



State Bar Board Meets in Bastrop

On April 16, the State Bar Board of Directors met in Bastrop for its quarterly meeting. Among the highlights of the meeting:

- **Professional Liability Insurance Disclosure** — Concluding several years of debate over whether lawyers should be required to disclose to clients or potential clients whether or not they carry professional liability insurance, the Supreme Court of Texas has decided to retain the status quo. State Bar President Roland Johnson announced that Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson had sent a letter to the State Bar explaining the Court's decision. Jefferson noted the complexity of the issue and commended the Board for its thorough examination of the question. (In January, after considering input gathered from public hearings, focus groups, surveys, and written comments, the Board recommended, by a vote of 39 to 1, against requiring mandatory disclosure.) "In making this decision," Jefferson wrote, "the Court is mindful of the overarching principle that clients or prospective clients are entitled to information on the existence of their lawyers' professional liability insurance, and lawyers may voluntarily disclose to clients, potential clients, or the public whether they maintain such insurance."
- **Proposed Changes to Disciplinary Rules** — Justice Phil Johnson, the Supreme Court's liaison to the State Bar, updated the Board on proposed changes to the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct (TDRPC). In November 2009, proposed changes were published for comment in the *Texas Bar Journal*. More than 290 comments were received during the 60-day comment period, many concerning proposed changes to the Rules regarding conflicts of interest and safekeeping. The Court has revised the proposed amendments in light of the feedback it received. The Court is close to finalizing interpretive comments to the revised proposed amendments. The Court has asked the State Bar Board of Directors to consider the proposed amendments and report back to the Court by Oct. 6, 2010, with recommendations or comments. State Bar President Roland Johnson said the Board is planning an information-gathering process similar to the process used to consider professional liability insurance disclosure. The Board will hold public hearings around the state in August and September and solicit feedback from members and the public through a variety of means. After the Board presents its recommendations to the Court, the Board will likely petition the Court to hold a referendum of all members on approval of the proposed TDRPC changes.



State Bar Executive Director Michelle Hunter (left) and Chief Disciplinary Counsel Linda Acevedo (right) presented a Staff Excellence Award to Erica Locust, information analyst in CDC's Austin office.

- **New Chair Elected** — The Board elected Pablo Almaguer of McAllen to serve as chair of the Board of Directors in 2010–2011. (See profile, p. 474.)
- **Collaborative Law Section Created** — The Board approved the formation of a Collaborative Law Section. Proponents had fulfilled all of the prerequisites to create a new section.
- **SOGII Name Change Approved** — The Board approved changing the name of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification Issues Section to the LGBT Law Section. The name change reflects common usage.
- **Minority Directors Appointed** — The Board approved the appointments of two Minority Directors to serve on the State Bar Board, Toni Nguyen of Keller and John Trevino of Dallas. Nguyen, a native of Vietnam who fled in a fishing boat when she was 7 years old, lived in a refugee camp, and did not learn English until she was in the 3rd grade, is assistant general counsel to Belo Corp. Trevino, who served as a military training instructor in the U.S. Air Force, is an in-house lawyer with American Airlines, Inc.
- **TYLA Update** — Texas Young Lawyers Association President Cori Harbour updated the Board on some of TYLA's initiatives during her year in office. The cyber-crimes video *R U Safe?* was presented to thousands of Texas students. Ten new public service brochures were created. "Road Shows" were organized for young lawyers in Brownsville and McAllen. Baylor Law School hosted a diversity forum for high school students. ✪