

**Philadelphia Bar Association
State Civil Litigation Section
MINUTES**

QUARTERLY MEETING OF MARCH 7, 2007 at Noon

Minutes:

1. Immediately before the March Section meeting, the Executive Committee met at 11:15am and discussed the activities of the Section and the three committees within the Section. At 12:15, the Section meeting began with several announcements from Co-Chair Kathleen Wilkinson: The plans are underway for the Section cocktail reception to be held in early May at Two Liberty Place as well as the end of the year Section party. Final details will be circulated shortly to Section members by e-mail. The meeting dates and plans for upcoming committee meetings of the Section were announced.
2. The Section is working on its anticipated CLE programs for the annual Bench Bar Conference to be held again in Atlantic City. One program will focus on the addition of electronic filings in municipal court and will be presented by Judge Presenza. The Executive Committee is working on a proposal to present a second CLE program focusing on a high-profile case, and expects to make a further announcement soon.
3. On behalf of the Treasurer Robert Szostak, Kathleen reported that the Section finances are healthy and, as of January 31, 2007. The current balance of Section funds is \$15,353.06. This compares favorably to last year's balance at the same time of \$8,110.00.
4. Section Secretary Tom Wilkinson presented a proposed technical amendment to the Section By-Laws so as to conform to the Association By-Laws. He moved that Article VI be amended to provide that the Section delegate to the Board of Governors be a member of the Section's Executive Committee, as provided in Section 208(A)(4) of the Association By-Laws and the By-Laws of the other Sections. The motion was moved and seconded and passed unanimously, and the Section By-Laws will be supplemented to reflect the language change.
5. Judge Manfredi reported on the Judge Pro Tem Program. If an attorney desires to be added to the Judge Pro Tem list, the attorney should write to one of the Administrative Judges or to Dennis Brennan, expressing interest and setting forth the appropriate qualifications. Judge Manfredi also reiterated the need for each Judge Pro Tem to prepare a complete report. The reports are reviewed and relied upon by both settlement and trial judges. He also urged that lawyers appearing before JPT's be adequately prepared. He further explained that, if a summary judgment is pending at the time of the JPT conference, it is possible to so advise the Judge assigned to the case and it is possible that the motion will be addressed in an expedited fashion necessary for the JPT conference to be productive.

6. Judge Manfredi noted that the JPT program for Commerce Court is ongoing and that mediations also are being handled and that the mediations typically take longer than the JPT conferences.
7. Judge Manfredi reminded members that the First Judicial District's electronic filing system will be similar to the system in use in the federal court. The filing system is planned to become effective as of January 1, 2008.
8. Mark Cohen provided an update on the work of the committee addressing pandemic or other disasters. Anyone with additional suggestions on issues that would bear on the viability of the court systems and law practices in the event of such a disaster should contact Mark.
9. President Judge C. Darnell Jones was introduced to provide a State of the Court report concerning the First Judicial District. President Judge Jones referenced the recent casino license challenge litigation that was determined by an out-of-county judge, and reviewed the reasons for the assignment of an out-of-county judge in that case. Judge Jones also reviewed the work of the Friends of Fairmount Park Commission.
10. Judge Jones noted that he would soon present the annual proposed budget for the FJD. Last year approximately \$108 million was granted. This is all part of a five-year program. However, there was a recent \$6 million reduction in federal funds earmarked for the Family Court system. He has written to Chief Justice Cappy to request that the shortfall be addressed. Judge Jones also referred to the new City Hall security system, noting that the security gates are under construction, but there is no firm date yet by which the new enhanced security system will be fully operational. It was noted that security passes may be obtained in Room 112 of City Hall from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Judge Jones also noted that, in May, the First Judicial District will co-host the National Judicial College and advanced courses on evidence. Judge Jones will present a program with Jules Epstein. The Section is assisting in raising funds for the events. Judge Jones stated that he would like for Philadelphia to be a center for judicial education. The programs include a reception for participants at the Academy of Fine Arts, and a dinner at the National Constitution Center.
11. The Section members thanked President Judge Jones for his excellent presentation.

Attendance:

William Fedullo – Co-Chair
Kathleen Wilkinson – Co-Chair
Bob Szostak – Treasurer
Tom Wilkinson - Secretary

President Judge C. Darnell Jones
Hon. William J. Manfredi

Hon. Lisa Rau
M. Mark Mendel
Joseph Foster
Tom Hurd
David Prewitt
Tom Wilkinson
Ed Smith
Alicia Freind
Gary Lee
Mark N. Cohen
Mark H. Riesenfeld
Nadeem Bezar
Tom Martin
Nick Centrella
Paul Kazaras
Kathy Coon
Regina Smith
Lynn M. Martosella
Todd M. Berk
Constanze Kaendler
Steve Harvey
J. Matthew Wolf
Wesley R. Payne

List not complete.

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