



Minutes of Meeting of Women and the Law Section  
State Bar of Texas  
October 21, 2020

Teresa Schiller, Chair, called the October board meeting of the Women and the Law Section to order at 12:00 P.M. after it was determined that a quorum was present.

Council members in attendance via telephone or video: Teresa Schiller, Betsy Johnson, Nikki Chargois-Allen, Leigh Goodson, Natasha Martinez, Laura Kugler, Jessica Mendez, Elizabeth Cantu, Cynthia Barela Graham, Kirby Drake, Judge Maria Salas-Mendoza, Susan Kelly, Judy Ney, Deborah Race, Denise Alex.

Guests in attendance via telephone: Amy Welborn and Wendy-Adele Humphrey.

### **MEETING MINUTES**

Minutes of Meeting for the meetings dated August 19, 2020, September 16, 2020 and October 2, 2020. The motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for August 19, 2020 was seconded and carried unanimously. The motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for September 16, 2020 was seconded and carried unanimously. The motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for August 19, 2020 was seconded and carried unanimously.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Treasurer Natasha Martinez reported a balance of \$112,455 ending August 31, 2020, and she provided other financial information for the period from July 1 to August 31, 2020.

### **AFFINITY SECTION GROUP NOMINATION(S) FOR SBOT AT-LARGE DIRECTOR**

Chair Teresa Schiller reported on a potential Affinity Section Group nomination of a leader from our section for the position of State Bar at-large director. She stated that the Affinity Section Group is an informal group within the State Bar composed of leaders from certain sections and committees particularly focused on promoting diversity; Teresa Schiller participates on behalf of WAL. Email notices about nominations for an At-Large Director

were recently sent by the SBOT Board. The State Bar president appoints at-large positions. One of the four positions will become vacant next June. Traditionally, the goal has been to fill these slots with (i) diverse candidates who (ii) demonstrate knowledge gained from experience in the legal profession and the community necessary to ensure the board represents attorneys from varied backgrounds. The Affinity Section Group jointly would like to nominate one to three candidates for the soon to be open at-large position.

Ms. Schiller reported on certain Affinity Section Group strategies relating to nominations for this position. She then proposed Deborah Race as a potential nominee. Deborah Race is a former chair of the section and a past recipient of the section's Barbara Culver Clack Award. She was elected as emeritus member of the council, and is a co-chair of the section's Awards Committee.

A motion to present Deborah Race to the Affinity Section Group as a potential nominee was seconded and carried unanimously.

### **CLE COMMITTEE REPORT**

CLE Committee Co-chair Kirby Drake reported on the status of CLE programs for the year, and she proposed the approval of a CLE library for members on the section's website. She said that the section's CLE programs are being recorded in 2020/2021, and that SBOT suggested that the recordings be made available to section members on demand. An upgrade of a Members Only page on the section's website is in progress.

For the proposed CLE library, each CLE program would require a separate CLE number in order for viewers to receive CLE credit. The charge to the section for these numbers is expected to be approximately \$315 for 2020/2021.

A motion was made to approve the necessary expenditure to obtain separate CLE numbers allowing members to view the section programs and receive CLE credit without added cost. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

### **LAW SCHOOL WRITING COMPETITION**

Awards Committee Co-chairs Deborah Race and Judge Maria Salas-Mendoza reported about the Harriet E. Miers Writing Competition. Judge Mendoza reported that the topic will be to identify and analyze "legal challenges for women in Texas." The award for first place is \$1,000, and the award for second place is \$500. Ms. Race reported that the number of entrants was lower in 2019/2020 than in 2018/2019. She and Judge Mendoza asked council members to promote the competition so as to maximize the number of entrants this year. They stated that a proposed announcement about this year's competition would be circulated to the council for review. They also stated that a law-school contact list would be circulated so that council members could sign up to promote the program at particular law schools.

## **TEXAS TRIBUTE TO JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG**

Deborah Cordova, Section Council Member and President of Texas Women Lawyers (“TWL”), spoke about the upcoming Texas Tribute to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (“RBG”). TWL, the Dallas Women Lawyers Association, and other women’s bar associations are collaborating with the section on this program created to honor the life, work, and legacy of RBG. Ms. Cordova encouraged council members to send her potential questions that she could use in moderating the program’s panel. The event will be held on October 30, 2020 at noon. To date, there are 200 registrations. Ms. Cordova has applied for .5 hours Ethics CLE credit for the program.

## **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS**

Laura Kugler, a co-chair of the Business Development Workshops Committee, reported on a series of seven planned virtual workshops for the year. The workshops will cover the same or similar content, tweaked for particular geographic areas. The first workshop is scheduled for November 11, 2020 at noon, and it will include a focus on the Dallas/Fort Worth and North Texas area. Ms. Kugler encouraged council members to participate in the workshops, and to encourage others to do so as well.

## **SBOT PRO BONO WORKGROUP LIASON**

The State Bar of Texas Pro Bono Workgroup has requested a liaison from each section. Summer Olmos, Section Council Member, has agreed to serve as the section’s liaison.

The Workgroup was formed for the purpose of enhancing the culture of pro bono in Texas. The chairs are two former State Bar presidents – Terry Tottenham and Roland Johnson. Workgroup members include judges, local bar leaders, and leaders of legal aid programs. Its first meeting will be on November 5, 2020.

## **AN SBOT FOCUS ON DIVERSITY LISTENING SESSION**

Ms. Schiller reported that SBOT sent an email notice to its members about an upcoming program entitled “An SBOT Focus on Diversity Listening Session.” It was developed in response to certain controversial statements made by State Bar President Larry McDougal. She encouraged council members to attend because the section shares an interest in promoting diversity. A notice of the event and hyperlinked registration page are on the “Events” page of the section’s website.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was raised.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made at 1:00 pm, seconded and approved unanimously.



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Betsy Johnson, Secretary