MINUTES
ALABAMA STATE BAR
BOARD OF BAR COMMISSIONERS MEETING

State Bar Building
Montgomery, Alabama

Friday, September 24, 2010

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Spruell convened this meeting of the Alabama State Bar Board of Commissioners at 10:00 a.m. in the board room of the Alabama State Bar building, Montgomery, Alabama. Commissioner Howard asked for a moment of silence in memory of Commissioner Robert Huffaker who died on September 23, 2010.

2. ROLL CALL

The Secretary called the roll of the Commission and the following Commissioners were present:

Cleve Poole Christy Crow J. Garrison Thompson
Robert Simms Thompson Cooper Shattuck William H. Broome
Phil D. Mitchell Rocky Watson Leslie R. Barineau
Jack Neal Phillip W. McCallum Augusta S. Dowd
Teresa G. Minor Joseph A. Fawal Robert E. Moorer
Derrick A. Mills William A. (Pete) Short Albert J. Trousdale
Henry A. Callaway, III Billy C. Bedsole Juan Ortega
Mary Margaret Bailey James R. Beard Frank M. Wilson
Les Pittman Cole Portis Sim Penton
F. Michael Haney Hamp Baxley John L. Jernigan, III
Kenneth E. White, III Jerry Wayne Baker, Jr. Elizabeth Parsons
John M. Kennemer Jason P. Knight J. Milton Coxwell, Jr.
Christopher E. Malcolm Roger W. Pierce Alexander M. Smith
Claude E. Hundley, III Deborah Byrd Walker LaBarron Boone
David K. Howard Kelly T. Lee

The following Commissioners were absent:

Ronnie E. Keahey Hays Webb S. Greg Burge
Richard W. Whittaker Walter H. Honeycutt K. Scott Stapp
Ramona Morrison Julia C. Kimbrough Brian D. Mann
Harold Stephens J. Dale Lawrence, Jr. R. Wyatt Howell
Allan Chason Tut Wynne Robert L. Rumsey
Buddy Lee Eddie Beason Don Word
Jere Trent Walter E. McGowan Merceria Ludgood
Alicia F. Bennett Monet Gaines
President-elect Jim Pratt and Immediate Past President Tom Methvin were present. Staff members present included Tony McLain, Robert Lusk, Sam Partridge, Jeremy McIntire, Linda Lund, Laura Calloway, Angela Parks, Jeanne Marie Leslie, Brad Carr and Ed Patterson. Also present were Tracy Daniel with the Alabama Law Foundation, Judy Keegan of the Alabama Center for Dispute Resolution and legislative counsel, Kim Adams and Suzi Edwards.

3. **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

President Spruell recognized special guests including Calvin Poole, president of the Butler County Bar Association and brother of Commissioner Cleve Poole and David Steele, president of the Monroe County Bar Association.


President Spruell stated that the minutes of the Board of Commissioners meeting for July 14 and its continuation on July 17, 2010 as well as the minutes of the July 17, 2010 Grande Convocation and Business Meeting had been transcribed and disseminated to the board. She asked if there were any corrections, additions or deletions. There were none.


5. **PUBLIC REPRIMANDS**

5.1 James Scott Langner, Birmingham, ASB 04-26(A)

Mr. Langner received a public reprimand without general publication for violation of Rules 1.3 and 3.2 of the *Alabama Rules of Professional Conduct* [ARPC].

5.2 James Russell Pigott, Baldwin County, ASB 06-205(A)

Mr. Pigott received a public reprimand without general publication for violation of Rules 1.3 and 3.2 of ARPC.

5.3 Michael Allen Moseley, Talladega County, ASB 07-160 (A)

Mr. Moseley received a public reprimand without general publication for violation of Rules 1.3, 3.2, 8.4 (a), 8.4 (d) and 8.4 (g) of ARPC.
5.4 Rodney Newman Caffey, Montgomery County, ASB 08-098 (A) and ASB 08-097 (A)

In the first matter, Mr. Caffey received a public reprimand without general publication for violation of Rule 8.1 (a) of ARPC. In the second matter, Mr. Caffey received a public reprimand without general publication for violation of Rule 1.15 (a) of ARPC.

5.5 Wanda Marler Rabren, Lee County, ASB 08-177 (A)

Ms. Rabren received a public reprimand without general publication for violation of Rules 1.3, 1.4 (a), 1.4 (b) and 8.4 (a) of ARPC.

5.6 John Gordon Brock, Conecuh County, ASB 10-462 (A)

Mr. Brock received a public reprimand with general publication for violation of Rules 3.4 (c), 8.4 (a) and 8.4 (d) of ARPC.

6. PRESIDENT’S REPORT

President Spruell reported on her travels since becoming president which included attending the Baldwin County Bar Association meeting the previous day, the Alabama Lawyers Conference, the Judicial Conference and several local bar meetings as well. She stated that she had enjoyed the opportunity to speak to various groups and asked commissioners to invite her to speak to local bar meetings in their area. President Spruell also reported on a successful Executive Council Retreat and recognized the members of the Executive Council. She thanked them for their help thus far in her presidential year.

President Spruell then discussed the Civics Education Initiative. She discussed her plans including the “Play by the Rules” program which is administered by the Alabama Center for Law and Civic Education and the iCivics program. She stated that efforts were under way to help emphasize these programs in Alabama’s schools and information concerning the programs was included in her President’s Page in the September issue of The Alabama Lawyer. President Spruell recognized Commissioners McCallum and Peek for their help spearheading this effort. She encouraged commissioners to write Dr. Joe Morton, head of the State Department of Education, and urge that more civics courses be taught in Alabama schools. President Spruell stated that better emphasis on civics in the school curriculum will help citizens improve their understanding and appreciation of the rule of law.

President Spruell provided an update on the oil spill situation and informed the commission that she had appointed former commissioner Maibeth Porter to replace Sam Franklin on the Chief Justice’s Professionalism Commission. Finally, she stated that Commissioner Huffaker who had also edited The Alabama Lawyer for 27 years had been nominated prior to his death for the Bill Scruggs Service to the Alabama State Bar Award. She reported that as required by the rules she appointed a committee to consider the nomination and the committee unanimously recommended that Mr. Huffaker be given the award.
COMMISSIONER WATSON MOVED TO ACCEPT THE UNANIMOUS RECOMMENDATION OF THE BILL SCRUGGS AWARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDING THAT THE LATE ROBERT A. HUFFAKER OF MONTGOMERY RECEIVE THE BILL SCRUGGS SERVICE TO THE BAR AWARD. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED AND APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.

7. SECRETARY’S REPORT

The Secretary reported on the improving condition of Commissioner Trent and also reported that Commissioner Rumsey had recently had surgery and was recuperating. The Secretary next reported on the results from the July bar exam. He concluded by stating that the Mobile Bar Association had forwarded a resolution in memory of Pierre Pelham to be included in the Alabama State Bar Book of Memorial Resolutions.

COMMISSIONER BEDSOLE OFFERED A MOTION TO RECEIVE THE RESOLUTION FROM THE MOBILE BAR ASSOCIATION IN MEMORY OF PIERRE PELHAM AND THAT THE RESOLUTION BE INCLUDED IN THE ALABAMA STATE BAR BOOK OF MEMORIAL RESOLUTIONS. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED AND APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE.

8. PROGRAMS UPDATE

Ed Patterson stated that the applications were now available for Leadership Forum Class VII and the deadline for submitting applications was November 8. He also informed the commission that Blue Cross Blue Shield had withdrawn its long term care program that had been endorsed by the Alabama State Bar several years ago. He reported that the Insurance Programs Committee would be meeting to determine whether or not to recommend a successor long term care product for bar members.

9. REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON THE CHIEF JUSTICE’S JUDICIAL REALLOCATION PROPOSAL

President Spruell recognized Commissioners Shattuck and Fawal for a report. Commissioner Shattuck discussed the work of the task force and provided an overview of the issues surrounding the proposal of the Chief Justice’s committee. He reported that this proposal came about as a way to address manpower needs of the court system because of a severe lack of funding for the judicial system. Commissioner Shattuck discussed the groups, including judges and lawyers, with which members of the task force had discussed the proposal. He asked commissioners for their help by seeking input of the lawyers in their area. He stated that the task force will report back to the commission at a later meeting for additional discussion from commissioners concerning this or any other recommendations addressing the funding crisis affecting the court system. Commissioner Shattuck then introduced members of the task force including Commissioners Crow, Baxley, Jernigan, Stapp, Smith and Howell. Young lawyer member Navan Ward was not present. The vice chair of the task force is Commissioner Chason who was unable to be present for the meeting. It was noted that Commissioner Fawal serves as the executive committee liaison. Commissioner Fawal encouraged commissioners to discuss the proposal with lawyers in their circuits and to get an idea of
their opinions on the proposal. He stated that the chief justice will submit legislation for this proposal at the 2011 legislative sessions if it is supported by judges and lawyers.

Following Commissioner Fawal’s remarks, discussion ensued about the proposal. Commissioner Shattuck encouraged commissioners to send e-mails to him about comments they are receiving from local lawyers about the proposal. The judicial relocation proposal and accompanying information would be posted on the state bar’s web site.

10. REPORT OF THE BOARD OF BAR EXAMINERS

Appearing on behalf of the Board of Bar Examiners were chairman David Hymer and board member Barry Ragsdale. Mr. Hymer reported on the uniform bar exam (UBE) and discussed the contents of the UBE and highlighted a recent National Conference of Bar Examiners article discussing the UBE in detail. He explained how the UBE would work if approved in Alabama noting that it would only slightly change what the board is currently doing (the National Conference of Bar Examiners would choose the six MEE questions which the Board of Bar Examiners now chooses.) He stated that examinees would see no difference because the grading would remain the same as would the weighting of the questions and the pass fail score. Mr. Hymer stated that the advantage is the UBE score would be portable and accepted in other jurisdictions. This would permit Alabama examinees to be licensed in other jurisdictions without taking the bar exam again. Mr. Hymer informed the commission that the Board of Bar Examiners is solidly behind the adoption of the UBE for Alabama and that the National Conference of Bar Examiners has helped draft appropriate changes to the Rules Governing Admission to the Alabama State Bar. Mr. Hymer reported that once the rule changes have been vetted by the Board of Bar Examiners, those proposed amendments would be brought to the commission for their review. He concluded by noting that lawyers coming to Alabama with a UBE score would still be required to take the Alabama essay exam.

The commissioners next heard a report from Barry Ragsdale about the use of laptop computers for examinees to complete essay exams. He reported that Alabama is only one of several states that does not currently allow the use of computers and that this change will be implemented with the February bar exam. He stated that the company, ExamSoft, would actually administer the computer aspects of the exam. Mr. Ragsdale explained how the process would work for those voluntarily choosing to use a computer to take the essay portion of the bar exam. He noted that although there is an additional cost associated with using a computer, this cost would be borne by the examinee. He further noted that as an examiner currently grading exams, allowing the use of computers to complete essay exams will be a tremendous help to all the members of the board who grade the essay exams. Moreover, most law school graduates are now using computers to take exams in law school.

President Spruell thanked Mr. Hymer and Mr. Ragsdale for their report.
11. **CLIENT SECURITY FUND REPORT**

Mike Ballard appeared on behalf of the Client Security Fund Task Force and explained the proposed changes as recommended by the task force and CSF committee. The task force and committee are recommending four principle changes: The per claim amount would be increased from $10,000 to $75,000, and the cap per attorney from $20,000 to $200,000. In order to increase the caps, Mr. Ballard stated it was necessary to increase funding which the task force recommended be done by requiring all regular and special members pay $25.00 per year to the Client Security Fund until age 65. He stated that this would also include those filing PHV applications. The third and fourth suggestions that the task force recommended were increasing the size of the committee in order to add two lay people to it and to add a CSF staff person.

President Spruell thanked Mr. Ballard and the task force for the report.

(A copy of the task force’s joint report and recommendations of May 2010 as well as a copy of the marked up Client Security Fund Rules are attached to these minutes as Appendix A and B).

12. **STATE BAR DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN**

The Secretary highlighted the need for a disaster response plan. He explained that the Governor had asked all state agencies to develop an agency response in case of a pandemic. The Secretary reported that the plan included plans for continuing state bar operations in the event of a disaster or a pandemic.

(A copy of the proposed Alabama State Bar Emergency and Disaster Plan are attached to these minutes as Appendix C).

13. **ALABAMA STATE BAR ELECTION RULES AMENDMENTS**

The Secretary explained the proposed amendments to the *Alabama State Bar Rules Governing Election and Selection of President-elect and Members of the Board of Bar Commissioners*. He noted the principle changes included shortening the deadlines for returning ballots electronically in the regular election both for president-elect and commissioners from the last Friday in May to the third Friday in May. Likewise, the deadline for returning ballots in the run-offs would be moved from the third to the second Friday in June. The Secretary explained that with electronic balloting, the extended voting is no longer necessary. He also explained that the amendments would make clear that members who lack access to the Internet to participate electronically in the elections would be required to make their request for a paper ballot on or before May 1 of the election cycle.

(A copy of the *Alabama State Bar Rules Governing Election and Selection of President-elect and Members of the Board of Bar Commissioners* reflecting the appropriate amendments is included with these minutes as Appendix D).
14. **POLICY ON RESERVES**

The Secretary highlighted the need for a Policy on Reserves for the Alabama State Bar, Alabama State Bar Foundation and the Client Security Fund. He highlighted the aspects of the proposed reserve policy for each of the funds and discussed implementation.

(A copy of the proposed Policy on Reserves is included with these minutes as Appendix E).

15. **PRO BONO WEEK RESOLUTION**

President Spruell recognized Commissioners Raleigh and Mitchell who presented a resolution for National Pro Bono Week Celebration. Commissioners Raleigh and Mitchell highlighted events for the celebration and encouraged commissioners to help get local bars involved with the celebration. The following resolution for National Pro Bono Week was introduced:

WHEREAS, last year one in every four of the 940,872 Alabamians living in poverty experienced legal problems, with the majority of these civil problems being consumer issues, health issues, family law issues, employment issues, and housing issues; and

WHEREAS, each year the low-income citizens of Alabama lack access to legal assistance for their legal problems that are often critical to their safety and independence, forcing them to resolve complex legal problems on their own; and

WHEREAS, the need for legal aid in Alabama is dire, since unlike in the criminal defense system, funding for low-income Alabamians who need civil legal assistance has not yet been fully met, with the consequences being a lack of access to justice which is devastating for the poor and which weakens our democratic society as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Alabama attorneys donated over 9500 hours of pro bono legal services last year and made generous financial contributions to legal aid organizations in Alabama to help address the huge unmet need for legal assistance to Alabama’s poor; and

WHEREAS, the American Bar Association has designated October 24-30, 2010 as Pro Bono Week Celebration to recognize the valuable pro bono contributions made by lawyers throughout the year, and to increase pro bono participation across the country to narrow the justice gap; and
WHEREAS, Alabama’s Celebrate Pro Bono Committee has developed and distributed to members of the Board of Bar Commissioners, local bar association presidents and other celebration planners throughout Alabama its “Celebrate Pro Bono Week Event Kit” containing resources to have proclamations signed by Municipalities and County Commissions recognizing the celebration week, to deliver speeches to local civic groups about the importance of access to justice, to hold pro bono recruitment drives, to hold a pro bono legal clinics, to present a pre-approved continuing legal education programs, and to hold a community legal education programs; and

WHEREAS, the American Bar Association’s Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service has recognized the efforts of Alabama’s Celebrate Pro Bono Committee and has made the Celebrate Pro Bono Week Event Kit available nationwide.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Bar Commissioners of the State Bar of Alabama recognizes the week of October 24-30, 2010, as Pro Bono Week, commends Alabama attorneys for their ongoing pro bono contributions, and reminds all members that by engaging in pro bono work and providing financial support they can make a significant difference in the lives of Alabama’s poor who would not otherwise have access to the legal system and encourages all attorneys and local bar associations in Alabama to participate in the Celebration.

COMMISSIONER RALEIGH MOVED THE ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED AND APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE.

16. RULE III APPLICATIONS

President Spruell stated that Michael May (VA) and Jeffery Melcher (GA) had submitted applications pursuant to Rule III of the Rules Governing Admission to the Alabama State Bar for admission by motion. She stated that the applications and character and fitness information complied with the rules thereby allowing them to be considered for admission by motion.

COMMISSIONER RALEIGH MOVED THE ADMISSION OF MICHAEL MAY AND JEFFERY MELCHER. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED AND APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE.
17. **SPECIAL ABA RESOLUTION HONORING HARPER LEE AND **TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD** **ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

President Spruell stated the commission was being asked to ratify the action of the Executive Council authorizing a resolution to be introduced on behalf of the Alabama State Bar in the ABA House of Delegates on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the publication of Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She stated that the resolution as adopted by the ABA House of Delegates read as follows:

RESOLVED, that the American Bar Association celebrates the 50th anniversary of the publication of Harper Lee’s Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and honors the positive role that the book has played in the lives of lawyers, their families and the American public over the 50 years.

COMMISSIONER BEDSOLE MOVED TO RATIFY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL’S ACTION AUTHORIZING A RESOLUTION HONORING HARPER LEE AND THE PUBLICATION OF *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED AND APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE.

18. **RESOLUTION HONORING BETH CARMICHAEL ON HER RETIREMENT**

Commissioner Jack Neal presented a resolution to the commission to honor Beth Carmichael for her long service to the Birmingham Bar and to the legal profession in Alabama.

The resolution offered by Commissioner Neal was as follows:

THIS RESOLUTION IS PRESENTED to Beth Carmichael, beloved Executive Director of the Birmingham Bar Association, on the occasion of her retirement from that position after 37 years of faithful and successful service to that organization and its membership; and

WHEREAS, Under Beth’s leadership the Birmingham Bar Association’s membership has grown from approximately 690 lawyers in 1973 to more than 4,000 members, making it not only the largest voluntary bar association in the state but one of the largest in the Southeastern United States; and

WHEREAS, Beth has served ably and well and at the time of her retirement has the distinction of being one of the most respected and longest serving executive directors in America; and

WHEREAS, as a bar executive, Beth is an active member of the National Association of Bar Executives (NABE), where she enjoys the respect and admiration of her colleagues and has held numerous positions serving on many committees during her long years of membership in that national organization; and
WHEREAS, The Alabama State Bar honored Beth in 2008 by presenting her the Award of Merit at its annual meeting. A portion of that presentation included an observation from one officer of the Birmingham Bar Association remarking, “Beth is a good friend, has excelled and is perfectly suited for her position as executive director of the Birmingham Bar. Beth possesses the perfect blend of skill sets needed to succeed in her role, such as best friend, confident, lion tamer, psychiatrist, diplomat and parliamentarian. The members of our bar have always been able to count on Beth’s guidance, support and friendship.”

WHEREAS, The Birmingham Bar Association has recently honored Beth by passing a resolution in her honor and a copy of the same is attached hereto and made a part hereof.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be spread upon the minutes of the Alabama Board of Bar Commissioners of the Alabama State Bar and in the permanent records of this Association; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the members of Beth’s family as testament of our admiration and esteem for her; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the retirement of Beth Carmichael is recognized to be a loss to the Birmingham Bar Association, the Alabama State Bar and the legal community and that she is wished all success and happiness in her well earned retirement. We are greater for her having served.

COMMISSIONER NEAL MOVED THE ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED AND APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE.

(Also included with these minutes as Appendix F is the Birmingham Bar Association’s resolution honoring Beth Carmichael).
19. **TRANSFER OF GROUP DISABILITY BUSINESS**

President Spruell recognized Kate Musso, chair of the Insurance Programs Committee. Ms. Musso reported that the bar’s third party administrator, Insurance Specialists, Inc. had recommended that the state bar transfer its current group disability coverage offered through The Hartford to Prudential. She stated that ISI has indicated that The Hartford appears to be moving away from offering group disability coverage. Moreover, ISI believes that Prudential is a much stronger company financially and is better geared to serve the association market long term than The Hartford. She reported that in order to facilitate the transfer, all insureds and applicants will receive an across the board five percent increase in the face amount of their benefit without any additional price increase.

COMMISSIONER WHITE MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER OF THE BAR’S GROUP DISABILITY COVERAGE FROM THE HARTFORD TO PRUDENTIAL AS RECOMMENDED BY THE INSURANCE PROGRAMS COMMITTEE AND THE BAR’S THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATOR INSURANCE SPECIALISTS, INC. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED AND APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE.

20. **LOCAL LAWYER RECOGNITION**

President Spruell stated that lawyers in Orange Beach and Gulf Shores led by Craig Olmstead organized pro bono assistance to members of their communities suffering from financial loss as a result of the BP oil spill. She stated that this was done independently and entirely upon their own initiative.

In the absence of Commissioners Chason and Wynn who were unable to be present for the meeting, the following resolution was introduced to honor the 15 attorneys from Gulf Shores and Orange Beach participating in this community project. The resolution read as follows:

WHEREAS, lawyers are members of a self-regulating profession that is vital to the integrity of the justice system, bearing special responsibilities to help ensure that those of limited financial means and other vulnerable and under-represented populations are not excluded from the justice system because of their inability to pay for legal assistance; and

WHEREAS, fifteen attorneys from Gulf Shores and Orange Beach lead by Craig Olmstead organized to provide pro bono assistance to members of their community suffering financial losses as the result of the BP oil spill; and

WHEREAS, this group held a pro bono legal assistance clinic on Saturday, August 28, 2010 to provide advice and counsel on foreclosure actions, collection actions and landlord/tenant disputes that have arisen due to reduced income resulting from the BP oil spill; and
WHEREAS, lawyers in Alabama govern themselves under a code of conduct and are inspired by a shared culture that recognizes a duty to act in the public interest and to uphold the integrity of the justice system; and

WHEREAS, this group has demonstrated the highest level of professionalism and truly reflects the Alabama State Bar motto, Lawyers Render Service; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alabama State Bar Board of Bar Commissioners recognizes and commends attorneys Craig Olmstead, Tim Garner, David Chapman, Andrew Harrell, Bobby Hornsby, Pete DeSarro, Burt Taylor, Pete Bridges, Jule Herbert, Blake Lowe, Richard Johnson, D. W. Wilson, Joshua Kesling, David Whetstone and Andrew Monaghan for the pro bono assistance they provided to their community and the positive impact on our profession.

COMMISSIONER BEDSOLE MOVED ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED AND APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE.

21. STAFF COMPENSATION FY 2010-11

President Spruell stated that for 2010-2011 the amount of $2,543,230 was the recommended staff compensation. She reported that this figure was approximately $271,000 less than the amount budgeted for staff salaries.

COMMISSIONER MOORER MOVED TO APPROVE STAFF COMPENSATION IN THE AMOUNT OF $2,543,230 FOR FY 2010-2011. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED AND APPROVED BY VOICE VOTE.

22. ADJOURNMENT

President Spruell asked if there was any further business to come before the commission. There being no further business to come before the commission, a motion was made and duly seconded to adjourn. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Alyce M. Spruell, President
Alabama State Bar

ATTEST:

Keith B. Norman, Secretary
Alabama State Bar