

**STATE BAR OF GEORGIA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
MEETING MINUTES
Saturday, June 7, 2025, 9:00 a.m.
Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa
Ponte Vedra, Florida**

The 308th meeting of the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia was held on the date and location shown above. President Christopher P. Twyman presided.

Pledge of Allegiance

Past President Dawn Jones led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation

Past President Patrise Perkins-Hooker gave the invocation.

Special Presentation

In a demonstration of unity and commitment to the Rule of Law, Chief Justice Nels S.D. Peterson administered the Lawyer's Oath to all lawyers present, serving as a reminder of the enduring principles that guide the practice of law in Georgia and the United States.

Special Recognition

President Chris Twyman recognized the members of the judiciary, the past presidents of the State Bar, and other special guests in attendance.

Welcome to New Officers and Board Members

President Chris Twyman recognized the new officers and Board of Governors members.

Roll Call

Secretary Shiriki Jones circulated the roll for signature (Exhibit A).

Future Meetings Schedule

President Chris Twyman reviewed the Future Meetings Schedule.

President's Address

President Chris Twyman delivered the President's Address (Exhibit B).

Georgia General Assembly

Sen. Brian Strickland, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, reported on the activities of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Approval of President's Appointments to the State Disciplinary Boards

The Board of Governors approved the following presidential appointments to the State Disciplinary Boards by majority vote:

State Disciplinary Board

Robert H. Smalley III, Dalton (2028)

Christine Koehler, Lawrenceville (2028)

State Disciplinary Review Board

Norbert Daniel “Bert” Hummel, IV, Kennesaw, Northern District (2028)
Pamela Sue James, Augusta, Southern District (2028)
LaShekia Hughes, Macon, Lay Member (2028)

Formal Advisory Opinion Board

Member-at-Large: Edward B. Krugman, Atlanta (2027)
Member-at-Large: Martin A. Levinson, Atlanta (2027)
Young Lawyers Division: Emily C. Long, Alpharetta (2027)
Georgia Trial Lawyers Association: Christy C. Childers, Macon (2027)
Georgia Defense Lawyers Association: Jacob E. Daly, Atlanta (2027)
Atlanta’s John Marshall Law School: Jeffrey A. Van Detta, Atlanta (2027)
Mercer University School of Law: Patrick E. Longan, Macon (2027)
University of Georgia School of Law: David N. Lefkowitz, Athens (2027)
State Disciplinary Board: Marcella C. Ducca, Atlanta (2026)
State Disciplinary Review Board: John R. B. Long, Augusta (2026)

Approval of 2025-2026 Standing, Special & Program Committees and Boards

The Board of Governors approved the proposed 2025-2026 Standing, Special & Program Committees and Boards by majority vote.

Proposed Rules Changes

Rule 1.15(II). Safekeeping Property-Trust Account and IOTLA

This proposed change, originating from the Disciplinary Rules and Procedures Committee, includes non-substantive housekeeping and grammatical updates. It also incorporates revisions prompted by a recent Supreme Court opinion on paymaster cases. Under the proposed changes, a lawyer holding or managing funds in a fiduciary capacity without representing any party must notify all parties in writing that neither the funds nor the lawyer is subject to the Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct. Additionally, lawyers may not use their law firm trust or IOLTA accounts to hold fiduciary funds unless they are representing a client in a specific matter.

The Board of Governors, by majority vote, approved the proposed rules change.

Rule 4-203.1. Uniform Service Rule

This proposed change, originating from the Disciplinary Rules and Procedures Committee, clarifies the service process in disciplinary matters. It defines a lawyer’s “official address” for serving documents and authorizes State Bar Investigators or individuals approved by the State Disciplinary Board to serve Petitions for the Appointment of a Special Master and Formal Complaints. The changes also specify acceptable methods of service and introduce the use of an affidavit to document unsuccessful service attempts.

The Board of Governors, by majority vote, did not approve the proposed rules change.

Rule 4-220. Notice of Punishment or Acquittal; Administration of Reprimands

This proposed change, originating from the Disciplinary Rules and Procedures Committee, addresses concerns raised by the Supreme Court regarding Disciplinary Review Board Reprimands. It replaces the term “issued” with “read in the presence of the respondent” and

requires the reprimand to be administered during the portion of the Review Board meeting open to the public. Additional changes clarify notice requirements for both the public and the respondent.

The Board of Governors, by majority vote, approved the proposed rules change.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Javoyne Hicks reported on the Bar's finances and investments. She referred to the financials in the Board Book that are through March 31, 2025. The combined audit was included in the Board Book, which contained no audit adjustments.

The Board of Governors received copies of the Consolidated Revenues and Expenditures, Operations and Bar Center Combined, for the year-to-date period ending March 31, 2025; Total Bar Center Operations Revenues and Expenditures Executive Summary for the year-to-date period ending March 31, 2025; Operations Income Statement for the year-to-date period ending March 31, 2025; Supporting Schedule of Other Expenses for the year-to-date period ending March 31, 2025; Status and Use of Cash Investments as of March 31, 2025; SBG Unallocated Cash chart; Board-Designated and Donor Temporarily Restricted Net Assets as of March 31, 2025; Summary of Members and Voluntary Legislative Contributions paid through March 31, 2025; Summary of Members and Voluntary Contributions to GLSP paid through March 31, 2025; Legislative Activity Report through March 31, 2025; and Summary of Clients' Security Fund Activity for the year-to-date period ending March 31, 2025.

Election Schedule 2025-2026

The Board of Governors approved the proposed 2025-2026 Elections Schedule (Exhibit C) by majority vote.

Executive Committee Election

The Executive Committee election was held with the following results:

Two-Year Term 2025-2027

Results:

Candidate: Thua G. Barlay

Elected by majority vote for two-year term

Nominator: Anne Templeton LaMalva

Seconded: Ryan English

Candidate: Joyce Gist Lewis

Elected by majority vote for two-year term

Nominator: Past President Dawn M. Jones

Seconded: Past President Robin Frazer Clark

Candidate: David S. Lipscomb

Elected by majority vote for two-year term

Nominator: Past President Brown Sally Akins

Seconded: Thomas W. Herman

Candidate: John R.B. "Jack" Long

Was not elected

Nominator: Hon. Amanda Nicole Heath

Seconded: Edward T. McAfee

Georgia Legal Services Program Appointments

By majority vote, the Board of Governors approved the appointments of Tamara S. Caldas, Atlanta; Ronald E. Daniels, Eastman; and Elisa S. Kodish, Atlanta, to the GLSP Board of Directors.

Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism Appointment

By majority vote, the Board of Governors approved the appointment of David M. Paule for a three-year term to the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism.

Executive Director Election

The Board of Governors elected Damon Elmore as executive director for the 2025-2026 Bar year by majority vote.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Damon Elmore expressed his gratitude to the Board for their support in extending his term and emphasized the importance of teamwork in achieving the Bar's mission. As the current Bar year concludes, he conveyed optimism about the upcoming year and reiterated the value of starting anew, referencing St. Benedict's philosophy of "always, we begin again." Elmore announced that full details summarizing the 2024-2025 year would be included in the Bar's annual report, expected in the Fall Board Book. He highlighted the Bar staff's commitment to enhancing member services and operational improvements. He acknowledged the recent losses of team members Mike Monahan and Laura Johnson, thanking the Board for their support during this time. Elmore said he looked forward to working with President Chris Twyman and collaborating with the Executive Committee and others to attract new tenants and optimize resources at the Bar Center, while expressing appreciation for the leadership of President Ivy Cadle and the Supreme Court liaisons.

Young Lawyers Division President's Report

YLD President Veronica Cox reported on the year ahead for the Young Lawyers Division, marking the 20th anniversary of the YLD Leadership Academy. She expressed enthusiasm for celebrating the achievements of the YLD, acknowledging the hard work and success of its members. YLD President Cox outlined plans to continue the YLD's service efforts while highlighting successful programming and enhancing visibility and engagement among members. She emphasized the importance of bringing back pre-pandemic events and confirmed that the YLD would participate in all meetings with the Board of Governors, except for the Spring Meeting. Additionally, she encouraged Board members to welcome new participants and urge mentees and young lawyers to get involved in YLD activities.

Legislative Report

Director of Governmental Affairs Jennifer McNeely reported on the legislative activities of the Bar.

Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Technology Report

Past President and Chair Darrell Sutton provided an update on the activities of the Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Technology. He explained how the committee was established, outlining the necessity for its creation and the findings that emerged from their review of the Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct. The committee recommended three changes to the rules to better address the implications of artificial intelligence in legal practice, two of which were already in progress with the Office of the General Counsel and the Supreme Court. Additionally, an AI Toolkit was developed, which will be maintained and updated by the Director of Law Practice Management, Nkoyo Effiong. The committee's name was changed to the Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technology Committee to reflect its broader focus. Sutton expressed his gratitude to the staff and committee members for their efforts and looked forward to continuing the committee's work in the upcoming Bar year.

Suicide Prevention and Awareness Committee Report

Hon. Shondeana Morris, chair of the committee, reported on the activities of the Suicide Prevention and Awareness Committee. She shared a moving video reminding all of those the Bar has lost by suicide over

recent years. Past President Robin Frazer Clark provided bracelets to represent the importance of the Bar's Lawyer Assistance Program, which were shared with everyone at the meeting.

Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism Report

Executive Director Karlise Grier reported on the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism, expressing her gratitude to Chief Justice Nels S.D. Peterson for his leadership. She announced that the grant application period for the commission is open through July 15. Carlos Vilela, Kevin Patrick, and Sam Mullis were present to discuss the efforts of the Professionalism Committee. Grier indicated that the commission is actively recruiting group leaders for the 2025 law school orientations and encouraged Board members to volunteer for this important role. Additionally, she highlighted upcoming professionalism CLE sessions.

State Bar of Georgia Audit Report

The Board of Governors received a copy of the State Bar of Georgia Audit Report for the year-end 2024 and related auditor's letter regarding governance.

Center for Lawyer Wellbeing

The Board of Governors received information on the Center for Lawyer Wellbeing.

Office of the General Counsel

The Board of Governors received a written report from the Office of the General Counsel.

Fee Arbitration Program

The Board of Governors received a written report from the Fee Arbitration Program.

Law Practice Management Program

The Board of Governors received a written report from the Law Practice Management Program.

Sections' Annual Reports

The Board of Governors received written reports from the following sections: Administrative Law Section; Alternative Dispute Resolution Section; Construction Law Section; Creditor's Rights Section; Elder Law Section; Eminent Domain Section; Energy Law Section; Entertainment and Sports Law Section; Environmental Law Section; Family Law Section; Franchise and Distribution Law Section; Health Law Section; Intellectual Property Law Section; Nonprofit Law Section; Privacy & Technology Law Section; Real Property Law Section; Taxation Law Section; White Collar Law Section; and Workers' Compensation Law Section.

Institute of Continuing Legal Education

The Board of Governors received a written report from the Institute of Continuing Legal Education.

Unlicensed Practice of Law Program

The Board of Governors received a written report on the Formal Investigations undertaken by the Unlicensed Practice of Law Program.

State Bar of Georgia Satellite Office Reports

The Board of Governors received written reports from the Coastal Georgia Office in Savannah and the South Georgia Office in Tifton.

Communications Media Report

The Board of Governors received a written media report from the Communications Department.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Board Member and Judge Joseph W. Dent offered to be the first chair of the Senior Lawyers Division when it is formally established.

Remarks/Q&A/Comments/Suggestions

President Chris Twyman opened the floor to remarks, questions, comments, and suggestions. Board Member Martin Valbuena acknowledged Board members Will Davis and Jared Parrish for taking a YLD member to the ER the previous evening.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Shiriki Cavitt Jones, Secretary

Approved:

Christopher P. Twyman, President