is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the women right to vote. Rough Road to Justice theme was also recommended.

**Pro Bono Workgroup.** Leigh Hunt Goodson will attend meeting in Austin on November 6, 2019 as section liaison and report back to the committee at the November meeting.

**Upcoming Meeting Dates and Events.** The next meeting will be held on November 14, 2019 via teleconference.

**New Business.** Ideas were tossed around for an annual retreat similar to Dallas Women Lawyer's Association. Council agreed to brainstorm for next time.

No further business was declared and Deborah Race moved to adjourn the meeting with a second by Sharon Hemphill.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 P.M.