

ABEMFT *Newsline*



Alabama State Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy

The Experience of Serving as an ABEMFT Public Member

Jab Brown

Special points of interest:

- Legislation is Introduced to correct the Associate Status.
- AMFTRB Annual Meeting Update
- From Professional advocacy to public protection—one Member's experience.
- Information on Late License Renewal
- Find out where and when the Board Meetings are conducted and who can attend

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I am still excited by the prospect that I was chosen to represent our general public on this prestigious state board. It has been a true pleasure. I will always be grateful to Dr. Wayne Perry for putting my name in the hat, and for Governor Siegelman who appointed me. From my very first meeting, through these final days, I have been overjoyed by this fantastic opportunity and responsibility.

So many Alabamians have been better served in the area of marriage and family therapy since this Board began. At no time, as a public member among such a fantastic array of practicing and teaching professionals, have I felt alienated or dismissed. They always accepted my thoughts and ideas without scorn, and for that I am very grateful. I have definitely been a part of something special. Professional ethics and integrity in our service to the public have been the cornerstones of this Board's performance of its duties. I have been so impressed by the tenacious teamwork dis-

played over the years, including our Executive Director, Ms. Paula Scout McCaleb, Hope Paulene, Executive Assistant, and our Attorney General representatives.

As I prepare for my departure from this illustrious group, I am reminded of my first meetings with Dr. Connie Salts, Dr. Joe Boone Abbott, Dr. Skip Archer, Dr. Charlotte Daughhetee, and Mr. Damon Nolin. The professional manner with which they went about initiating the formulating of the rudimentary policies and procedures, was second to none. Ms. Dana Billingsley, at that time our Attorney General Representative, provided unparalleled legal guidance and savvy to meet the requirements for being a successful state board. Ms. McCaleb solidly provided our perpetual focus and administrative support. I cannot be certain as to how she became initially involved with this Board, but she has proven over and over again to be an outstanding asset.

I am so proud to have represented the people of Alabama

to this Board. I would not trade this experience for the world. We accomplished so much as we set out to make our board viable and respected by heads of state, industry professionals, and the public. We stood the test of several Sunset Committee Reviews, even though we had an occasional misunderstanding. I am proud to have witnessed the dedication and determination of this board to approve only the best applicants our state has to offer. During those times when new and challenging situations presented themselves, I can assure you that all members of the Board embraced the situations with concern, diligence, and sincerity.

Well, I will always remember fondly the enjoyment I have had as a member of the Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy. There is no doubt that the Board will continue to flourish, particularly with its current outstanding leadership. Thanks for the memories.

**ABEMFT
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in Marriage and Family
Therapy**

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Report from AMFTRB & Public Protection Charlotte Daughetee, Ph.D.

The annual Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB) meeting was held in Phoenix, Arizona this year on September 14-15 and I attended as the Alabama delegate. The purpose of the AMFTRB is to foster communication and collaboration among member boards, encourage research in marital and family therapy, and to protect the public through the enhancement of regulatory practices. A major function of AMFTRB is the development of the MFT national exam in marital and family therapy. This exam is used by the majority of member states to test the practice readiness and initial competency of licensure applicants.

The state delegates discussed several topics at this year's meeting. The importance of specific training for supervisors was emphasized. Some states merely require years of practice as a qualification to become an approved supervisor. Alabama's approved supervisor requirements are reflective of national standards and we can be proud of our approved supervisor process. Another topic of concern was the portability of licenses. Due to the varying licensure requirements between states it is unlikely that portability can be

completely streamlined, but AMFTRB might be able to serve as a resource for state boards to compare licensure requirements when an applicant for licensure already holds licensure in another state. Continuing competency across the span of a licensee's career is another topic of interest that will be examined further in the coming year. Committees were formed to further examine these areas of concern and report back at the 2006 meeting.

While this year was the last time I will attend an AMFTRB meeting as an Alabama delegate, I will continue to be involved in AMFTRB as I begin a 2 year term as AMFTRB secretary in January 2006. I have enjoyed my five years of service to the Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy and I will miss working with the board members and with Paula. When one serves on a regulatory board, the focus shifts from professional advocacy to the protection of the public. These five years as an advocate for the public have changed me, and I believe that I am a better therapist and a better person because of this experience. The ABEMFT takes its mission to protect the public very seriously and Alabama can be proud of its MFT licensure board.

"When one serves on a regulatory board, the focus shifts from professional advocacy to the protection of the public."

Late Renewal Reminder

Renewal Forms and reminders have been sent to all licensees who were scheduled to expire on December 31, 2005. The majority of these licenses have been renewed. However, current statute includes a provision for late renewal if a completed application and CEU hours are received by

March 1, 2006. Renewal Forms can be downloaded at www.mft.state.al.us

The following will be required for renewal:

- A complete renewal application
- CEU Reporting Form reflecting the required 40 hours of continuing

education consisting of 10 hours of clinical MFT, and 3 hours in professional ethics. All supporting CEU documentation must be attached to the reporting form.

- \$250 Late Renewal Fee in the form of a check or money order made payable to ABEMFT.

HB 518 Introduced in the 2006 Regular Legislative Session

The Board has been in existence for eight years and this is the first bill amending the original enabling act. The proposed legislation consists mainly of general housekeeping items that have been recommended by the Examiners of Public Accounts and the Attorney General's Office. Language authorizing reasonable administrative fees, disciplinary action, further violations defined and examination are commonly used with all boards. Representative Ron Johnson who sponsored the original legislation creating the Board is now going to bat for us once again by sponsoring this bill. The Alabama Marriage and Family Therapy Association has been supportive of this legislation and is lobbying for the bill. The following is a list of items addressed in HB 518:

- ◆ Provide for an Associate Designation - Allow persons who are completing their two years post degree supervision the designation of Associate before applying for their LMFT and specifically designate Intern status to individuals acquiring their required education
- ◆ Examination - change language from written examinations to computer based testing and requirements of the National Examination Service; and eliminate a six month waiting period to re-
- ◆ Provide for administrative fees - reasonable costs for copying, labels, and lists provided by the Board and allow the board to establish examination and license fees deemed appropriate.
- ◆ Disciplinary Action - Eliminate \$500 fine for ethical violations; provide authority for disciplinary action other than to deny, revoke, or suspend a license; provide the board with the option of levying an administrative fine for violations of the chapter or the rules and regulations of the board in an amount not to exceed one thousand dollars for each violation.
- ◆ Further Violation Defined - For practicing without a license as a marriage and family therapist, the board may impose an administrative fine of not more than one thousand dollars, issue a cease and desist order, or petition the circuit court of the county where the act occurred to enforce the cease and desist order or collect the fine.
- ◆ Basic Housekeeping - Quorum defined as a majority of the current appointed members of the board; update language in use in the field

take the examination.

today; eliminate language for license commencing on January 1 to simply, "renewal period"; and eliminate original provisions for grandparenting and original board appointments.

This exact legislation was introduced in the 2005 Regular Session. Although the Bill was approved by the Boards and Commissions Committee, the legislation was ultimately unsuccessful due to a simple lack of time to get it passed. It's important for this year's legislative session to be a successful one in order to reinstate the Associate designation and to adequately fund the board. Following our last Sunset Review Audit the Board of Examiners determined that we did not have the statutory authority to grant Associate Certificates. The only way the Board can reinstate Associate Certificates is to have this specific language in the statute. During this same audit, the ABEMFT was directed not to charge any fees other than the licensure fee and late renewal fee. Our ability to charge the application processing fee has harmed the board. ABEMFT has limited funding due to current statute. Please contact your Senator or Representative in support of HB 518. You can track this bill's progression at www.legislature.state.al.us



Jab Brown (left) presented with Plaque for Service to ABEMFT from John Mark Trent

Appreciation for Board Service

It is with a heavy heart that ABEMFT says farewell to Jab Brown and Dr. Charlotte Daughhete. After completing more than five years of Board Membership, their terms are now up for appointment. Dr. Charlotte Daughhete has served as Chair of the Board and Jab Brown has served as Vice-Chair. Their commitment to the Board has never wavered, which their attendance and idea contributions have consistently exhibited. ABEMFT is stronger due to their leadership.



Charlotte Daughhete (left) presented with Plaque for Service to ABEMFT from John Mark Trent

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INFORMATION ON 2006 EXAM
ADMINISTRATIONS NOW INCLUDED
ON WEB SITE.

Calendar of Events



Note: All Board Meetings are open to the public. Meetings convene at 9:00 a.m. and are held at Board headquarters located at 7245 Halcyon Summit Drive in Montgomery. Meetings are subject to change, but will always be advertised on the Board website and the Secretary of State's Web site (www.sos.state.al.us) in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

BOARD MEETING DATES

May 12, 2006

August 11, 2006

November 17, 2006

**Board Meeting Minutes
Now Available on the
Web Site!**

**It's easier than ever to keep
current on Board Actions
with this addition to the
Web site.**