

HISTORY OF THE PARALEGAL DIVISION OF THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS

1990 - 1991

The Board, the Legal Assistants Committee of the Bar, and paralegal educators met for Forum IX in Austin in October 1990. The topic of the meeting was "Alternative Dispute Resolution Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." Governor Clements proclaimed October 23rd as Legal Assistants Day.

As of January 9, 1991, the Division had 1,994 members, exceeding January 1990 by 97 members. As of June 1991, Division membership totaled 2,086 members.

The Chair was authorized to give notice on or before April 1, 1991, to terminate the accounting portion of the Division's contract with the Bar, effective May 31, 1991. The Treasurer will approve all payments and the Executive Director will record the Division's bookkeeping transactions into the Division's accounting software and provide such computerized financial reports as requested by the Treasurer. This change in accounting procedures will not require an increase in the Treasurer's Bond.

At the board meeting in Brownsville on April 12, 1991, a social was held following the meeting with local attorneys, judiciary, and legal assistants.

A Task Force on Long Range Planning and Reorganization was created to include a minimum of five active members and a Board Adviser, with the chair of such task force to be appointed by the Chair. The purposes of the Task Force are to review numerous functions and operations within the Division and to recommend ways to improve services, efficiency, and effectiveness on behalf of the entire Division.

Additional benefits made available to Division members include a reduced subscription rate to *Texas Lawyer* and car rental discounts from National and Avis.

The Ethics Committee prepared an ethics brochure entitled "Professional Ethics and the Legal Assistant." This brochure was distributed to members at the Annual Meeting and by Directors in their respective districts.

Subscriptions to the Division Newsletter were offered to interested persons out of state at a rate of \$15.00 per year, effective June 1991.

Policy guidelines for approving membership applications were developed for use by the membership subcommittees. The Executive Director of the Division also began receiving and processing membership applications in order to allow the Membership Committee to concentrate on recruiting members.

The Certification Digest was approved for release by the Board. The consensus of the Board, after directors had met with their local associations, was that the Division should support a certification exam modeled along the lines of the Texas Specialty Examinations for attorneys. The following resolution was approved by the Board on April 13, 1991:

WHEREAS, the Legal Assistants Division of the State Bar of Texas (the "Division") desires to offer a program to recognize advanced professional competency; and

WHEREAS, the Division's stated purpose is to enhance legal assistants' participation in the administration of justice, professional responsibility, and public service in cooperation with the State Bar of Texas; and

WHEREAS, the Division desires to foster the professional growth, extended education in the law, and competent services to the legal community of its members; and

WHEREAS, the Division desires to develop a voluntary, specialty certification examination; and

WHEREAS, there exists a Texas model, pioneered by the State Bar of Texas, to recognize effort, education and excellence; and

WHEREAS, the Division has appointed a special committee to liaison with the Bar for counsel guidance and direction to develop a program of advanced proficiency specialization certification recognition for legal assistants.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Division hereby proposes that a Board of Legal Assistant Specialization be established to develop and administer a Texas legal assistant specialty examination in substantive areas (patterned somewhat after the State Bar of Texas' Board of Legal Specialization) such Board to work in cooperation with the State Bar of Texas.

On May 2, 1991, the Resolution was presented to the Bar Board and was adopted with only one addition: insertion of the clause, "subject to final approval by the State Bar Board of Directors."

The LAD/SBOT Voluntary Specialty Certification Task Force was created with membership of this task force to include the Chair, Immediate Past Chair, and others deemed appropriate to serve on this negotiating committee. This committee will work with the Legal Assistants Committee of the Bar on a "Legal Assistants Division-State Bar of Texas Voluntary Specialty Certification" examination. The Division renegotiated its Executive Director contract and Norma Hackler of Austin continued as the Division's Executive Director. On a temporary trial basis, the Board approved the processing of membership applications by the Executive Director.

The Annual Meeting was held in Houston. There were 306 registered to attend the Annual Meeting. The Division was honored by the attendance at the Annual Meeting luncheon of Bar President James Parsons and his wife, along with a Soviet delegation of three attorneys and their interpreter. Special Division awards were presented to Alain Rondeau for his outstanding personal contribution to the Division, to Sandy Hardin (Bar) for her continued support and ongoing assistance to the Division, and to Gail Stinson as the outstanding Committee Chair for 1990-1991. Special Recognition awards were presented to outgoing Bar President James Parsons, outgoing Standing Committee Chair C.L. "Mike" Schmidt, and Houston attorney Tom Womble for their extra efforts on behalf of the Division. A new annual meeting format in which committee reports were presented in a written annual report format rather than being presented orally was begun and an open forum for informal membership discussions held. Seminars presented included: Discovery: Those Little Mistakes and How to Avoid Them; Making a Communications Impact; Information Management - Using Computer Technology; Where to Incorporate? Practical Considerations in Selecting a Jurisdiction; Piercing the Corporate Veil; Financial Institutions and the New Regulatory Environment - Guide for the Uninitiated; and Ethics Panel-Real Life Issues. A special "birthday party" social was held in honor of the Division's 10th anniversary.

Legal Assistants Division Board of Directors 1990 - 1991

Officers:

Chair:	Michele M. Boerder, CLA
Chair Pro Tem:	Millie DeAnda/Deanne A. Galloway, CLA
Treasurer:	JoAnna O. Rondeau, CLA
Secretary:	Linda M. Fiegner, CLA
Parliamentarian:	Sharyn Aust Smith, CLA

Directors:

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Lynn McBee	District 1, Place 2
Michele M. Boerder	District 2, Place 1
Sherrie Easter	District 2, Place 2
Sharyn Aust Smith	District 3
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