

MINUTES

ALABAMA STATE BAR

2010 GRANDE CONVOCATION AND ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Camellia Ballroom II
Baytowne Wharf, Sandestin Resort
Destin, Florida

Saturday, July 17, 2010

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

President Tom Methvin called to order the 132nd Grande Convocation and Annual Business Meeting of the Alabama State Bar.

2. **INTRODUCTION OF CHIEF JUSTICE SUE BELL COBB AND
PRESENTATION OF THE JUDICIAL AWARD OF MERIT**

President Methvin introduced Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb and presented her with the Judicial Award of Merit for 2010. Chief Justice Cobb accepted the award and expressed her appreciation. She had been unable to attend the awards luncheon on Thursday because of her mother's health.

3. **PRESENTATION OF THE PROFESSIONALISM AWARD**

Chief Justice Cobb announced that J. Douglas McElvy was the recipient of the Professionalism Award. Mr. McElvy accepted the award from Chief Justice Cobb and thanked her as well as the professionalism commission.

4. **CHIEF JUSTICE REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE JUDICIARY**

The Chief Justice gave a brief overview of the state of the judiciary. She discussed the challenges that lie ahead and thanked the bar, past bar presidents and others in helping make the courts better. She praised President-elect Spruell for her help over the past year and expressed her pride in Alyce Spruell becoming the first female president of the Alabama State Bar. She congratulated Mrs. Spruell and her family on this accomplishment.

Chief Justice Cobb then proceeded to outline plans for fundamental changes in the court system to deal with the continuing budget crisis confronting the court. She explained that the days of increasing court budgets are no longer possible because of the dire financial condition of the state. She stated that because of the disparity of case loads among circuit and district judges, resources are not available to add judges to equalize caseloads and this creates problems for citizens who utilize the courts.

The Chief Justice reported that she had been working with a committee of judges to develop a plan to eliminate the caseload disparity since there will be no new judgeships added in the foreseeable future. She said that the committee had worked on a plan to re-engineer the courts and she was seeking the bar's input on these plans. The Chief Justice remarked that she was asking the state bar president to appoint a committee to help the committee of judges prepare a constitutional amendment to abolish district judges and make all district judges circuit judges, so as to create a one-tier court system. She stated that there would still be small claims jurisdiction but by making all judges circuit judges, this would help equalize caseloads. The Chief Justice said the committee with the help of the bar will need to develop how to evaluate what resources a circuit needs particularly upon the death or retirement of a judge.

The Chief Justice alluded to Chief Justice Heflin's work in securing passage of the Judicial Article and the work ahead to help the court deal with its current lack of resources. She acknowledged that it would be difficult to expect the legislature to abolish judgeships as a remedy to address the severe lack of resources. She noted that it was nevertheless essential for the court and the bar to develop a procedure that would be fair to all circuits and counties. The Chief Justice stated that in the final analysis it was crucial for citizens to know that they will have their day in court. She said that this will take the entire profession to craft a solution to make that possible.

President Methvin thanked Chief Justice Cobb for her informative remarks.

5. 2010 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

President Methvin recognized Past President and Hall of Fame Selection Committee Chair, Sam Rumore. Mr. Rumore reported that the selection committee had recommended and the Board of Bar Commissioners had approved the following recipients to be members of the 2010 class of the Alabama Lawyers Hall of Fame. They were: Edgar Thomas Albritton, Henry Hitchcock, (100 year inductee), Judge James E. Horton, Lawrence Drew Redden, and Harry Seale.

6. LOCAL BAR ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Ed Patterson was recognized to present the local bar achievement awards to the following counties: Calhoun/Cleburne County, Tim Mitchell, president; Madison County, Tommy Siniard, president; and Tuscaloosa County, James Roberts, president.

7. **PRESENTATION OF SECTION AND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT AWARDS**

President Methvin recognized the sections and judicial circuit that had the largest increase in VLP participation this year. They were as follows: Real Property, Probate and Trust Law – Paul Burkett, president; Young Lawyers’ Section – Bob Bailey, president; Jefferson County – Greg Hawley, president and Barbour/Bullock counties – Christy Crow, commissioner, third judicial circuit.

8. **LEADERSHIP FORUM GRADUATES**

President Methvin asked the alumni of leadership forum to stand and be recognized.

9. **50 YEAR CERTIFICATE RECIPIENTS**

President Methvin called on Vice President McCallum to announce the following bar members who were present to receive their 50 year certificates. President Methvin presented certificates to the following lawyers who were present: William Harold Albritton, III; Robert Charles Bennett; William Jennings Benton, Sr.; Julian Mason Davis, Jr.; John Vernon Denson, II; William Hallman (Buddy) Hendrix; Richard Kent Henslee; Broox Garrett Holmes; Ernest Clay Hornsby, Sr. and Borden Martin Ray.

10. **RECOGNITION OF PAST PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

President Methvin asked the past presidents to stand and be recognized. He also asked members of the Board of Bar Commissioners to stand and be recognized. President Methvin then recognized the retiring commissioners who included Randall S. Hayes; John Gruenewald; Maibeth Porter; Les Hayes; Donald R. Jones, Jr.; Robert T. Meadows, III and Kesa Johnston.

11. **PRESIDENT’S CONCLUDING REMARKS**

President Methvin recognized Immediate Past President Mark White. Mr. White recognized President Methvin’s wife Amy Methvin who was presented with a bouquet of flowers by Mr. White’s wife, Carol Ann Hobby. Mr. White then presented a framed certificate to Anna Pender-Pierce, President Methvin’s secretary and thanked her for her service. Next, Mr. White made several remarks about Mr. Methvin’s year as president and presented him with the past president plaque and ribbon. Mr. Methvin thanked Mr. White and offered remarks concerning his term as president.

12. **INTRODUCTION OF PRESIDENT-ELECT**

President Methvin asked Mr. Jim Pratt to come to the podium. President Methvin congratulated Mr. Pratt on his election as president-elect whereupon Mr. Pratt made brief remarks.

13. INTRODUCTION OF NEW PRESIDENT

President Methvin introduced the state bar's new president, Alyce Spruell and asked her to come to the podium. He turned over the office of president to Mrs. Spruell and presented her with the president's gavel and presidential ribbon. President Spruell thanked Mr. Methvin and thanked the bar staff and then recognized her husband Bruce, children Taylor and Cameron, her father and past vice president of the Alabama State Bar Rick Manley, her brother Richard and his wife Carol and their children Shannon and Rich and other family members. She then introduced her office staff including law partner Joe Powell as well as staff members Marie Sutton and Stacy Perry.

President Spruell spoke about her mentors in the bar including past presidents and what those leaders have meant to her and how they have influenced her over the years. She asked rhetorically where are we headed? She alluded to the dire financial problems confronting the court and expressed her desire to work with the chief justice in overcoming this difficulty. President Spruell noted that we should be watchful of increased court costs, especially local fees that have little to do with addressing the operating costs of the court. President Spruell highlighted her plans during her term to stress civic education in our schools. She explained that it was necessary for the bar to help all citizens understand our judicial system, particularly the importance of the Constitution and our Bill of Rights. President Spruell noted that her plans will also deal with needed rule changes including changes in the CLE rules, particularly addressing the need for CLE rules to include provisions that require lawyers that have become voluntarily or involuntarily inactive to make up CLE before being re-licensed. She stated that the Client Security Fund rules and the claims process needs to be streamlined. She explained that the Client Security Fund rules have not been changed since they were first adopted in 1987.

President Spruell concluded her remarks by saying that she looks forward to the challenges of the coming year and is excited to serve our profession.

14. INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

President Spruell introduced Nina Tolinson, president of the Mississippi State Bar. Ms. Tolinson received an ovation for her presence at the Grande Convocation of the annual business meeting.

15. GRAND PRIZE DRAWING

President Spruell recognized Laura Calloway who thanked the exhibitors in particular Insurance Specialists, Inc. (ISI) the lead sponsor of the annual meeting and the donor of the grand prize package and trip to Las Vegas. Ms. Calloway conducted the drawing. The grand prize was won by Patrick Jones of Dothan.

16. ADJOURNMENT

President Spruell closed by reminding that the 2011 Annual Meeting would be held July 13-16 at the Grand Hotel in Point Clear and the commissioners of their brief meeting immediately following the annual business meeting in Magnolia Ballroom F. She declared the 2010 Grande Convocation and Annual Business Meeting of the Alabama State Bar adjourned.

Thomas J. Methvin, President, 2009-2010
Alabama State Bar

Alyce M. Spruell, President, 2010-2011
Alabama State Bar

ATTEST:

Keith B. Norman, Secretary
Alabama State Bar

Note: The awards made during the 2010 state bar meeting are listed in the pamphlet from the Bench and Bar Awards Luncheon. This is included as Appendix A to these minutes.