

**MINUTES  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS  
MARCH 9, 2005  
VIA CONFERENCE CALL**

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**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

With President Mac McKerral presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, March 09, 2005, via conference call.

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**ROLL CALL**

Assistant Secretary-Treasurer and Executive Director Terry Harper called the roll. The following board members were in attendance for all or a portion of the meeting: President Irwin Gratz, President-elect David Carlson, Vice President for Campus Chapter Affairs James Highland, Director At Large Jim Parker, Campus Representative Sonya Smith, Adviser At Large Neil Ralston, Regional Directors Carl Corry, Ann Augherton, Holly fisher, Terry Wimmer, Dave Aeikens, Ron Sylvester, Deb Hurley, Scott Maben, and Jamie Gonzales.

Board members absent from the meeting: Secretary-Treasurer Christine Tatum, Immediate Past President Gordon D. McKerral, Director At Large Sally Lehrman, Campus Representative Callie Martell, Adviser At Large Mead Loop, Regional Directors Richard Roth, Travis Poling and Clint Brewer.

Others present during the call were Executive Director Terry Harper, Deputy Director Julie Grimes, SPJ legal counsel Bruce Brown and Robert Lystad, and Washington D.C. Pro Chapter member Robert Becker.

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**PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

The meeting via conference call was organized for the purpose of discussing the Society's position on proposed federal shield law legislation.

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**FEDERAL SHIELD LAW DISCUSSION**

Upon a proper motion and second by Parker and Smith, the board adopted Baker & Hostetler's recommendation that the Society publicly support the federal shield law legislation as outlined in the March 3 memo from Baker & Hostetler. A copy of that memo is included with these minutes.

The vote was a roll call vote. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Highland, Parker, Smith, Ralston, Augherton, Fisher, Aeikens, Sylvester, Hurley and Maben. Opposed to the motion were: Corry, Wimmer, and Gonzales. Abstaining was Carlson.

Prior to the vote, board members discussed specifically who the proposed law covered and the potential dangers of defining journalists. Sanford explained that the proposed legislation is as broad as it can be written and leaves that for the courts to decide on a case by case basis further down the road.

The group also discussed the potential for prosecutory abuse of power; whether or not the proposed statute addressed or excluded student journalists; and whether or not other news organizations and journalism groups supported the legislation.

Sanford explained to the group that no shield law can anticipate every possible situation, but that this legislation is a substantial improvement over the current situation and it will help keep reporters out of jail.

Gratz will prepare the board's position statement on the federal shield law legislation.

Following the vote, the group consensus was that this was a vitally important issue. The board will designate additional time during the spring meeting for a broad discussion about the philosophical implications of a federal shield law. This is a discussion that will probably continue through the national convention this fall.

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## **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**Upon a proper motion and second by Ralston and Highland, the board voted to adjourn at 2:35 p.m. EST.**