State Bar Board Meets in Austin

On Jan. 28, the State Bar Board of Directors met in Austin for its quarterly meeting. Among the highlights:

- **Candidates Approved** — The Board approved Guy Choate of San Angelo and F.R. "Buck" Files, Jr. of Tyler as candidates to serve as president-elect of the State Bar of Texas in 2011–2012. (See p. 196.) There are three candidates for Chair of the Board: Beverley B. Godbey of Dallas, Bethew "Bert" Jennings III of Pearland, and Travis J. Sales of Houston.

- **Budget and Finance** — The State Bar received an unqualified opinion, or "clean audit," for its financial audit for FY 2010. The Board approved for publication in the *Texas Bar Journal* the State Bar's proposed FY 2012 budget. (See p. 236.) The Board also designated from the fund balance a contribution to the Texas Access to Justice Foundation for the Texas Student Loan Repayment Assistance Program, which is designed to enable recent law school graduates to work for Texas legal aid organizations.

- **Prime Partner Banks** — The Board approved a resolution supporting the Prime Partner banks program. The resolution encourages lawyer organizations in Texas to move their business to Prime Partner banks that voluntarily provide a higher interest rate than required on IOLTA accounts, which help fund legal aid programs in Texas. For a list of Prime Partner banks, visit the Texas Access to Justice Foundation website at **www.teajf.org**.

- **FTC "Red Flags Rule"** — President Terry Tottenham updated members of the Board on Federal Trade Commission (FTC) policy regarding identify theft. In October, Tottenham reported that the State Bar of Texas, at the request of the New York State Bar Association, had joined an amicus brief in a lawsuit brought by the American Bar Association against the FTC regarding lawyers and the "red flags rule" on identify theft. On Nov. 30, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed the Red Flag Program Clarification Act of 2010. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the legislation a week later. On Dec. 18, President Obama signed the legislation into law, effectively preempting all practicing lawyers from the Red Flags Rule. The original FTC rules would have considered lawyers "creditors" subject to the rule.

- **Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans** — Tottenham updated Board members on Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans, the State Bar's pro bono initiative to assist veterans. In November, to commemorate Veterans Day, 20 veterans legal clinics were held across the state in all major metropolitan areas, as well as in Lubbock, Midland-Odessa, Big Spring and Fort Stockton, Denton, Galveston, Bastrop, Bell County, and Fort Bend and Hidalgo counties. Overall, more than 600 veterans received some form of legal assistance from nearly 300 volunteer attorneys during the month of November. The Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Austin bars are continuing their regularly scheduled clinics this year, San Antonio is starting a monthly schedule, and El Paso is expanding its programming for veterans.

*Judge **Steve Smith** of Bryan (left), who serves as the Judicial Section Liaison to the State Bar Board of Directors, and **Roy Brantley** of College Station (right), the director for District 8, displayed their school pride in front of the scoreboard at Darrell K. Royal — Texas Memorial Stadium on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin. The State Bar and Texas Young Lawyers Association boards of directors held a joint meeting. Directors were encouraged to wear their school colors to a dinner at the stadium on Friday night.*

- **Special Commendations** — State Bar President Terry Tottenham presented special commendations from the Supreme Court of Texas and the State Bar of Texas to Immediate Past President Roland K. Johnson, Supreme Court Rules Attorney Kennon L. Peterson, and Thomas H. Watkins, who served as chair of the Supreme Court Task Force on the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct, for their leadership and service throughout the process leading to Referendum 2011.

- **Employee of the Quarter** — State Bar Executive Director Michelle Hunter presented the employee of the quarter award to Meeting Planner Pam Dudley. ✪