

STATE BAR *of* TEXAS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

July 17, 2006

Bar Leaders Conference — For the first time, the Committee and Section Chair Orientation, Board Retreat, and Bar Leaders Conference will be combined. Activities begin Thursday in Dallas with the chair orientation (section treasurers are also invited). Lunch is the kick-off for board activities. Please try to attend — this will be a great opportunity to touch base with the committees and sections you serve as board liaison. That afternoon is the Board Retreat, where we will discuss issues such as the upcoming legislative session and the statutorily required updating of the State Bar Strategic Plan. Friday morning is an Executive Committee Meeting. The Bar Leaders Conference begins at lunch. The Bar Leaders Conference provides a great opportunity for officers and directors to meet local bar leaders and listen to their concerns and ideas for ways we can work together on issues of concern to all lawyers. The program includes breakouts by region.

Hankinson Awards — The Texas Access to Justice Commission will present its annual Deborah G. Hankinson Awards at the Saturday luncheon of the Bar Leaders Conference in Dallas. The awards go to local bar associations and TYLA affiliates that contribute at the highest rate to the annual ATJ campaign on the State Bar dues statement. Funds from the campaign go to legal services to the poor. This year's winners are: Austin Bar Association (large city); Kerr County Bar Association (small city); Austin Young Lawyers Association (large city); and Corpus Christi Young Lawyers Association (small city). The awards will be presented at the luncheon by ATJ Commissioner (and former Supreme Court Justice) Deborah Hankinson.

ATJ Commission Recommends Access to Courts Committee — The ATJ Commission recommended to the Supreme Court of Texas the creation of a Judicial Committee on Access to the Courts, which would increase judicial involvement in access to justice issues at all levels of the court system. Based on a commission recommendation in 2005, the court amended Rule 145 of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure to streamline the filing of lawsuits with affidavits of inability to pay costs by legal aid lawyers.

ATJ Commission Coordinates Internships in the Valley — The ATJ Commission's Law School Advisory Committee (made up of the deans of the nine Texas law schools) has created a consortium to provide law school interns to underserved areas of the state. The pilot project began this summer in the Rio Grande Valley. A Texas Wesleyan student is highlighted on the law school's website, law.txwes.edu. His picture is on the home page under "In the Spotlight." Click "Read more" to read his account of his experience.

TYLA Conducts ProBAR Children's Training — On Friday, TYLA and representatives of the South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project provided a four-hour training program at the Texas Law Center to prepare lawyers to represent detained unaccompanied children seeking relief in immigration or family court.

State Bar Honors Former Texas Supreme Court Justices — At a reception at the Texas Law Center, the State Bar honored former Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Tom Phillips and former Supreme Court Justices Priscilla Owen and Michael Schneider for their contributions to Texas jurisprudence.

New Phones, New Numbers — After months of preparation, a new telephone system will be activated in the Texas Law Center. The “cut over” is scheduled for the weekend of August 5. Due to various new features and functionality, anyone calling the Texas Law Center can expect a few changes as a result of the new system. The State Bar staff will begin training on the new system on July 26. Training will include the basic use of the new telephones and voicemail system, as well as additional training on the new automated call distribution features. As with any major transition, there are likely to be some glitches along the way. The new main phone number is (512)427-1463. The new main fax number is (512)427-4100. The toll-free number remains (800)204-2222.

Law Center Update — To ensure that the work of the Facilities and Equipment Committee continues to move forward with new members, Sandy Stewart met with Al Cumming for a half day to review an orientation program for the committee. Also, six new cameras have been installed at the Law Center as part of an effort to upgrade security.

Positive Financial News — The State Bar's unaudited financial results for fiscal year 2006 are complete and the news is good. The General Fund ended the year with \$2,666,416 net revenues over expenditures compared with a budgeted net of -0-. The accounting department is currently preparing for the annual financial audit, which is scheduled to begin July 24. Maxwell Locke & Ritter, the State Bar's new auditors, will conduct its audit on these financial results at that time.

Dues Reminders — On July 10, 11,734 dues reminder notices were sent to attorneys who had not yet paid their member dues. As of July 12, 2006, there were 10,462 attorneys who had paid dues or taxes online at TexasBar.com. Last year, by the same time, 8,017 attorneys paid dues or taxes online.

TexasBarCLE — TexasBarCLE staged 10 CLE events the week of July 10: four live programs, two video replays, and four webcasts. The first of three live installments of the Advanced Personal Injury Course was held in Dallas. Attendance was down by about five percent compared with the Dallas installment last year. At the same time, the Suing and Defending Government Entities Course was held in San Antonio. Attendance at this course was up by 23 percent over last year's course. Does this mean that trial lawyers are going into government work?

In Memoriam — Austin lawyer Jeff Wilson, the husband of State Bar employee Mandy Wilson, died tragically last week. A service was held in Jeff's honor on Friday. We extend our deepest sympathies to Mandy and her family.

By the Numbers — Women are projected to make up 50 percent of the State Bar membership by 2035. Minorities are projected to make up 50 percent of the State Bar membership by 2043. The youngest State Bar member is 23. The oldest State Bar member is 100. The median age of Texas lawyers is 46.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the State Bar of Texas is to support the administration of the legal system, assure all citizens equal access to justice, foster high standards of ethical conduct for lawyers, support and provide services to its members, enable its members to better serve their clients and the public, and educate the public about the rule of law.

