



*Serving the Public. Serving the Profession.*

# **BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

## **Thursday, April 18, 2024**

### **New Orleans**

#### **\* MINUTES \***

President Shayna L. Sonnier called the meeting to order at 3 p.m., Thursday, April 18, 2024, at The Higgins Hotel New Orleans. Business was conducted in accordance with the agenda below.

#### **Agenda Item 1. Roll Call**

Ms. Larsen called roll and advised that the following members, who constituted a quorum, participated:

President, Shayna L. Sonnier  
President-Elect, Patrick A. Talley, Jr.  
Treasurer, Larry J. Centola III  
Secretary, Valerie T. Schexnayder  
Immediate Past President, Stephen I. Dwyer  
Chair, Young Lawyers Division, Senae D. Hall  
First Board District Representative, J. Christopher Zainey, Jr.  
First Board District Representative, Graham H. Ryan  
Second Board District Representative, Jeffrey G. Lagarde  
Third Board District Representative, Melanie W. Chatagnier  
Fourth Board District Representative, Adam P. Johnson  
Fifth Board District Representative, Carrie LeBlanc Jones  
Fifth Board District Representative, Kelly M. Rabalais  
Sixth Board District Representative, Charles D. Elliott  
Seventh Board District Representative, W. Michael Street  
Eighth Board District Representative, Curtis R. Joseph, Jr.  
At-Large Member, Blake R. David (by phone)  
At-Large Member, Jeffrey A. Riggs  
At-Large Member, L. Bradley Hancock (by phone)  
From the Faculty of Southern University Law Center, Donald W. North  
From the Faculty of Louisiana State Law Institute, André Doguet  
House of Delegates Committee on Liaison Chair, Keenan K. Kelly (by phone)  
House of Delegates Committee on Liaison Member, Sandra K. Cosby (by phone)  
House of Delegates Committee on Liaison Member, Shannon Seiler Dartez

Also present were:

President-Elect Designee, Edward J. Walters, Jr.  
Treasurer-Elect, C.A. "Hap" Martin III  
Executive Director, Loretta Larsen, CAE

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Access to Justice Director, Monte T. Mollere  
Communications Director, Kelly W. Ponder  
Director of Member Outreach and Diversity, Tricia R. Pierre  
Information Technology Directory, Ashley Cambre  
Executive Assistant, Jennifer France

Absent were:

From the Faculty of Loyola University College of Law, Monica Hof Wallace

**Agenda Item 2. Consent Calendar**

- a. **Minutes of January 19 and 20, 2024 Meetings** – Consideration of approval of minutes of January 19 and 20, 2024 meetings.
- b. **Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education** – Periodic report from the LCLCE, as required by the April 2010 agreement.

Upon motion by Mr. Centola and second by Mr. Talley, the Board unanimously approved the Consent Calendar without discussion or debate.

**Agenda Item 3. Budget – Larry J. Centola**

- a. **Amendments to FY 2023/2024 Budget** – Consideration of amendments as recommended by Budget Committee.  
Mr. Centola reviewed the amendments to the FY 2023/2024 budget as recommended by the Budget Committee. After a brief discussion and upon motion by Mr. Doguet and second by Mr. Riggs, the Board unanimously approved the amendments as recommended by the Budget Committee.
- b. **Consideration of FY 2024/2025 Budget** – Consideration of preliminary approval of budget for FY 2024/2025, as recommended by the Budget Committee.  
Mr. Centola reviewed the proposed FY 2024/2025 budget as recommended by the Budget Committee. After some discussion and upon motion by Mr. Street and second by Mr. North, the Board unanimously approved the proposed budget as recommended by the Budget Committee.

**Agenda Item 4. Ratification of At-Large Appointment – Patrick A. Talley, Jr.**

Mr. Talley asked for ratification of Tina L. Suggs of Metairie as his at-large appointment to the Board of Governors for a three-year term beginning at the close of the 2024 Annual Meeting and ending at the close of the 2027 Annual Meeting. The Board at its January 19 meeting gave Mr. Talley the authority to make the appointment. Upon motion by Mr. Doguet and second by Mr. Joseph, the Board ratified Ms. Suggs's appointment.

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**Agenda Item 5. Ratification of Pro Bono Awards and Children’s Law Awards Vote – Shayna L. Sonnier**

Ms. Sonnier asked for ratification of the March 2024 email vote regarding recipients of awards. Upon motion by Mr. Joseph and second by Mr. Ryan, the Board voted unanimously to ratify the email vote.

**Agenda Item 6. Committee on Bar Admissions Recommendation – Shayna L. Sonnier**

Ms. Sonnier asked the Board to consider the recommendation to the Louisiana Supreme Court the appointment of Margaret “Peggy” Welsh as the Civil Code III Examiner for the Committee on Bar Admissions. Current Civil Code III Examiner Stacy Grove Butler highly recommends the appointment of Ms. Welsh. Upon motion by Mr. Riggs and second by Mr. Lagarde, the Board voted unanimously to recommend the appointment of Ms. Welsh.

**Agenda Item 7. Appointment of JLAP Board of Directors – Shayna L. Sonnier**

Ms. Sonnier advised that in accordance with JLAP Bylaws. The LSBA Board of Governors was charged with making appointments to the JLAP Board of Directors. After taking into account the recommendations of the JLAP Board and the LSBA Executive Committee, and upon motion by Mr. Talley and second by Mr. Riggs, the Board voted unanimously to make the following appointments:

- Appointment as Judge Director (7/1/24 – 6/30/27) to replace the Hon. Jay C. Zainey – Hon. Darrel J. Papillion; and
- Appointment as LSBA Member Director (7/1/24 – 6/30/27) to replace Dian Tooley-Knoblett – John E. “Eddie” McAuliffe, Jr.

**Agenda Item 8. Committee on Diversity Recommendations – Tricia R. Pierre**

- a. **Guardian of Diversity Award Criteria** – Ms. Pierre reviewed the proposed changes and asked the Board to consider the revisions to the criteria of the Guardian of Diversity Award as recommended by the Committee on Diversity. Upon motion by Mr. Johnson and second by Mr. North, the Board unanimously approved the revisions as proposed.
- b. **Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson Trailblazer Award and Guardian of Diversity Award** – Ms. Pierre advised the Board that the Committee on Diversity unanimously recommended:
  - Associate Justice Piper D. Griffin as the recipient of the Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson Trailblazer Award; and
  - United States District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana as the recipient of the Guardian of Diversity Award.

Upon motion by Mr. Johnson and second by Mr. Street, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Committee on Diversity’s recommendations.

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**Agenda Item 9. Member Benefit Proposal – Tricia R. Pierre**

Ms. Pierre asked the Board to consider the addition of the member benefit Omnizant, a full-service digital marketing agency specializing in legal marketing. Upon motion by Mr. North and second by Mr. Johnson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the addition.

**Agenda Item 10. Introduction of New Chief Disciplinary Counsel – Shayna L. Sonnier**

Ms. Sonnier introduced Anderson O. Dotson III, who was appointed Chief Disciplinary Counsel effective March 2024. Mr. Dotson made some brief remarks to Board members and answered a few questions.

**Agenda Item 11. Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program – Patrick A. Talley, Jr.**

- a. **Report on JLAP Operations**
- b. **Mandatory reporting to LSBA**

Mr. Talley reported that JLAP is finalizing its budget and will present it to the Board of Governors for its consideration at the June 9, 2024 meeting. He also noted that JLAP's Executive Director Angela White-Bazile was continuing to do a great job.

**Agenda Item 12. Annual Meeting/Summer School for Lawyers and Judges – Shayna L. Sonnier**

Ms. Sonnier referred members to the registrations to date and encouraged everyone to register and attend. She noted that registrations are higher than at this time last year.

**Agenda Item 13. Report of the Young Lawyers Division Chair – Senae D. Hall**

Ms. Hall reported on three recent YLD successes:

- The Wills for Heroes program is going well with more than 240 wills drafted year to date.
- The YLD hosted the State Mock Trial, and the winning team, Caddo High School, will represent Louisiana at the national high school mock trial in May.
- The Young Lawyer Conference was a success and featured several excellent speakers, YLD Awards, and YLD Top 40 Awards.

She also reported that the YLD will be collaborating with the Florida and Georgia Young Lawyers for a four-hour writing workshop.

**Agenda Item 14. Report of the Treasurer – Larry J. Centola**

Mr. Centola advised that all financial matters had been covered elsewhere on the agenda. He added that the LSBA and Louisiana Client Assistance Foundation were continuing to discuss the MOU which would result in additional funding for the Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program.

**Agenda Item 15. Report of the Secretary – Valerie T. Schexnayder**

Ms. Schexnayder reported that the last issue of the *Louisiana Bar Journal* focused on Young

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Lawyers with several articles written by them. As the June issue will feature the 24/25 Board, she encouraged continuing Board members to update their biographical sketches if needed.

**Agenda Item 16. Report of the Immediate Past President – Stephen I. Dwyer**  
Mr. Dwyer waived his report.

**Agenda Item 17. Report of the President-Elect – Patrick A. Talley, Jr.**

- a. **2024-2025 Board of Governors/YLD Council Orientation** – Mr. Talley announced the meeting would be held May 2 through May 5 for those continuing Board members.
- b. **Strategic Planning Update** – AT MR. Talley's request, Mr. Ryan announced that the member survey had been emailed and that the deadline to complete had expired.
- c. **Other Matters** – Mr. Talley announced that the 2024 Annual Meeting theme "I Get by with a Little Help from My Friends" was inspired by the Beatles and the continued focus on Access to Justice.

**Agenda Item 18. Report of the President – Shayna L. Sonnier**

- a. **ATJ Conclave** – Ms. Sonnier reported on the success of the 2024 Access to Justice Conclave held at Jones Walker with around 50 attendees.
- b. **BOG Meeting** – Ms. Sonnier announced that the Board of Governors' final meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 5 at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, in connection with the 2024 Annual Meeting/Summer School for Lawyers & Judges
- c. **Louisiana Bar Foundation Annual Fellows Gala** – Ms. Sonnier reminded members about the April 19, 2024 LBF Gala at the WWII Museum.
- d. **Report on Seven Points Louisiana CLE Series** – Ms. Sonnier thanked volunteers and staff members for their contributions to another successful CLE series.
- e. **Lawyer Advertising** – Ms. Sonnier reported on upcoming changes to lawyer advertising filing procedures, which will include an online system for submitting and paying for filings. The goal is implementation by July 1, 2024.

**Agenda Item 19. Report of the Executive Director – Loretta Larsen** – Ms. Larsen waived her report.

**Agenda Item 20. Report of the Associate Executive Director – Cheri Cotogno Grodsky** – Members were referred to Ms. Grodsky's written report.

**Agenda Item 21. Staff Reports**

- a. **Access to Justice** – Monte T. Mollere

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Mr. Mollere referred members to his written report and invited them to the Pro Bono and Children's Law Awards Ceremony scheduled for May 21 at the Supreme Court.

**b. Member Outreach and Diversity – Tricia R. Pierre**

Ms. Pierre referred members to her written report noting the Annual Conclave on Diversity in the Legal Profession is scheduled for August 9, 2024, in New Orleans. She also reported that the Leadership Class applications are available online until May 31. The Suit Up program will take place from June 10-28, 2024, and she encouraged members to reach out to her for job shadowing opportunities for the high school students.

**Executive Session**

At 4:25 p.m., Mr. Riggs moved that the Board go into the Executive Session, which motion was seconded by Mr. Johnson. The Executive Session began at 4:26 p.m. and ended at 4:40 p.m.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Valerie T. Schexnayder  
Secretary

**APPROVED BY BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
JUNE 5, 2024  
MIRAMAR BEACH, FL**