

Minutes of the Annual Business Meeting  
Judicial Section, State Bar of Texas  
September 10, 2012  
Westin Galleria ~ Houston, Texas

1. Welcome and call to order by the Chair, Justice Elizabeth Lang-Miers. After a motion and second the minutes from the previous business meeting were approved.
2. Justice Elizabeth Lang-Miers presented a new mission statement for the Judicial Section to better describe their work and purpose:

*The Judicial Section of the State Bar of Texas works for improvement of the quality of justice in Texas, examines issues affecting the judicial system, fosters public education about the judicial system and matters of concern to the judiciary, promotes dialogue and collaboration among judges, and provides a forum for the discussion of matters of concern to judges.*

3. Secretary-Treasurer's Report. Judge Tom Bacus reported on the current fiscal condition of the Judicial Section and presented the minutes of the annual Section business meeting of September 22, 2010, for approval. Both were approved unanimously.
4. State of the Judiciary Report. Supreme Court Justice Phillip Johnson presented the report on behalf of Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson. Justice Johnson advised that the Court has been working closely with the State Bar and the legislature on matters affecting the judiciary in anticipation of the upcoming session. He reviewed the current work of the Supreme Court Advisory Committee. He also addressed the continued Access to Justice crisis and the needs for traditional and non-traditional solutions. He provided the members with current information regarding electronic filing in Texas and a sketch for full implementation.
5. Court of Criminal Appeals Report. Judge Mike Keasler presented the Court of Criminal Appeals Report. Judge Keasler discussed the current workload of the CCA and outlined their projects for the upcoming year. He advised the Task Force on Indigent Defense is now called the Texas Indigent Defense Commission.
6. Texas Commission on Judicial Conduct Report. Seana Willing provided the report on behalf of the Chair, Tom Cunningham. Ms. Willing discussed the overriding mission of the Commission which is to encourage public confidence in the Judicial Branch of government. She described the make-up of the current commission board and the significant workload that is handled by the board and commission staff. She discussed the commission's recent sunset review and provided information about where to find the final results of the review on the commission website.

7. Office of Court Administration. David Slayton provided the report on behalf of the Office of Court Administration. He advised there were more than 3,436 elected (or appointed, judicial positions in Texas as of September 1, 2012 and more than 140 associate judges. There were over 10.5 million new cases filed in fiscal year 2012 in the Texas courts. The average time between filing and disposition of civil cases filed in the courts of appeals was 8.2 months, while criminal cases averaged 8.6 months. Justices issued almost 11,000 opinions in 2012. The number of divorce cases in the district and county-level courts has remained steady since 1993, but child support cases have greatly increased. Seventeen percent of all family law cases were filed by a petitioner who represented himself/herself.

8. Committee Reports.

- a. Judicial Ethics. Judge Kelly Moore discussed the role of the Judicial Ethics Committee, where to find formal ethics opinions and how to request an ethics opinion.
- b. Membership Committee. Judge Kelly Moore provides historical and current section membership information and emphasized the importance of supporting the section by joining and paying membership dues – especially in a legislative year.
- c. Legislative. Alfonso Charles provides his outlook for the upcoming legislative session and the many entities involved in advocating on the behalf of the judiciary. He announced the section’s plan to devote almost all efforts towards receiving a judicial pay raise in the next session and encouraged all Judges to speak with a unified voice so that the effort did not become diluted.
- d. Nominating. Judge Steve Smith presented the following proposed slate to the membership:

Elizabeth Lang-Miers , Immediate Past Chair  
Alfonso Charles, Chair  
Penny Roberts, Chair Elect  
(Secretary/Treasurer appointed by the new Chair)  
Place 1 - Appellate Court Justice: Evelyn Keyes  
Place 5 - District Court Judge: Margaret Barnes  
Place 8 - County Court at Law Judge: Brad Cates  
Place 10 – Retired Judge: Linda Thomas

There were no additional nominations from the floor. Following motion and second, the slate was unanimously elected by acclamation.

9. Justice Elizabeth Lang-Miers introduced all new members of the judiciary and had them stand and be recognized.

10. Recognition of outgoing Board Members. The Chair presented plaques each of the outgoing Board Members and thanked them for their service and dedication:

Steve Smith, Judge 361<sup>st</sup> District Court  
Patrick Garcia, 384<sup>th</sup> District Court, El Paso  
Penny Roberts, CCL #2, San Angelo  
Patrick McDowell, 219<sup>th</sup> Judicial Court, Dallas

11. Special Recognition. Judge Tom Bacus was presented with a special award of recognition for his years of dedicated service to the Judicial Section and the Bench and Bar of the State of Texas – as Chair from 1989-90 and Treasurer from 1993 – 2012.
12. Outgoing Chair Elizabeth Lang-Miers expressed her gratitude for being allowed to serve as the chair of the judicial section and introduced the incoming chair, Alfonso Charles.
13. Incoming Chair's Remarks. Chair Alfonso Charles encouraged all members to get the other judges in their area to become members and help strengthen the Judicial Section. He reiterated the importance of the upcoming session and the importance of singular focus on the judicial pay issue. He outlined his vision for the upcoming year. He encouraged members to become involved in section work by volunteering for committee service.
14. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.