

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

## 2001 - 2002

The Incoming Board Meeting was held June 15, 2001. Committee Chairs appointed were:

Elections — Jo Ann Sims, PLS, CLAS  
Membership — Joncilee Miller, CLA  
Public Relations — Whitney Lyon, RP  
Publications — Debra Crosby  
Professional Development — Jodye Kasher, CLA\*  
Historian — Javan Johnson, CLAS, TBLS  
Annual Meeting Co-Chairs — Laurell Phillips and Jonae Mundstock\*\*  
[\*Jodye Kasher resigned and Kristy Ritchie was appointed]  
[\*\*Jonae Mundstock resigned]

Liaison appointments were as follows:

TYLA — Rhonda Brashears, CLA, TBLS  
Legal Administrators/ALA — Carolyn Goff  
NFPA — Kim Cantu, CLA\*  
LAMA — Melinda Jackson  
NALA — Mariann Porter, CLA  
TALS/NALS — Karla Schwemmer, PLS, RP  
[\*Kim Cantu resigned, and Ellen Lockwood, CLAS was appointed]

There was discussion regarding conducting a TBLS review course. Plans were underway for LAU 2002 to be held in Houston. The State Bar College plans for legal assistant membership to open in 2002.

The decrease of membership figures was discussed; and the need for increasing membership by utilizing the *Legally Speaking* videos and Profiling the Legal Assistant Profession video, as well as getting the Bar more involved with new programs was discussed. Assistance was requested by LAD's liaison to the Bar Board to market the Guide to Utilizing Legal Assistants and LAD's videos.

Money was budgeted to purchase a laptop computer for use by the Secretary.

The Texas Bar has a Historical Foundation that the Board would like to see our history included in and the board will investigate what is involved.

The 20th Anniversary celebration of LAD continues, and the website was updated to include that information. Efforts to locate Charter members continue for this special celebration.

The Fall board meeting was held at the Aristocrat Hotel in Dallas on September 28-29, 2001. New Director for District 7, Janis Barnett, was welcomed.

LAD leadership attended the Fall TAPA meeting on September 21-22 in Houston.

Requirements and dues for Associate Membership in the State Bar College were discussed and recommendations will be made for fees to be \$25 for active and freelance members of LAD and \$50 for non-members of LAD with 20 hours of CLE required annually.

A new committee was created of Section Representatives to the Board Committee whose members are to speak on behalf of all Sections at each Bar Board meeting. The purpose of the committee is to foster new trust between the Bar and the Sections.

LAU 2001 was held on September 5-8, 2001 at the Renaissance North Hotel in Dallas. Two scholarships were awarded. The Division's profits were approximately \$9,000.00. The seminar began on Wednesday afternoon with a technology seminar, then a barbeque was held next door at the Brookhaven College campus, partially sponsored by vendors. Book bags were again distributed. The t-shirts for attendees were black and white, and the volunteers were given red and white t-shirts. The volunteers also wore small red and white corsages. On Thursday, classes formally commenced and 30 vendors set up. The luncheon featured remembrances of the past 20 years and the speakers were Judge Richard Johnson, Melinda Smith, and Ike Vanden Eykel, who were on the original planning committee for LAD in 1979-1980. They shared memories as to the formation of LAD. Thursday evening there was a "Mystery Guest" dinner. Buses were chartered, thanks to Dallas Area Paralegal Association, Metroplex Association of Corporate Paralegals, and Collin County Legal Association, to transport the attendees over to the

restaurants. Attendees then returned to the hotel for the Talent Revue Dessert Social, a sundae dessert bar, and karaoke. Classes continued on Friday and there was a special luncheon for the volunteers. On Friday evening the more formal social was held. On Saturday, classes continued until noon. Attendees felt it was another excellent seminar.

Due to cost factors, the Board did not participate in the Texas Forum XX or the Joint LAC/LAD meeting since it was held in conjunction with the AAFPE annual convention in San Antonio. President Farmer was asked to attend on behalf of LAD.

Paralegal program instructors were added to the Associate membership category to allow them to become members. LAD continued its 20th anniversary celebration by continuing the search for charter members, ordering 20-year lapel pins for members, publication of an article in TPJ, and publication of an article in Legal Assistant Today.

Discussion was held to appoint a LAMA liaison to begin sharing information with that association regarding the Division.

Development of an ad in the *Texas Bar Journal* to publicize the Division continued to be discussed.

The salary survey was completed and published in the TPJ.

The February board meeting was held on February 1-2, 2002, at the Marriott in Austin.

Sandy Eaves from Beaumont was welcomed as the new Director for District 10.

President Farmer, President-Elect Brashears, and Norma Hackler, LAD Coordinator, were asked to attend the February 8, 2002, State Bar College board meeting to discuss the Associate Membership for legal assistants.

President Farmer, Publications Chair Debra Crosby, and Michele Boerder attended the Texas Forum XX, held in conjunction with the AAFPE convention in San Antonio. The LAC determined that the theme for Texas Forum XXI in 2002 would be "Advocacy for the Profession."

The *Attorney's Guide for Practicing with Legal Assistants* was being revised, with emphasis on revisions to the job descriptions portion. Directors were asked to get legal assistants to suggest descriptions which will be forwarded to the Bar.

President Farmer attended the Bar Council of Chairs meeting January 18, 2002, where there was discussion about scaling down the Annual Meeting. Sunset review was also a major topic of discussion.

Membership increase is still the ultimate goal. Directors were asked to report on what methods work to promote LAD membership in their districts.

Media kits were sent to LAU vendors to purchase ads in TPJ. Also, the scanning of the past board minutes was discussed. Estimates included \$800.00 to scan the past ten years and \$80.00 per year in the future. Discussion was also held regarding purchasing a program like Summation, and to talk to vendors regarding this issue, including those sustaining members that deal with such programs to be able to offset information in the TPJ.

A question arose regarding sustaining members wanting to send out information about jobs through the LAD e-group. The Standing Rules do not allow sustaining members to use their membership to promote themselves.

The Publications Committee Chair, Debra Crosby, discussed the continued need for advertising and sources for articles. Letters with media kits and rate sheets may be sent to court reporters advertising in the *Texas Legal Pro.*

Judge Lora Livingston and Debra Crosby were appointed by the LAC to co-chair the Joint LAC/LAD Task Force. The Long Range Planning Task Force continues gathering information from other states.

LAU 2002 was discussed and it will be held in Houston at the Intercontinental Hotel, September 18-20, 2002. It was decided that classes would be held Wednesday through Friday. One-day attendance will also be offered for the first time at a reduced registration fee. The theme was voted to be "2002 LAU, It's a Tradition." Marketing is to include links to attorney websites, such as Texas Young Lawyers Association. The deadline for the Nancy McLaughlin LAU Seminar Scholarship was set for June 28, 2002.

Girl Scout Troop 422 visited the Spring 2002 board meeting. They were working on their leadership program in order to obtain their GS Silver Award, which required them to attend a board meeting.

Plans for the Annual Meeting were discussed. Annual Meeting was to be held in Dallas. Justice Harriet O'Neill agreed to speak at the Friday luncheon. TBLS Information Sessions, NALA CLA Review Course, and NFPA PACE Overview sessions will be held.

Historian and Immediate Past President Javan Johnson was asked to continue working on locating Charter Members for historical purposes, and attendance at the Annual Meeting. Special awards and items were discussed.

David Timmons, who designs the *Texas Paralegal Journal (TPJ)*, the official publication of the Legal Assistants Division, will be

presented with a Special Award.

The 2002 Annual Meeting was held in conjunction with the Bar's Annual Meeting at the Wyndam Anatole Hotel in Dallas on June 13-14, 2002. On Thursday, June 13, legal assistants were invited by special invitation of Bar President Broadus Spivey, to attend the Bar Leadership Luncheon with keynote speaker Erin Brockovich. Ms. Brockovich spoke about the importance of legal assistants in the legal profession, and encouraged legal assistants to continue to strive for excellence in their role in the profession.

The Exceptional Pro Bono Award was presented to Sandra Walker of Austin for her outstanding work in the Austin area with Volunteer Legal Services through the Pro Se Divorce Clinic, working with children. The Award of Excellence was presented to Debra Crosby of San Antonio, as editor of the *Texas Paralegal Journal*, which she volunteered to take on after the death of Nancy McLaughlin. Committee Chair of the Year was Javan Johnson, as LAU 2001 Committee Chair, and a special award was presented to Laurell Phillips as the Annual Meeting Committee Chair.

For the first time, LAD offered TBLS Information Sessions for the TBLS specialty exams, a NALA CLA Review Course and a NFPA PACE Overview sessions. Each was extremely well attended and received.

On Friday, June 14, the Annual Luncheon was held at the Wyndam Anatole, with keynote speaker Supreme Court Justice Harriet O'Neill giving a wonderful presentation on focusing your life and career. In celebration of the 20th anniversary of LAD, a special invitation was extended to the charter members who had been located for their attendance at the luncheon. Approximately 20 charter members were able to attend the luncheon. They were presented with corsages, and 20-year lapel pins. A special recognition of each in attendance was made, and photographs were taken for a future article in the TPJ. Each charter member that had been located was to be mailed a 20-year certificate. Many charter members shared remembrances of when the Division was created, as well as the development of the profession throughout the past 20 years. The entire 2001-2002 year was focused on celebrating 20 years, including the Winter 2001 edition of the TPJ, entitled "LAD at 20", which included a review of LAD's history and an article with shared remembrances. This history will be linked on the LAD website for publication.

## Legal Assistants Division Board of Directors 2001 - 2002

### Officers:

President:	S. Kristine Farmer, TBLS
President-Elect:	Rhonda Brashears, CLA, TBLS
Treasurer:	Mary McDowell, CLA
Secretary:	Joan E. Beishir, CLA
Parliamentarian:	Carolyn Goff

### Directors:

District 1	Melinda B. Jackson
District 2	Kim J. Cantu, CLA
District 3	Pat Hammer, CLA, TBLS
District 4	Martha Jones, CLA, TBLS
District 5	Ellen Lockwood, CLAS
District 6	Jeanne Fairman, CLA
District 7	Janis Barnett, CLA* / Carol McRoberts, CLA*
District 8	Karla Schwemmer, PLS, RP
District 9	Virginia Coronado, TBLS
District 10	Sandy Eaves*
District 11	Mary McDowell, CLA
District 12	Tamara Null, CLA
District 13	Carolyn Goff
District 14	Joan E. Beishir, CLA
District 15	Michelle P. Garcia
District 16	Mariann Porter, CLA

\*District 10 was vacant until Sandy Eaves was appointed in January 2002

\*Janis Barnett resigned in April 2002. Carol McRoberts was appointed in May 2002