

STATE BAR *of* TEXAS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

June 30, 2006

Annual Meeting — The Annual Meeting was a great success. While the financials are not yet complete, those who attended the meeting enjoyed a lot of good CLE, section meetings, and special programming. Congratulations to the Annual Meeting Committee and staff for a job well done.

Positive Response to Friday Update — During the Texas Legislature's recent special session on school finance and related taxation issues, the State Bar initiated an opt-in e-newsletter (similar in format to this Executive Director's Report). After the session ended, our Research & Analysis Department surveyed all 3,100 subscribers to the Friday Update. The results are an overwhelming endorsement of the service: 97 percent said it met their expectations, 99 percent said it provided useful information, and 98 percent said it should continue during future legislative sessions. As Research & Analysis Director Nils Olsson stated, "It is very exceptional to receive that high a level of endorsement." Special thanks to our Governmental Relations, Communications, and IT staff for working together to create this valuable member service. Based on this response, we will continue the service during the regular session of the Texas Legislature in 2007.

House Votes to Increase LSC Funding — On June 27, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to increase funding for the Legal Services Corporation, which funds the three main legal aid programs in Texas, from \$313 million to \$338 million for FY 2007. That is about equal to the 2003 funding level. The president's budget had asked for across-the-board cuts that would have lowered LSC funding to \$310 million. The Senate has not yet taken action. During floor debate, Rep. Bobby Scott of Virginia introduced for the record a letter signed by 60 general counsels requesting further budget increases. Of the 60 general counsels who signed the support letter, 16 are from Texas. They signed at the urging of Charles Matthews, general counsel to ExxonMobil and chair of the Texas Access to Justice Commission's Corporate Counsel Committee.

Barbara Earle Retirement — Barbara Earle, whom most of you know and who has worked diligently on the State Bar Annual Meeting for more years than she's willing to state, retired effective today. We appreciate Barbara's dedication and service to the State Bar of Texas and wish her well as she moves into retirement.

Bar Leaders Conference — The Bar Leaders Conference is on the horizon. This year, the annual Committee Chair and Section Chair and Treasurer orientation will be held on the same day as the board retreat. On Thursday, July 20, plan to be in Dallas at noon to meet the chairs of the committees and sections to which you are the liaison. This is a great opportunity to connect with these chairs and learn about their programs and meeting schedules. If you have questions, contact Holly Wilkerson at hwilkerson@texasbar.com.

Facilities Update — The Space Program has been updated for floors 3 through 6 and will be sent to the architects, who will produce placement fit drawings for review prior to final construction drawings.

Say What! Podcast — If you need a good laugh, link to a 25-minute interview with U.S. District Judge Jerry Buchmeyer about his "et cetera" column in the *Texas Bar Journal* at www.texasbar.com/saywhat.