

## **Minutes of the Columbia Chapter of the South Carolina Roster Administrators**

**Meeting Date: Tuesday October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008**

**Location: Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, PC, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Meridian Building, 1320 Main Street, Columbia, Sc**

**Host: Jennifer Blackmon**

### **Attendees:**

1. Laurie Jennings, Nelson Mullins, [laurie.jennings@nelsonmullins.com](mailto:laurie.jennings@nelsonmullins.com)
2. Jennifer Blackmon, Ogletree Deakins, [Jennifer.blackmon@ogletreedeakins.com](mailto:Jennifer.blackmon@ogletreedeakins.com)
3. Jay-Jay Flanagan-Grannemann, Law Office of Daryl G. Hawkins, LLC, [jayjay@dghlaw.net](mailto:jayjay@dghlaw.net)
4. Michael Cerkez, Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd (HSB), [MCerkez@HSBlawfirm.com](mailto:MCerkez@HSBlawfirm.com)
5. Myra Rutland, McAngus Goudelock & Courie (MGC), [mrutland@mgclaw.com](mailto:mrutland@mgclaw.com)
6. Tometta Johnson, MGC, [tometta.johnson@mgclaw.com](mailto:tometta.johnson@mgclaw.com)
7. Karen Anders, Sowell Gray, [kanders@sowell.com](mailto:kanders@sowell.com)
8. Jade Upshur, Mike Kelly Law Group, [jupshur@mklawgroup.com](mailto:jupshur@mklawgroup.com)
9. Greta Edwards, Mike Kelly Law Group, [gedwards@mklawgroup.com](mailto:gedwards@mklawgroup.com)
10. Kathleen Clardy, HSB, [kclardy@hsblawfirm.com](mailto:kclardy@hsblawfirm.com)
11. Kim Harbison, Law Office of Daryl G. Hawkins, LLC, [kharbison@dghlaw.net](mailto:kharbison@dghlaw.net)

Mike Cerkez took charge of the meeting initially at approximately 1:10 p.m. and asked if anyone had any objections to appointing Laurie Jennings chief of communications, Jay-Jay Flanagan-Grannemann Secretary, and himself as Speaker. All parties agreed to serve in those capacities and no one objected to the appointments. Mike asked who we wanted to serve as President of the organization and suggested Laurie fill that role as well. Others seconded that nomination, as Laurie is the only one among the group who does roster checking as her full-time job and she has played a vital role in the group's formation. Initially, Laurie had reservations about accepting the position, as she stated that she has never been President of anything before and doesn't know what is expected. She suggested that 2 co-Presidents be appointed. She was reassured that since this is a new group, there are no real expectations and she can pretty much create her own job description. She agreed to accept the position once Mike agreed to help her out as needed.

One problem everyone noted right away is that getting the Clerks of Court to remove attorneys of record once they leave a firm or settle their portion of a case is like pulling teeth. Laurie suggested that her contact at Court Administration, Adrian [later corrected to: Adriane L. Radeker, [ARadeker@sccourts.org](mailto:ARadeker@sccourts.org)], might be able to help us in getting those types of problems resolved. Laurie is to check her emails for Adrian's name and contact information. [see above for correct spelling and email address]

Mike described how his roster search program can search an entire lengthy roster, such as Charleston's, which lists over 400 cases at a time, in less than 4 seconds, highlighting the names, phone numbers, and addresses of all firm attorneys on the roster for review and docketing. He explained that they have some sort of Adobe plug-in that converts every page to a .pdf file and compares that document to the search terms in a special firm-created dictionary to highlight cases belonging to the firm's attorneys. A technical discussion of macros and the old HSB firm search protocol ensued. Mike is going to try and get permission from his firm to prepare a PowerPoint presentation showing how their procedure works. He will also try to get permission to load his program on a laptop to bring to our next meeting site to demonstrate the procedure and how their software plug-in works.

Everyone mentioned how they search rosters and how often they do so. Some firms (including Nelson Mullins, HSB, and Law Office of Daryl G. Hawkins, LLC) have centralized firm-wide searching, with 1 or 2 people searching rosters for the entire firm or location, while others (including MGC and Sowell Gray) have de-centralized searching. Sowell Gray divides the state among various staffers, with each searching all rosters for 1-3 judicial circuits. At MGC, each paralegal is responsible for searching rosters for her own cases, as they are only allowed to bill for such searching when it is relevant to a particular case. One of the MGC attendees stated that she only searches rosters when a case is 10 months old and likely to be called for trial or when someone in the case has filed a motion which needs to be heard. Others expressed their opinion that that seemed dangerous, as it might be possible to miss things. Those who use the system says it seems to work well for them, and they have not had any problems to date.

Various attendees ask Mike questions about how his roster checking software works. One question in particular was asked more than once: what happens if your firm's attorney is not listed as attorney of record on the case? How do you find out that that case is on the roster? Mike does not search by case name, but some of our attendees do that as well as name and Bar number searches to be sure they are not missing anything. Certain counties are known for not including all attorneys of record in their rosters. In multi-party cases, Pickens County only sends notice of motions hearings to the party that filed the Motion; all other parties only get notice when the filing party sends it to them. Also, only the filing party and the party against whom the motion was filed are listed on the roster, so other parties to the case who are not directly involved in the motion would not get notice of the hearing and it would not appear under a roster check for just the attorney's name or Bar number.

A question was asked about how many counties are on the new system now. According to the Judicial Department website, 22 counties now allow case records searching. We think that all of those counties are on the new system, though some also have the old system still available for searching. Richland County is among the latter and the old and new systems were demonstrated for all to see.

One of the MGC attendees wanted to know which counties are on the new system, so the map of counties with case records searching was pulled up on the Judicial Department website and we visited a few of those sites to show what search and roster options are available. It was noted that unfortunately, while the new system is supposed to be uniform, counties have options about what buttons to put at the top of their search page, and not everyone is including (or updating) their jury and non-jury cover sheets with roster meeting information. Orangeburg County, for example, lists a 2007 information sheet for Charleston County under its jury cover sheet tab.

Laurie and Mike called to everyone's attention the fact that the Greenville County jury rosters go out for many months into next year already, but there are also 2 non-jury rosters at the end of the list (at the bottom of page 2 and on page 3) that are NOT in chronological order, so don't miss those!

A question was asked about North Carolina's state-wide roster search. The central website is: [www.nccourts.org](http://www.nccourts.org) From there, choose court calendars, then court calendars again, then civil calendars, and choose a county to see that county's pending rosters. This system could be a wonderful model for South Carolina and we should all explore it further to see if there are any enhancements we would like if a similar system is instated here.

Future meeting dates and locations were announced as follows:

November 18<sup>th</sup> at Nexsen Pruet, hosted by Melanie Magruder

December 16<sup>th</sup> at MGC, hosted by Nelda Canada

January 20<sup>th</sup> at Mike Kelly Law Group, hosted by Greta Edwards

February 17<sup>th</sup> at Law Office of Daryl G. Hawkins, LLC, hosted by Jay-Jay

Flanagan-Grannemann and Kim Harbison

Mike has received permission from Kay Mein, President of the Palmetto Paralegal Association (PPA), to make an announcement about this group at the November PPA meeting, which will be held on November 19<sup>th</sup>, the day after our next meeting.

A suggestion was made to get one of the programmers who has been traveling from county to county setting up the new system to come speak to us to provide insight into what the system is programmed to do and how to make it do what we need it to do.

Mike stated that the only contact information he has is for Chief Justice Toal's team of 3 technology gurus and they are not always able to respond in a timely fashion because they are always so busy.

Mike stated that the system was designed to be used for both civil and criminal matters and much of it seems to be optimized for criminal needs, including the ability to search all counties to see if someone has been indicted elsewhere in the state. This capability is to be available when all counties are up and running on the new system, which is already past its due date.

As we discussed speaking with the state organization of the Clerks of Court at the last meeting, their meeting information and officer information was located online. The organization's website is at [www.sccrod.org](http://www.sccrod.org) Their annual seminar was held in Charleston from October 1 through October 3, 2008. The President of their organization is Julie Armstrong, the Charleston Clerk of Court. The Vice-President is the York County Clerk of Court, and the Secretary/Treasurer is the Berkeley County Clerk of Court. It was suggested that we might want to make contact with their organization to discuss concerns about the system as it is currently being implemented in the counties using the new system, as it may be easier to make changes in 22 counties than it will be to make changes in all 46 counties once everyone gets up and running and gets used to their own way of doing things.

Attendees were left with a homework assignment to make notes throughout the next month of any peevs or problems with the new system and any suggestions for improvements or additions. A blue sky suggestion had been made earlier in the meeting that we be allowed to search in one place for cases all throughout the state. Since North Carolina and other states have done this, we would like to ensure that this is considered. That has been noted for the compilation of suggestions to be compiled at the next meeting.

Mike is to investigate starting an email group that we can all join to make communication easier.

Mike also asked for authorization from the group to contact SCUPA, the Greenville paralegal association, and the Sumter paralegal association to discuss starting chapters in those areas. It was also suggested that he contact the technical school in Florence that has a paralegal program to get word out in that area. Authorization was granted by assent. The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jay-Jay Flanagan-Grannemann*

Secretary

South Carolina Rosters Administrators, Columbia Chapter

10/21/2008