



From the lens of mobility, we see providence, perils, and progress



M. Jenise Comer, LCSW, MSW, ACSW
ASWB President

The 2013 Board of Directors demonstrated foresight by including “Mobility in Our Lifetime” in the 2014–2018 Strategic Plan. We had no idea at the time that other health care professions would also be engaged in achieving the challenge of mobility today. We were convinced that this is a workforce issue rooted in the value of competent practice to protect the public. Mobility Task Force co-chair Dorinda Noble added the trend of increased mobility observed in millennials. Above all, we knew that once a professional had been determined “competent” by satisfying a jurisdiction’s licensing requirements, that professional remained competent, even when he or she moved to a different jurisdiction. Years of practice without discipline, supported by continuing education aimed at “continuing competency,” should confirm the designation of competence.

Additional factors, including the use of technology in practice and the need for increased access to health care, affirmed the importance of achieving the goal of mobility and portability to enhance ASWB’s mission of service to member boards to protect the public. We knew it was an ambitious undertaking. We worked

deliberately and strategically to study the issue, identify our needs and resources, and to include input from constituents and member boards. The Mobility Task Force planned a strategy that respects states’ rights to regulate the licensed practice of social workers.

At the Spring Education Meeting in St. Louis in 2014, I stated that we must achieve Mobility, or the issue will be imposed on us by our legislators. Today, the state of regulation faces many threats. Contrary to our mission of public protection, the Federal Trade Commission is focused on addressing another side of regulation. Following the North Carolina dental board decision, the spotlight is now on “restraint of trade,” “barriers to entry to work,” and “promoting competition.” While these are important considerations, they should not drive a “deregulation” agenda while “public protection” is placed in the shadows. The need for competent practice and public protection must remain at the center of ASWB’s Mobility Strategy. This is even more critical when working with vulnerable populations and marginalized communities, who are often the clients social workers serve.

I am energized by the progress the Mobility Task Force and staff have

made. There is a consensus among our member boards that we need mobility and portability. As with most situations, the challenge is around how to achieve it. All agree a strategy should be simple and avoid opening state statutes. Our strategy focuses on licensed social workers only, who want to move to or practice in additional jurisdictions. The success of the ASWB Mobility Strategy is dependent upon the acceptance and participation of ASWB member boards.

A Mobility Resolution will be voted on at the Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly in November. The resolution simply asks that each ASWB member board agree to:

1. Review applicable statutes, rules/regulation, and policies related to accepting the Standards outlined in the attached Mobility Strategy
2. Review applicable statutes, rules/regulation, and policies related to accepting the primary source data verified by ASWB staff and maintained in the secure centralized databank

3. Identify any barriers or restrictions in the jurisdiction's statutes, rules/regulation, and policies related to accepting and participating in the ASWB Mobility Strategy
4. Identify the benefits to accepting and participating in the ASWB Mobility Strategy

ASWB is ready to assist any member board with conducting the requested research.

ASWB is US... YOU ARE US. We ARE making progress. I ask that you vote Yes to adopt the Mobility Resolution. ARE YOU with US?



Getting down to business

ASWB covers a lot of ground in the Annual Meeting agenda

On Friday, November 17, ASWB President M. Jenise Comer will call the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly to order. But attendees will be working hard for at least a day beforehand. In addition to the Board of Directors meeting, on Thursday, November 16, ASWB will offer two daylong sessions for meeting attendees. The Administrators Forum and the Board Member Exchange (BMX) both focus on issues facing social work regulators. Volunteer board members (BMX) and regulatory staff (Admin Forum) will have a chance to network and compare notes as well as hear from ASWB staff about services and programs that can make their lives easier.

From 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, ASWB will host two orientation sessions for attendees. First time attendees, especially those serving as delegates, are expected to attend an orientation session to help them understand the rules of order and voting procedures at ASWB's Annual Meeting. Attendees who have participated in past ASWB events and who are ready to step up their involvement in the association can join colleagues for a concurrent leadership orientation focusing on committee service and elected positions.

Thankfully, everyone will have a chance to relax Thursday evening,

with a complimentary reception and welcome dinner starting at 6 p.m. During the reception, ASWB committee chairs will be available to discuss their work and answer questions about committee service. In addition, Mobility Task Force members will be available to talk about the Mobility Strategy and Resolution 2017-1. After dinner, plan to burn up some energy by heating up the dance floor.

Beginning Friday morning, the real work will begin, with the traditional roll call and introductions. Later in the morning, the Nominating Committee chair will present the election slate and call for any nominations from the floor. Delegates will hear reports from ASWB leadership, the Finance Committee, and the Mobility Task Force as well as learn about the state of professional regulation from ASWB legal counsel and Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards (FARB) executive director Dale Atkinson. In the afternoon, other ASWB committees will make their reports and election candidates will make their speeches.

Friday afternoon will also focus on the ASWB examination program, including an executive session in which detailed, confidential information about the exams will be presented. In order to attend,

members and staff of regulatory boards must submit a signed confidentiality statement before the session begins. During executive session, individuals who are not members or staff members of ASWB member boards will be asked to leave the meeting room. When the meeting recesses Friday at 4:15 p.m., delegates will be able to meet the election candidates and ask questions during a Meet the Candidates reception.

After the meeting is called to order Saturday morning, President Comer will present her final report to membership as president. Because Saturday is the day for official actions by the delegates, attendees will have a chance to learn about parliamentary rules and the resolutions process prior to voting.

As in past years, voting will be done electronically, with keypads distributed to delegates. The distribution of keypads and results of the voting will be overseen by tellers selected from among ASWB

members, as well as by ASWB's legal counsel Dale Atkinson. Following the elections for the Board of Directors and Nominating Committee, delegates will discuss and vote on proposed amendments to the ASWB bylaws, as well vote on Resolution 2017-1, which is sponsored by the Bylaws and Resolutions Committee on behalf of the Mobility Task Force.

Saturday's awards luncheon will feature the presentation of the Glenda McDonald Board Administrator and Sunny Andrews Awards for Outstanding Commitment to Social Work Regulatory Board Service, as well as recognition of ASWB committee volunteers for 2017. A preview of the 2018 Education Conference and a discussion of top regulatory cases by ASWB legal counsel Dale Atkinson round out the afternoon. To close the meeting, President Comer will pass the gavel to incoming president Timothy Martel Brown and the 2018 Board of Directors will take the oath of office.



Ready to help!

ASWB has been using social media to spread the word on how social workers can help with recent disaster relief and recovery. Twitter and Facebook are ASWB’s social media platforms for getting the word out to all.

To recap:

Hurricane Harvey: <http://www.socialworkblog.org/practice-and-professional-development/2017/08/texas-looking-for-health-care-providers-from-other-states-including-social-workers-in-flood-aftermath/>

Hurricane Irma: <http://www.naswfl.org/latest-news.html>

Hurricane Maria: <http://www.redcross.org/about-us/our-work/disaster-relief/hurricane-relief/hurricane-maria-relief-information>

Wildfire response: <http://www.redcross.org/local/california/northern-california-coastal/wildfires-response-october-2017>

How to volunteer to be a Red Cross Disaster Mental Health Responder: https://www.naswca.org/resource/resmgr/Files/how_to_volunteer.pdf

To find us on social media, you can search on Facebook: @aswbonline; or Twitter: ASWB Info.

Safe and sound

WINIFRED ANTHONY-TODMAN of Virgin Islands let ASWB know that she and her family had made it through Harvey and Irma safely. She writes: “I am fairing well despite experiencing two category five Hurricanes in two weeks. I am without electricity and I have my parents residing with me as a result of sustaining damages to their home.”

VICKI GARDINE WILLIAMS of Tennessee also sent an update about her family members. She writes: “My sister, aunts and cousins live in St. Croix so they were impacted by Hurricane Maria moreso than Irma, which directly hit the islands of St. Thomas and St. John.... my older brother and [his] wife, and my step-grandmother live in Orlando, Florida. They were also impacted by Hurricane Irma, losing power for a couple of days. It has been a stressful month for me with family members in the path of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.”

In Memoriam

It is with sadness that ASWB announces the passing in September of [ANDREW MARKS](#), Licensed Master Social Worker in Texas, and former executive director of the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners

**association
asides**

(2000–2005). In 2005 ANDREW coordinated the board’s Sunset Commission review, culminating with passage of legislation for board continuance for



12 years. With ASWB during his tenure as executive director of the Texas board, ANDREW served as chair of the Administrators Forum and was appointed member and later chair of the ASWB Program and Education Committee that planned ASWB’s annual education conferences in 2000–2005. In 2008 in support of ASWB’s examination program, ANDREW was appointed to the Practice Analysis Task Force and the English as a Second Language Task Force. As senior clinical lecturer and BSW field director at Texas State University, ANDREW helped prepare many students for social work careers. He also presented extensively across the United States on professional ethics and professional regulation. ANDREW was recognized for his enthusiasm and passion for nontenure line faculty at the Nontenured Line Faculty Appreciation Reception held by Texas

State University in September. ANDREW was also involved in the Path to Licensure pilot program at Texas State with DORINDA NOBLE. JAN FITTS, ASWB senior manager of education and training, noted: “I visited with ANDREW when I was in Texas in 2015 and he was a great asset.”

Minnesota board celebrates 30th anniversary

ASWB helped the Minnesota board celebrate its 30th anniversary in September by sending a proclamation recognizing the board for providing steadfast protection of the public by licensing safe, competent, and ethical social workers and enforcing professional standards since its inception in 1987 and ... continuously providing dedicated volunteers and leaders to serve on ASWB committees, task forces, and the ASWB Board of Directors in support of mutual strategic objectives, among other accomplishments. Congratulations!



Time traveler

Talk about Mobility! FRAN FRANKLIN of Delaware recently traveled through time to meet up with the Out of Time Teachers while she was on a special mission for the Mobility Task Force. The Out of Time Teachers are a volunteer group of historical reenactors who bring American history to life.

Send all news and pictures to Jayne Wood, newsletter editor, at jwood@aswb.org or call Jayne at 800.225.6880, ext. 3075.



Committee work on fire

Any committee is only as good as the most knowledgeable, determined and vigorous person on it. There must be somebody who provides the flame.
—Lady Bird Johnson

Committees in 2017 again provided energetic support to ASWB's strategic objectives. Next year the organization will begin the planning process to introduce a new set of objectives for adoption at the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly...but we're getting ahead of ourselves!

This year more than 60 volunteers participated on committees and task forces, and members of ASWB Board of Directors were busy as liaisons to committees and serving on multiple task forces.

Task Forces

This year the Board of Directors had more task forces at work in one year—five all told—than in years past. All were engaged in work focused on sustaining ASWB operations or on serving ASWB membership.

The Mobility Task Force has had the highest visibility, charged with bringing a Mobility Strategy and resolution to this year's Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly for a vote. In collaboration with member boards, task force members proposed, revised, proposed, offered for comment, and revamped the original Mobility plan until it became a strategy that is ready for adoption and implementation. Their report will be

presented at the Annual Meeting in November.

The generative discussions of the Membership Task Force resulted in the short-term recommendation to [restructure member dues](#) and longer term recommendations to the Board of Directors about membership categories and benefits. The task force made a progress report to the Board of Directors in August and will continue its work in 2018.

The Foundation Restructure Task Force has been charged with reviewing ASWB's 501(c)(3) research arm to make recommendations to the ASWB Board of Directors for how to use the Foundation to its best potential. The task force made a progress report to the ASWB Board of Directors in August and received approval to continue its work based on its recommendations.

The other two task forces provided guidance related to personnel processes. The CEO Evaluation Task Force provided recommendations accepted by the Board of Directors to update Section VI. Personnel in the ASWB Policy Manual. The Succession Planning Task Force will make its recommendations to the Board of Directors in November for policy updates. Both task forces will have

completed their mandates this year.

Committees

ASWB has four standing committees and three ad hoc committees. Committee chairs will report more fully on committee activities at the Annual Meeting.

The Bylaws and Resolutions Committee report of proposed bylaws amendments and resolutions that delegates will be asked to vote on is available to [download](#).

Chair Brian Carnahan of Ohio will present the committee report at the Annual Meeting. Other committee members include Joyce Bell of Maryland, Yvonne Haynes of Virginia, Carla Moore of Louisiana, Kathy Outland of Oregon, Mark Scales of Nova Scotia, and Board liaison Meenakshi Budhraj of Arkansas.

The election slate for 2017 positions on the ASWB Board of Directors and open seats on the Nominating Committee reflects the work of the Nominating Committee of chair Anwar Najor-Durack of Michigan, Jennifer Fulcher of Mississippi, Claude Leblond of Québec, Karine Levesque of New Brunswick, Greg Winkler of Wisconsin, and Tim Brown of Texas and ASWB president-elect. Najor-Durack will introduce the candidates at the Annual Meeting and moderate the candidate speeches on Friday.

The Finance Committee met regularly throughout the year in completion of its charge to advise the ASWB Board of Directors on issues related to the use of the association's assets, and the development of revenue sources. In 2017, it also was charged with holding generative discussions on future capital projects and

discussing upcoming decisions for the new building such as alternative energy sources and landscaping. Finance Committee members include ASWB President-Elect Tim Brown of Texas, Janice James of Kentucky, Brian Philson of Michigan, and Robert Showers of Louisiana. ASWB Treasurer Mel Harrington of South Dakota is committee chair and will present the Finance Committee report at the Annual Meeting.

Instead of its usual four meetings per year to approve questions to be pretested on the ASWB social work exams, ASWB's [Examination Committee](#) of 18 volunteer subject matter experts (SMEs) met twice: in August and October. The rest of the year, staff and many SMEs were busy preparing to launch new exams in 2018 based on the most recent practice analysis, conducted in 2015–2016. Committee Clinical co-chair Bora Sunseri of Louisiana, Masters co-chair Stephanie Washington of Texas, and Bachelors co-chair Mary Stebbins of Virginia will update the membership of the committee's activities at the Annual Meeting.

The Continuing Competency Committee of chair Mark Gianino of Massachusetts, Rachell LaRose of Missouri, Beatrice Traub-Werner of Ontario, and ASWB Board liaison Anna Lyn Whitt of Mississippi reviewed the outcomes from the 2017 Education Conference "Beyond CE: Regulating Competency in a Dynamic Profession" to come up with recommendations for jurisdictions to consider and recommendations for further research needed before the committee is ready to publish best practices in continuing competence as directed by their charge. To complete the research, they

recommended collaboration with ASWB's Foundation research grant scholars and the Path to Licensure Institute scholars as well as the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). [Download the Continuing Competency Committee report](#).

As members of the Regulation and Standards (RAS) Committee, chair Laura Thiesen of Alaska, Spencer Blalock of Mississippi, Sonia Cisternas of Québec, Vikki Erickson of Nevada, Jacqueline Lowe of South Carolina, Elizabeth Pope of North Carolina, and Board liaison Florence Huffman of Kentucky have an ongoing charge of reviewing the ASWB Model Social Work Practice Act. Since this document had undergone a thorough three-year review recently, the committee made no recommendations for amendments this year. The hiatus gave the committee the opportunity to review complementary publications, including the ASWB Guidebook for Social Work Disciplinary Actions, and to continue promoting use of ASWB's Public Protection Database (PPD) to membership. The committee also wrote a letter to the Mobility Task Force supporting the Mobility Strategy and the task force's efforts to place the Model Social Work Practice Act at the heart of the strategy. [Download the RAS Committee report and letter of support](#).

Members of the 2018 Regulatory Education and Leadership Committee are at the midway point of planning the ASWB 2018 Education Conference focused on implementation and advocacy tools for moving the Mobility Strategy forward. All jurisdictions may have different methods and approaches to achieving greater practice mobility for licensed social

workers. All will need ideas and tools readily accessible to activate the Mobility Readiness Teams and review current legislation to determine how to overcome perceived barriers to implementation. Committee members include Kenya Anderson of Tennessee, Endsley Real of Georgia, Carolyn Szafran of Missouri, Barb Whitenect of New Brunswick, Vicki Williams of Tennessee, and Board liaison Harold Dean of Arkansas. Chair Kate Zacher-Pate of Minnesota will give membership a preview on Saturday at the Annual Meeting.

“I observed first hand the committee work our volunteers provide,” said ASWB President M. Jenise Comer. “They are passionate and ‘on fire’ about providing excellent service to ASWB. On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my distinct honor and pleasure to thank them for their contributions.”

Want to serve? Want to learn more?

Members will have an opportunity to visit with committee chairs and get information first-hand about serving on committees that interest them. Committee chairs will host the Welcome Reception on Thursday, November 16, preceding the Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly. There attendees can get up close and personal to ask: “What’s it really like to serve on your committee?”

Mobility Task Force members will share hosting duties, offering membership another opportunity, in addition to the two [listening sessions](#), to ask questions about the Mobility Strategy and resolution that delegates will vote on, on Saturday, November 18.

Members may submit a [Committee Interest Form](#) at any time. Committee appointments are made by the ASWB president after receiving input and approval from other members of the ASWB Board of Directors. Additional input comes from ASWB staff to the committees, the Volunteer Engagement and Outreach department, and ASWB executive staff and includes recommendations based on the committee interest forms on file. ASWB staff are always glad to know of members’ specific interests, skills, and strengths, and efforts are made to reflect diversity on the committees. With a few exceptions, committee appointments are made at the beginning of the calendar year. As per the ASWB bylaws, “composition and tenure of the committees is at the discretion of the ASWB president.”



The Power of Member Boards and Delegates



By Dale Atkinson, Partner,
Atkinson & Atkinson

Dale Atkinson is a partner with the Illinois law firm that is counsel to ASWB. He is also executive director of the Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards (FARB).

The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) is a private-sector organization whose membership is composed of public-sector social work regulatory boards. This unique public-private relationship provides numerous opportunities for the member boards to collaborate and cooperate on programs and services that benefit the membership. Such programs and services enhance government effectiveness while at the same time promote uniformity among and between member boards. Uniformity of licensure requirements and processes regarding data collection and management contribute to the efficiencies of members in making timely, yet informed, eligibility determinations. Specifically, and relevant to the current regulatory climate, uniformity provides opportunities for mobility and portability programs developed and implemented by the member boards.

What provides a unique strength to ASWB is the continuous involvement of member boards and persons designated by such boards in decision making at a policy-setting level. The collective voice of ASWB is representative of the membership that sets policies through active and meaningful participation by member boards. Active participation includes a delegate-elected Board of

Directors, committee appointments, and reports of recent activities, financial updates, and educational programming. In fact, ASWB funds a delegate from each member board to attend and participate in the Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly to ensure opportunities for active participation. Attending delegates are encouraged to review materials and be prepared to discuss and vote on matters brought before the Delegate Assembly. **This representative form of governance is essential to informed decision making and ultimate exploration, development, implementation, and maintenance of programs and services deemed necessary for use by member boards.**

Member boards are encouraged to actively participate in the continued evolution of ASWB as an organization. No other organization exists that provides social work boards with direct involvement in the development of programs and services for use in the licensure process. Active participation comes in many forms including the use of the resolution process, elections of leadership, volunteerism for committees and task forces, networking, and participation in educational programming. The 2017 Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly in Atlanta, Georgia,

will include important discussions surrounding committee work and the exploration of mobility programs and opportunities. Prepared delegates and regulatory board members and staff will enhance the discussions and ensure results that benefit the membership.

As is customary, the delegates of the 2017 Annual Meeting will adopt the rules of debate that set the parameters of discussions and provide order to the proceedings. Also, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order will assist in ensuring order to the discussions and voting. Meaningful and constructive dialogue is the linchpin to member board involvement and directional decisions of the membership.

ASWB looks forward to a participatory and productive 2017 Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly.



Putting knowledge to work

Path to Licensure scholars begin implementing what they learned and showing their pride in the Institute



A few months after the first cohort of Path to Licensure scholars headed back to their campuses from the three-day intensive training in Culpeper, Virginia, Education and Training Senior Manager Jan Fitts got an interesting request. The scholars, all on the faculty of schools of social work in the United States, were interested in some kind of logo or seal to highlight their participation in the Path to Licensure Institute and program.

Fitts, who spearheaded the Path to Licensure Institute, was surprised by the request. “They’ve all submitted models for how they intend to infuse regulation and

licensure throughout their social work degree programs,” says Fitts. “I was excited about how the scholars were identifying with Path to Licensure and looking for ways to draw students’ attention to their efforts. But, at the same time, we need to be certain that anything they use represents ASWB and the Path to Licensure program appropriately.”

Working with Fitts, ASWB’s Communications and Marketing department designed a logo that is available exclusively to schools participating in the Path to Licensure Institute and provided clear guidelines for usage in print and on the World Wide Web.



Path to Licensure mentors and scholars (left to right): mentor Deana Morrow, scholars Jane Hurley Johncox, Kelly Bass, Carolyn Szafran, Shakira Kennedy, Joan Groessl, and mentor Dorinda Noble.

Given how enthusiastic the participating scholars are, Fitts was glad to provide the new resource. As the participants have gone back to school for the fall semester, Fitts says, “they’ve all been really active and have developed a student survey to find out what their students already know about social work licensing and regulation.

“One scholar gave a presentation at her program’s faculty retreat,” Fitts says, “and invited her colleagues to document how they can address regulation in their coursework.” Another scholar is integrating the “three pillars” formulation that ASWB has used to describe the relationship between educators, regulators, and practitioners. A third has engaged with his state’s social work licensing board and NASW chapter to help students learn more about licensing.

“They’re sharing some ideas with one another,” says Fitts, “but they’re also actively figuring out how to make Path to Licensure work for their school.”

In addition to integrating licensing and regulation into their

curriculum, Path to Licensure scholars are expected to develop research projects that focus on social work regulation. Two scholars are thinking of collaborating on a mixed-methods design examining the correlation between continuing education requirements and violations for failure to comply. They have reached out to Mark Gianino of Boston University about working on the research project with them. Gianino has served on the Massachusetts Board of Registration for Social Workers and currently chairs ASWB’s Continuing Competence Committee.

All five scholars will check in with Fitts in January for a midyear conversation about their efforts. Fitts is energized by the work the scholars are doing—from their research to their work to increase understanding of social work regulation at their schools. “They’re all committed to engaging students, faculty, and administrators about regulation and licensing,” she says, and their success will inform future Path to Licensure efforts.



Satisfying ASWB's mission

Each year the Exam Committee finds unique ways to honor their own

The 2017 Exam Committee held its second and final meeting of the year in October. The committee met less frequently this year because the Examination Development department was preparing for launching exams in January based on blueprints developed following the latest practice analysis. The annual awards ceremony was also held to recognize committee members rotating off the committee.

The committee and form reviewers met in Reston, Virginia, to approve pretest items for the item banks and to develop the second exam forms for all exam categories to launch in

January. Two forms per category must be released in January so that candidates who elect to retest after failing the exam have access to a different form.

ASWB President M. Jenise Comer attended the meeting to present the awards. She serves as Board liaison to the committee. Comer opened the ceremony saying: "It is my distinct pleasure to acknowledge the work of the Exam Committee that helps to satisfy ASWB's mission."

Rather than appoint new members for a partial year, committee members whose terms ended in



The 2017 Exam Committee held its final meeting in October. Front row: Charu Stokes-Williams (HI), Adolpha Bassett (NC), Bachelors co-chair Mary Stebbins (VA), Michelle Piper (AL), Karen Slovak (OH). Middle row: Clinical co-chair Bora Sunseri (LA), Kelli Cortes (GA), Masters co-chair Stephanie Washington (TX), June Yee (AB), Sharon Cutts (CT). Back row: Jay Memmott (SD), Liz Johnston (CA), Tammy Dyson (BC), Susie Hendrickson (KS), Ben Rosenberg (NY). Not shown: Luz Alquicira (TX), Carl Hokanson (MN), and Debby Jones (BC).

2016 were asked to serve this year. For their additional year of service, the following committee members received Jefferson cups: Bachelors exam committee—co-chair Mary Stebbins of Virginia; Masters exam committee—Adolpha Bassett of North Carolina and June Yee of Alberta; Clinical exam committee—Liz Johnston of California, Debby Jones of British Columbia, and Jay Memmott of South Dakota.

Members who received “tombstone awards” (so named for their shape) for completing three years on their subcommittees were: Bachelors exam committee members Tammy Dyson of British Columbia, Susie Hendrickson of Kansas, Carl Hokanson of Minnesota, and Ben Rosenberg of New York; Masters exam committee member Kelli Cortes of Georgia; and Clinical exam committee member Sharon Cutts of Connecticut. Masters co-chair Stephanie Washington of Texas received a rosewood box to commemorate the ending of her two-year term as co-chair.

As has been the custom, each subcommittee celebrated their departing committee members with personal gifts. The Bachelors exam committee chose to hold their celebrations after the meeting concluded. The Masters exam committee announced that they donated to disaster relief in honor



Bora Sunseri (LA), Clinical exam committee co-chair, delights Jay Memmott (SD), Debby Jones (BC) and Sharon Cutts (CT) with personal mementos as they end their terms on the Exam Committee.

of departing co-chair Stephanie Washington, who was personally affected by hurricane Harvey. Washington recognized Kelli Cortes of Georgia for her service with a personalized plaque from the committee.

Clinical exam committee members presented their personal gifts during the awards ceremony. Gifts were representative of the giver’s jurisdiction. Item development consultant Greg Winkler of Janesville, Wisconsin, for example, presented a Parker pen set to Liz Johnston of California, noting

that Parker is headquartered in his hometown. Co-chair Bora Sunseri of Louisiana gave baseball caps from Louisiana State University and gumbo mix to committee members ending their terms. Other committee members presented similarly representative gifts to service award winners.

“Committee members develop close friendships working together over a number of years,” said Lavina Harless, director of exam development. “The awards ceremony gives everyone the opportunity to celebrate those close ties.”



Navigating through to get things done

The call to serve others was instilled early and reinforced frequently

Incoming ASWB president Timothy Martel Brown is Texas born and bred, and he has an unusual story about his arrival. His mother, pregnant at the time with Tim, was attending a baby shower for a friend of the family, he recounts. A dog went after a baby at the party. His mother tried to grab the dog and fell, which induced labor three months ahead of schedule. Tim was born on the day before hurricane Carla hit Texas. Asked what the story means to him, Brown responds: "It may explain why I am calm while in the midst of a storm going on around me. I am able to navigate through to take care of things." And navigating a busy schedule and finding time to help others has been a hallmark of Brown's throughout his career.

Brown has taken on increasingly responsible roles throughout his career, from a front line social worker to a manager to director and now associate chief social work, mental health, for the second largest Veterans Administration (VA) system in the United States. In addition, he has served as a field placement instructor for a number of colleges and universities in



*Incoming ASWB president
Timothy Martel Brown*

Texas and has provided clinical supervision for licensure candidates as a Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners board approved supervisor. He has served on nonprofit boards of organizations dedicated to community health care interests such as seniors with disabilities and special needs populations. Within the profession, he has held multiple leadership positions with the Texas chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the VA, and ASWB.

Social work was not where Brown's studies were initially taking him. But empathy toward others developed early, he says, thanks in large part to three women who taught him the importance of helping others. He credits them with helping to shape his life and choice of career in social work. The first of these influencers was his great-grandmother.

Like many native Texans, Brown has deep pride in his family's Texas roots. His mother's family settled in the Brazos Valley in the 1800s, and his great-grandmother was an early entrepreneur who built the first Greyhound bus station. She also ran a boarding home next door

to the station. During the Depression, Brown explains, she set out a picnic table in her yard and offered lunch and dinner to anyone who needed a meal. “She had strong empathetic tendencies toward her fellow man,” said Brown. “I spent a lot of time with her as I was growing up and learned to help others in need.”

Fast forward to Brown’s high school years and his encounter with the second woman to influence him, an Irish Catholic nun named Sister Bernard Marie. Brown describes growing close to her when he was working as an orderly in the Catholic hospital where he was born. “She took to me and taught me how to care for others,” Brown said.

Brown met the third woman who would influence him when he was working at a psychiatric hospital. Ann Hazen was a nurse, but also a social worker. At the time he met Hazen, he was studying science but unsure where he was going to go with his studies. She encouraged him to redirect his energies into social work, as he had “natural tendencies to help people.” In hindsight, Brown notes, “it was a good choice.”

Brown received his Bachelor of Social Work degree from Prairie View A & M University, a historically black college or university (HBCU), which was the closest college with a social work track to where he was living in Bryan, Texas. He went on to get his Master of Social Work degree with a specialization in end of life care at Baylor University.

The specialization was almost an afterthought, Brown notes.

His cohort had not focused on a specialty. He discovered that to receive the end of life care certification he could use his work experience in and papers he had published on community and palliative care through his affiliation with Hospice Brazos Valley. At the time, he was a national lecturer on the emerging field of palliative care in the U.S.

Before receiving his social work degrees, Brown was licensed as a social work associate in Texas. The license was available to candidates who were high school graduates with a few years of social work experience or had a non-social work degree. He recalls that the day he was supposed to test, the testing center had run out of paper test forms for the associate exam. The test center gave him the Bachelors licensing exam instead. He then sat for the Bachelors exam in his final semester at Prairie View for his bachelor social work license and the Masters exam for the master social work license before graduating from Baylor. He got his clinical supervision while working as weekend psychosocial therapist at the behavioral health unit at St. Joseph Regional Health Care Center from 2004 to 2006 and passed the Clinical exam in 2007.

Brown’s early career was spent in general and psychiatric hospital settings. In 1992 following the closure of the psychiatric hospital where he had been a mental health worker and promoted to manager of social services before the closing of the hospital, he followed his mentor Hazen to the hospice program she founded in the late 1980s, Hospice Brazos Valley. He spent 17 years there, working his way from social worker to clinical

director, mission support. “A door was closing and another was opening at the perfect time,” he said of the transition.

When he started at the hospice, the program was serving six patients. By the time he left in 2008, the number of patients had grown to 158, and the hospice was serving 19 counties with three service sites, one inpatient facility, and three resell stores. “Hospice Brazos Valley was a nonprofit program that never turned anyone away, no matter their ability to pay or reimburse for their care,” he said.

It was while working at the hospice that Brown first learned about the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners. He was serving at the time as the chair of the Brazos Valley unit of NASW-Texas and approached Jeannie McGuire, who was then chair of the regulatory board, about an ethical dilemma. After they had talked through the issue, McGuire told him that his understanding of the complexities of social work ethics would be an asset on the board. She put his name in for consideration.

In 2004, then governor Rick Perry appointed Brown to the board to fill the master social worker seat. In 2008, Perry reappointed Brown, this time to the clinical seat, and also appointed him board chair. In 2013, Brown was reappointed for an unprecedented third term and a second term as board chair. Brown’s current term will end in 2019.

Despite a fulfilling career in end of life care, Brown said he felt that after “working with death for so many years” he needed a change in his service. He chose to focus on serving veterans in the wake

of 9/11. He accepted employment at the Veterans Administration North Texas Health Care System (VANTHCS) as program manager of the community residential care program in 2008. In 2010 he became associate chief social work, mental health, and continues in that role, providing clinical supervision to 170 social workers across the mental health service line and serving as director over five programs in the largest mental health line in the VA. The VANTHCS covers North Texas and two counties in Oklahoma.

Brown is understandably proud of the Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) program, which was offered in only one veteran justice court when he started at VANTHCS. Today, six courts in the North Texas area adjudicate cases of combat vets with mental health issues. When the veteran successfully completes the program, the veteran's record is expunged. Vets who participate in the program receive ongoing care from the VA so that they can reintegrate into society without further issues. The program has a 92 percent success rate. The other programs he oversees are suicide prevention, psychosocial rehabilitation recovery center, mental health intensive case management, and the community residential care program.

"Down time" does not seem to be in Brown's vocabulary. He spends five to ten hours a week on board business, and the full board meets four times a year. He also chairs the Ethics and Rules Committee, which meets eight times a year. Last year he led the board through a volatile sunset review process that resulted in legislation to consolidate the

social work board with other health care professions. The bill was defeated this year, which means that the board will continue as currently structured until 2019. At that time sunset review will take place again.

"Serving on the [regulatory] board has expanded my understanding of politics, social work practice, and public protection," said Brown. "It's been very exciting to learn how to navigate and work with a complex bureaucracy and multiple stakeholders."

Among his accomplishments while chairing the board, Brown discusses improvements made to the standards for providers offering supervision courses in support of the board approved supervisor recognition. He worked with Dorinda Noble during her time on the board, to provide greater consistency related to the expectations for supervisor training. The new standards were introduced in 2014.

While on the Texas board, Brown also has been involved with ASWB in multiple capacities. He has served as delegate and been appointed to or chaired numerous committees that include Program and Education, Bylaws and Resolutions, Nominating, and Finance. He also was an item writer for the Masters exam. From 2010 to 2011, he served as treasurer and chair of the Finance Committee. In 2014 he received the Sunny Andrews Award for Outstanding Commitment to Social Work Regulatory Board Service. He co-facilitated the first Board Member Exchange in 2015 and was a presenter at the 2017 Education Conference on continuing competence. The topic of his presentation: how the Texas

board strengthened the licensing process by introducing a jurisprudence examination, which he helped develop.

For Brown, service on the regulatory board has been his way of giving back to society and the profession that has fulfilled him. "As a regulator I have worked to ensure public protection, but always cognizant to be mindful of actions to not harm the profession."

As Brown prepares to step into the role of ASWB president in November, he looks forward to navigating new leadership responsibilities and helping the association fulfill current objectives and identify new strategic initiatives.