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DEPOSITIONS SET IN SUIT AGAINST FIRM, FORMER DALLAS OFFICE HEAD

by BRENDA SAPINO JEFFREYS

Depositions are scheduled this month in a “sex discrimination and sexual harassment” suit against Gordon & Rees, which has Texas offices in Dallas and Houston, and the former partner-in-charge of the Dallas office.

The suit was filed by a former firm administrator in Dallas. Alissa Brackin alleges in her First Amended Petition filed in state district court in Dallas on Aug. 11 that partner Matthew Murphey, who formerly managed the Dallas office, “intentionally and/or knowingly physically touched Brackin in an offensive and provocative manner”

and he should have known she would have regarded that physical contact as offensive or provocative.

She alleges the conduct sometimes occurred in the presence of other Gordon & Rees employees, and, because of that, Murphey’s conduct was “known, tolerated and ratified” by Gordon & Rees management and/or officers and directors.

The defendants deny the allegations.

Scott McElhaney, a partner in Jackson Walker in Dallas who represents Murphey and the firm in *Alissa Brackin v. Gordon & Rees, et al.*, provided a statement issued by the San Francisco-based firm: “The firm does not comment

on pending litigation, but feels the case lacks merit and the defendants will be vindicated by the judicial process.”

McElhaney declines further comment, other than to confirm that several depositions in the suit are scheduled for this month.

Murphey, now managing partner of the Gordon & Rees office in Orange County, Calif., did not, before presstime on Oct. 1, return a telephone message left at his office in California.

As alleged in Brackin’s petition, Brackin became the administrator of the Gordon & Rees Houston office in

▶ see *Depositions*, page 15

Craig Woodcock, head of the Chairman’s Task Force for the State Fair of Texas

Fort Worth Lawyer Rides to the Top of Fair’s Wheel of Volunteers

by MIRIAM ROZEN

Deep-fried butter. Deep-fried peaches and cream. Deep-fried yams.

These are just some of the new cardiac-challenging concoctions at the State Fair of Texas, which opened Sept. 25 and closes Oct. 18.

But that isn’t all that’s new this year at the annual outdoor party, which Dallas began hosting in 1886. On Sept. 9, State Fair of Texas Chairman Ruben E. Esquivel selected lawyer Craig Woodcock to head the Chairman’s Task Force for the fair. As chairman, Woodcock supervises 32 task force members, assists with fundraising efforts, and dispenses down-home diplomacy to community leaders and VIPs. Woodcock also is in charge of attending to visiting dignitaries, such as the football coaches for the University of Texas Longhorns and University of Oklahoma Sooners who come to the Cotton Bowl for the Red River Shootout on Oct. 17. He says he marks his calendar each fall for the arrival of 52-foot-tall Big Tex, the most famous nonhuman fair visitor, who made his

▶ see *Fort Worth*, page 13

DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN

State Bar to Reconsider Insurance Disclosure

by MARY ALICE ROBBINS

It’s an issue that won’t go away: Should Texas lawyers have to disclose whether they carry professional liability insurance?

In September, the State Bar of Texas announced on its Web site that it will spend the remainder of 2009 gathering public input on a possible disclosure requirement. Information on the Web site indicates the State Bar board of directors will vote at its January 2010 meeting on a recommendation to the Texas Supreme Court on whether a disclosure rule should be adopted and, if so, the preferred method of disclosure. To ensure the Bar board is well informed, the board will collect information from lawyers and the public, including holding a series of hearings around the state in October and November, according to the Web site. [See *related chart*, page 17.]

“That’s exactly what we should be about: looking at it [the disclosure issue] from the public and lawyer angles,” says Roland Johnson, State Bar president and a shareholder in Harris, Finley & Bogle in Fort Worth.

Sound familiar? It should. The State Bar

▶ see *Bar*, page 16

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EIGHT (8) FIGURE SETTLEMENT

IN A PERSONAL INJURY CASE

JOHN K. ZAID, JOHN K. ZAID & ASSOCIATES, PLLC of Houston, Texas, associate counsel, would like to take this opportunity to congratulate lead Plaintiff attorneys and Partners DONNA M. AVERSANO and PAUL N. GOLD, AVERSANO & GOLD, Houston, Texas for an excellent job on an eight (8) figure settlement. The terms of the settlement are strictly confidential. The defendants have insisted that there be no publication of the identity of the parties, the style of the case, the court, the amount, or terms of the settlement. Plaintiffs' attorneys may only reveal that they settled a case for an eight (8) figure sum. I contacted DONNA and PAUL after defense counsel informed me his corporate client had no liability and would never offer any money in settlement of my clients' claims. Calling and associating AVERSANO & GOLD was one of the best and wisest decisions I ever have made. DONNA and PAUL were the consummate professionals in pursuit of this case. Over a seventeen month period, I was fortunate to witness each hearing and deposition and learn as these two dedicated attorneys pursued this case with the same commitment they would for their own family member. Along with their highly qualified staff, KELLY K. CORBIN and BETHANY JONES, DONNA and PAUL copied me on all correspondence, included me on every email, and made sure my opinion was heard with every step of this case. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever expect this type of attention from a handling firm. My clients received justice, dignity, and financial security for their life altering injuries. I have forged a relationship with AVERSANO & GOLD that has gone beyond this case and will continue a lifetime. I highly recommend this highly qualified and competent law firm for any and all large, catastrophic personal injury cases.

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