

## **MINUTES**

### **ALABAMA STATE BAR 2024 GRAND CONVOCATION AND ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

**The Sandestin Hilton  
Emerald Ballroom  
Destin, Florida  
Saturday, June 29, 2024**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

President Brannon Buck called to order the 147th Grand Convocation and Annual Business Meeting of the Alabama State Bar.

#### **STATE OF THE JUDICIARY – CHIEF JUSTICE TOM PARKER**

President Buck introduced Chief Justice Tom Parker for remarks regarding the Alabama court system. Chief Justice Parker thanked President Buck and commended the leadership of the Alabama State Bar for their strong working relationship between the bar and the judiciary in Alabama. He congratulated President-elect Tom Perry and said that he looked forward to working with him during the coming year.

Chief Justice Parker noted this would be his last bar meeting to attend as Chief Justice and informed those in attendance that he was the first Chief Justice to serve a full term in the past thirty (30) years. Chief Parker highlighted the successful legislative session and reviewed the Court's plan, adopted by the legislature, to add new circuit and district judges in the 2024 and 2026 election cycle. He highlighted the work of trial court judges in their specialty courts. Chief Justice Parker closed by thanking bar leadership and members for the work they continue to do for the legal system in Alabama.

President Buck thanked Chief Justice Parker for his remarks and pledged continued support and cooperation by the bar in improving the court system and access to justice in Alabama. Buck further commended the Chief for his service to the bar and judicial system.

#### **FIFTY YEAR STATUS**

President Buck recognized any fifty-year members in attendance and informed everyone the Alabama State Bar would hold a separate celebration on September 19, 2024, at Ross Bridge in Birmingham, Alabama.

#### **RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

President Buck recognized members of the judiciary, members of the Alabama state legislature, past presidents of the Alabama State Bar, retiring members of the Board of Bar Commissioners, and Leadership Forum alumni in attendance

### **PRESENTATION OF PRESIDENT’S AWARD**

President Buck presented current Commissioners Conrad Anderson, Manish Patel, and Robin Wolfe with the President’s Award commending them for their work with *The Alabama Lawyer* and criminal law section respectively.

### **PRESENTATION OF THE JUDICIAL AWARD OF MERIT AWARD**

President Buck recognized the Hon. John Graham of Jackson County, Alabama as the Judicial Award of Merit recipient.

### **PRESENTATION OF THE COMMISSIONERS’ AWARD**

President Brannon Buck presented the Commissioners’ Award to Commissioner Felicia Long for her dedicated service. Buck noted Felicia Long had worked tirelessly on by-laws, the Bench and Bar committee, and the most recent Justice for All initiative.

### **PRESENTATION OF THE J. ANTHONY “TONY” McLAIN PROFESSIONALISM AWARD**

Vice President Felicia Long presented the J. Anthony “Tony” McLain Professionalism Award to John D. Watson, III.

### **PRESENTATION OF THE MICHAEL ERMERT AWARD OF MERIT**

Vice President Long presented the Michael Ermert Award of Merit to Cassandra W. Adams.

### **PRESENTATION OF THE WILLIAM D. “BILL” SCRUGGS, JR. AWARD**

Vice President Long presented the William D. “Bill” Scruggs, Jr. Award to Samuel N. Crosby.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARDS PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED**

Vice President Long announced recipients of awards presented at other times during the Alabama State Bar Annual Meeting.

Maude McLure Kelly Award

Hon. Inge P. Johnson

Susan B. Livingston Award

Kim B. Martin

Justice Janie L. Shores Scholarship

Hannah Hart  
Sandy Kimble

### **PRESENTATION OF THE JEANNE MARIE LESLIE AWARD**

Jack Carney, Chair of the Alabama Lawyers Assistance Program committee presented the Jeanne Marie Leslie Award to Johnny W. Berry and Robert E. Clute, Jr.

## **PRESENTATION OF THE VOLUNTEER LAWYERS PROGRAM PRO BONO AWARDS**

Eileen Harris, chair of the Pro Bono Committee announced the recipients of the Volunteer Lawyers Program Pro Bono Awards.

Albert Vreeland Award	David Weston
Mediator Award	Holly Sawyer
Law Firm/Group Award	Tuscaloosa County Bar Association
Public Interest Attorney Award	Michael L. Forton
Law Student Award	Rolanda Tina Turner

## **PRESENTATION OF PRESIDENT'S PLAQUE AND PIN**

Immediate Past President Gibson Vance presented President Brannon Buck with the President's Plaque and Past President's Ribbon. Executive Director Terri Lovell thanked President Brannon Buck for his commitment to the Alabama State Bar and on behalf of the ASB staff presented him with a framed September Alabama Lawyer magazine cover.

## **PRESIDENT'S CLOSING REMARKS**

President Buck thanked those in attendance for allowing him the opportunity and privilege to serve as president of the Alabama State Bar. He gave an overview of his tenure as President and unveiled the launch of his primary initiative, the Justice for All website, which will provide a navigation tool for all legal services available to the underserved in Alabama. Buck expressed his appreciation to his family, law firm, and the ASB staff for their support during his presidency. He wished Tom Perry the best as he assumes the office.

## **RECOGNITION OF FRED HELMSING, JR. AS PRESIDENT-ELECT**

President Buck asked Fred Helmsing to come to the podium. President Buck congratulated Mr. Helmsing on becoming president-elect. Mr. Helmsing made brief remarks and said that he looked forward to supporting incoming president Tom Perry with his initiatives in the coming year.

## **INSTALLATION OF TAYLOR THOMAS PERRY, JR. AS 149<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT OF THE ALABAMA STATE BAR**

Chief Justice Tom Parker administered the oath of office to Tom Perry as he was introduced as the 149th president of the Alabama State Bar. Immediate Past President Buck presented him with the presidential gavel, pin, and ribbon. President Perry thanked President Buck for his leadership over the past year. President Perry also thanked Chief Justice Parker, his family, law firm, and other members of the Alabama State Bar for their support and belief in him.

President Perry outlined the initiative of his presidency: **Harvesting Hope**. Perry stated many counties in Alabama are facing a tipping point regarding access to lawyers. While the Alabama State Bar is comprised of approximately 19,400 lawyers, only 12,000 are actively engaged in the practice of law within the state. Of that number, approximately 75% of all lawyers live and practice

in 6 of the 67 counties. Perry hopes to engage with membership and promote the benefits of a rural practice while leveraging bar resources to support any young lawyer considering opening a practice in these underserved areas.


President Perry concluded by sharing that he was humbled and honored to be the 149th President of the Alabama State Bar and grateful for the trust that the members of the Bar bestowed upon him.

### **GRAND PRIZE DRAWING**

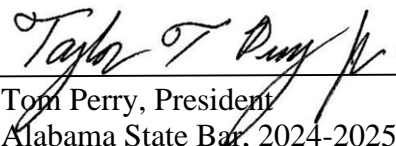
Robyn Bernier and representatives of Insurance Specialists (ISI) were recognized for the drawing of the grand prize. The winner was Jim Esdale. She also recognized other sponsors of the annual meeting and concluded by thanking the vendors, speakers, and lawyers for their participation in this year's annual meeting.

### **CLOSING REMARKS AND ADJOURNMENT**

President Perry closed the meeting by reminding all in attendance that the 2025 annual meeting would be held July 16-19, 2025, at the Grand Hotel in Point Clear, Alabama. He reminded commissioners of their brief meeting immediately following the annual business meeting. He then declared the 2024 Grand Convocation and Annual Business Meeting of the Alabama State Bar adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

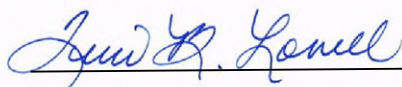


Brannon Buck  
President, 2023-2024



Tom Perry, President  
Alabama State Bar, 2024-2025

ATTEST:



Terri B. Lovell, Secretary  
Alabama State Bar