

# State Bar Board Meets in San Antonio

The State Bar of Texas Board of Directors held its quarterly meeting Jan. 24 at the Hilton Palacio Del Rio in San Antonio. Among the meeting's highlights:

**Candidates Approved.** The board approved the nomination of Allan DuBois of San Antonio and Beverly Godbey of Dallas as candidates for 2014-2015 president-elect of the State Bar of Texas. Voting will begin April 1 and will end at 5 p.m. CST April 30. The winner will serve as president-elect from June 2014 to June 2015 and as president from June 2015 to June 2016. The board also heard comments from the four candidates for 2014-2015 chair of the board: Robert E. Aldrich Jr. of Fort Worth, Sara E. Dysart of San Antonio, Roger A. Key of Lubbock, and Denise Scofield of Houston. The election for chair will take place at the April board meeting.

**Finance and budget.** The State Bar received an unqualified opinion, or "clean audit," for its 2013 fiscal year financial audit. The board approved for publication in the *Texas Bar Journal* the State Bar fiscal year 2014-2015 budget. (See page 266.)

**Insurance Trust.** The board approved several changes to the State Bar of Texas Insurance Trust to ensure that members have the best options available to them under a changing insurance landscape brought on by the Affordable Care Act. Member Benefits Inc., which administers the Texas Bar Private Insurance Exchange, has been appointed as the third-party administrator of the trust. Under its third-party administrator agreement, Member Benefits will administer and sell Prudential products through traditional methods, as well as through the Texas Bar Private Insurance Exchange. These Prudential products include life, long-term disability, office overhead, and personal accident insurance.

Aetna health plans currently with the trust will be terminated on June 30 because of changes under the Affordable Care Act. Member Benefits will assist attorneys who have Aetna plans with the transition to ACA-compliant individual major medical plans through the Texas Bar Private Insurance Exchange. Member Benefits has purchased all of the insurance policy assets of the SBIT Insurance Agency, a subsidiary of the trust. Member Benefits will provide ongoing service for those policies. As health insurance policies come up for renewal, those customers will be provided with the option to move into ACA-compliant plans through the Texas Bar Private Insurance Exchange. Also, the board approved amendments to the agreement between the trust and the State Bar, reducing the number of trustees from seven to three and providing that trustees shall also be members of the State Bar board. Finally, the board approved State Bar President Lisa M. Tatum's

appointment of David Chamberlain, Tim Kelly, and Michele Wong Krause as new trustees of the trust.

**MCLE changes.** The board approved proposed changes to MCLE regulations, to be effective June 1, 2014. The faculty exemption was changed to ensure consistency with other exemptions and to simplify administrative and IT processes. Previously, MCLE regulations required a "special allowance" of credit that was added to the attorney's record. The credit effectively exempted attorneys from certain CLE hours. The change has replaced the credit allowance with an actual exemption. In other changes, accredited sponsors now must pay an application and annual renewal fee of \$200. Accredited sponsors receive additional benefits from their status, including reduced accreditation fees, presumptive approval, and delayed payment options. The fee will recover administrative costs for recordkeeping, auditing, and providing expedited service. Local and district bar associations and government agencies are exempt from accredited sponsor application and renewal fees.

**Section update.** The board heard an update from the Oil, Gas, and Energy Resources Law Section, which recently celebrated its 75th anniversary. Established in 1938 as the Natural Resources Section, the Oil, Gas, and Energy Resources Law Section is the oldest section of the State Bar of Texas. Membership has doubled since 2004, to more than 3,000, which Chair M.C. Cottingham "Cottie" Miles attributed to the state's booming oil and gas industry.

**Resolution.** San Antonio attorney Tammy L. Wincott received a resolution honoring her commitment to helping veterans and other Texans who cannot afford legal services. Wincott, a solo practitioner and the principal owner of the Wincott Law Firm, regularly contributes more than 100 hours of pro bono service each year. The San Antonio Bar Association Community Justice Program recognized Wincott as Pro Bono Attorney of the Year in 2010, 2012, and 2013 for handling the most cases by an individual. She tied for the 2011 award with fellow attorney James Rodriguez.

**Employee of the Quarter.** State Bar Executive Director Michelle Hunter presented the Employee of the Quarter Award to Tracy Brown, the director of the Texas Young Lawyers Association. Brown started at the State Bar in February 1983 as a communications clerk and held positions with the Law-Related Education Department, Executive Team, and TYLA before leaving in 1996. She returned in 2000 as the assistant director of TYLA and was promoted to department director in 2006. During her tenure, Brown has served as a trusted adviser to more than 15 TYLA presidents as well as TYLA directors and committee members. **TBJ**