

# HISTORY OF THE PARALEGAL DIVISION OF THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS

## 1996 - 1997

On June 22, 1996, the incoming Board held their first meeting. President Villarreal gave her views of the role of the President. Karol McVay, incoming Vice Chair of LAC, reported on the new certification examinations to be prepared and administered in the areas of criminal, probate, and real estate law. Director Sprinkle reported on the video project and the opportunity to meet with the Bar's Family Law Section.

The following Directors were appointed to serve as Board Advisors or Liaisons:

- Annual Meeting — Jim Buchanan
- Elections — Kelly Cavin
- Membership — Leigh Burton
- Professional Development — Diane Sharer
- Professional Ethics — Lisa Sprinkle
- Publications — Dawn Crider
- Public Relations — Deborah Oaks
- NALA — Lisa Sprinkle
- NFPA — Wendi Rogers
- LAC — Melanie Villarreal
- TAPA — Melanie Villarreal
- Long Range Planning Task Force — Wendi Rogers
- NALA/TALS — Donna Dendy
- Legal Administrators — Deborah Oaks
- Texas Young Lawyers Association — Barbara Fahlender

The incoming Board discussed and passed a number of motions pertaining to budget and finance, continuing education, live seminars, elections, public relations, promoting Legal Assistants Day and Law Day, publications, and membership applications. The membership application form was, by motion and vote, extensively amended.

The Board of Directors met with the Standing Committee on Legal Assistants during Texas Forum XV. The Fall meeting of the Board was held on September 27-28, 1996, at the Marriott Hotel in Austin. District 7 Director and Board Secretary, Kelly Cavin, tendered her resignation which was regretfully accepted by the Board. District 12 Director Barbara Fahlender, had resigned, and that position had not been filled. Johnny Lacy, CPA, reported that the Division lost \$16,000 this year and cautioned against overspending. Procedures for better audit trails were also discussed. Director Kelly Cavin reported on the Council of Chairs meeting which will, in the future, hold meetings the Friday before Bar Board meetings for better input to the Bar for the coming year. Norma Hackler reported that as of September 1996, the Division had 1,966 members.

After discussion regarding video seminars and other matters pertaining to CLE matters, President-Elect Wendi Rogers gave a report on the Procedures Manual. Cynthia Minchillo, Public Relations Chair, presented samples of promotional items as she gave her committee report to the Board. The Exceptional Pro Bono Service Award was discussed by Kristine Farmer, Chair of Professional Development. Several motions were approved by the Board pertaining to the financial matters of the Board.

A special meeting of the Board was held on December 14, 1996 at the law offices of McGinnis, Lochridge & Kilgore, LLP in Austin. Because of the resignation of President Melanie Villarreal on November 20, 1996, acting President Wendi Rogers called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present. President Rogers informed the Board about two meetings of the Executive Committee and Tony Alvarado, Michelle Hunter, Robert Anchondo, and Randall Moore. The history of the contract for the Executive Director was discussed as were duties of the Executive Director. Motions approved by consensus and this special meeting included Wendi Rogers writing the following letters: to the Bar Board inquiring as to the status of the Executive Director's position through the end of fiscal year 1996-1997; to the Bar Board (subject to LAD Board approval) requesting the appointment of an ad hoc committee to recommend guidelines for the position of a person to perform the duties currently being performed by the Executive Director; and to the Bar Board to inform them of actions taken at this special meeting.

On January 10-11, 1997, the Board held their winter meeting at the Omni Austin Hotel Downtown in Austin. President-Elect Wendi Rogers presided at the meeting. District 12 was not represented as no applications had been received to replace Barbara Fahlender. Wendi Rogers and Jim Buchanan reported on the Council of Chairs meeting they attended on January 10, 1997, and the problems of the various sections that were discussed there. It was reported by Wendi Rogers that Randall Moore, Division Bar Board Advisor, will discuss the Executive Director employment issues with Tony Alvarado and the Board's request for an ad hoc committee. The Long Range Task Force hosted the Fall TAPA meeting which was well attended. Virginia Gil, District 15 Director was complimented on the success of her District seminar.

TBLS Certification exams will be held on April 12, 1997 at the Texas Law Center in Austin. The Board discussed the vacant office of President as it relates to the Bylaws. President-Elect Wendi Rogers will complete her term as President-Elect and begin her term as President in the 1997-1998 fiscal year. Each district was asked to approach its public access channels to sell the *Legally Speaking* videotapes. The Division owns one set of tapes for showing to non-profit organizations. The Publications Committee reported that advertising sales are at a critical point. Jim Buchanan, District 1 Director, will chair the nominating committee for officer elections at the April Board meeting. Continuing education seminars were discussed, with a motion passed to charge the CEC with investigating the possibility of adjusting the fees for LAD advanced seminars to include a greater discount for LAD members. Debra Crosby, Chair of the Long Range Task Force, presented her report and a motion was passed to charge the Long Range Task Force with preparing a preliminary digest containing the information they have gathered. It will be requested that a member of the Bar be appointed to the Task Force. Tony Alvarado addressed the Board. After a report by the Nominating Committee, Jim Buchanan was elected 1997-1998 President-Elect. Before the meeting adjourned, President-Elect Rogers appointed Jim Buchanan — Assistant to the Acting-President — which is a non-voting special appointment effective from January 11, 1997, until the 1997 Annual Meeting.

The Spring meeting of the Board was held April 4-5, 1997 at the Wyndham Warwick Hotel in Houston. Mandy Smithers was welcomed as new District 12 Director.

An ad hoc committee to address procedures for the Executive Committee has been established; members are Melinda Hicks, Lisa Sprinkle, and Mandy Smithers. A discussion was held to clarify the Board's definitions of "excused" and "unexcused" absences from Board meetings. If one day of the two-day meeting is attended, it will not be considered an absence. Excused absences are primarily for illness or death in the family. Wendi Rogers will attend the upcoming LAC and TAPA meetings, and Jim Buchanan will attend the Council of Chairs meeting. A report on the Annual Meeting, to be held in Houston, was given by Sharon Wagner; the committee has received \$2,025 in donations and \$1,650 in commitments. Board meetings will be held on Thursday June 26 and Saturday, June 28. Publications Chair, Chris Levy, reported that advertising sales are improving. By making publication changes, the actual cost of the magazine may be reduced to \$42,000. A motion was passed to authorize the Publications Chair to appoint the Publications Committee members on an annual basis, with Board ratification. Various issues covering continuing education were addressed by Martha Jones, Continuing Education Chair, including lowering the costs of seminars and clarifying the fact that seminars are not designed as preparatory for TBLS exams. The CEC was charged with reviewing ways to reduce seminar costs and looking at non-metropolitan sites for seminar locations. During the dinner recess, member Kristin Wilkinson addressed the Board about various issues, including leadership training for Board members, remaining open to change, and looking into the Small Business Institute to assist the Division. Extensive discussion revolved around distribution of profits from CLE events that occur at the District level, resulting in a motion passed that District CLE profits from Division sponsored seminars be divided with 65% to the District and 35% to the Division.

It was reported that there were no Director candidates from Districts 9 or 11. The 1997-1998 officer elections were held with Melinda Hicks being elected Parliamentarian, Melissa Sherman being elected Secretary, and Dawn Crider being elected Treasurer. Director Sprinkle was authorized to investigate development of a video on "How to Utilize Legal Assistants." Each Director was given a video with two episodes of *Legally Speaking*, as well as order forms. The Long Range Task Force report, in the form of the requested digest, was presented. An issue of the TPJ will be devoted to issues printed in the digest, and a motion was passed to register a copyright of the digest in LAD's name.

The Outgoing Board met on Thursday, June 26, 1997, at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston. Wendi Rogers called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present. The 1997-1998 Committee Chairs are as follows:

- Annual Meeting – Karla Schwemmer, ALS, PLS
- Continuing Education – Charlotte Turner, CLA
- Elections – Jo Ann Sims, PLS
- Long Range – Task Force Debra Crosby
- Membership – Javan Johnson, CLAS
- Professional Ethics – Ellen Lockwood, CLA
- Professional Development – Deborah Worthington, CLA
- Publications – Christine Levy, CLA
- Public Relations – Sharon Wagner

Wendi Rogers gave a report to the Board concerning the proposal to the Bar drafted by her and by Bar Board Advisor, Randall Moore, regarding the Executive Director position. The proposal had been reviewed by an employment law attorney and forwarded to the Bar for review and revisions before presentation to the Board for a mail vote. A discussion of TAPA's desire to formalize their structure was held. Wendi Rogers advised that the PACE exam designation has been changed to "Registered Paralegal." Directors' reports included the information that the El Paso Community College Paralegal Program was recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordination Board as one of the top five paralegal programs surveyed, largely due to their work with the *Legally Speaking* community service programs.

The TBLS Board voted to present Board Certification certificates at the same time they present attorney certificates, which results in the following schedule change for TBLS:

- Application deadline - January
- Testing - Fall
- Certificate presentation - February

The Outgoing Board heard reports from the Annual Meeting Committee and the Continuing Education Committee. The concerns of obtaining MCLE credit were discussed, and possible solutions presented. Melinda Hicks, Lisa Sprinkle, Mandy Smithers, Melissa Sherman, and Wendi Rogers were appointed to make recommendations as to what issues are appropriate for the Executive Committee to address and how minutes and notifications of meeting are to be handled. It was mentioned that the Public Relations Chair will maintain the LAD banner for use by any Director or Committee.

## Legal Assistants Division Board of Directors 1996 - 1997

### Officers:

President:	Melanie Villarreal, CLA***
President-Elect:	Wendi Rogers, CLA
Treasurer:	Ellen Lockwood, CLA
Secretary:	Kelly Cavin, CLAS*
Parliamentarian:	Lisa Sprinkle, CLAS

### Directors:

Ronald J. (Jim) Buchanan	District 1
Deborah Oaks	District 2*****
Melissa D. Sherman, CLA	District 3
Dawn Crider, CLA	District 4
Ellen Lockwood, CLA	District 5
Connie Lawrence	District 6
Kelly Cavin, CLAS	District 7**
Leigh Burton, CLA	District 8
Donna Dendy, PLS, CLA	District 9
Shannon Hyde, CLA	District 10
Diane Sharer, CLAS	District 11
Barbara Fahlender	District 12****
Melinda Hicks	District 13
Linda Slayter	District 14
Virginia P. Gil	District 15
Lisa Sprinkle, CLAS	District 16

\*Melissa Sherman was elected to replace Kelly Cavin who resigned in September, 1996

\*\*Kelly Cavin resigned as the District 7 Director and was replaced by Rhonda J. Brashears

\*\*\*Melanie Villarreal resigned on November 20, 1996, as President and Wendi Rogers became the Acting President; In January 1997, Wendi Rogers appointed Jim Buchanan as Assistant to the Acting-President

\*\*\*\*Barbara Fahlender resigned as the District 12 Director, and was replaced by Mandy Smithers

\*\*\*\*\*Deborah Oaks resigned as the District 2 Director

\*\*\*\*\*Linda Slayter resigned January, 1997