

**BYLAWS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF MATRIMONIAL LAWYERS  
TEXAS CHAPTER**

**ARTICLE I. IDENTIFICATION.** This organization shall be known as the “American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers Texas Chapter” (hereafter Chapter).

**ARTICLE II. PURPOSE.** The primary purpose of this Chapter is to encourage the study, improve the practice, elevate the standards and advance the cause of matrimonial law, to the end that the welfare of the family and society be preserved and improved.

**ARTICLE III. ORGANIZATION.**

**3.1 INCORPORATION.** The Chapter is a part of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (hereafter Academy). The Academy is a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Illinois. The Chapter has no power to contract for, act for or bind the Academy. If the Chapter is dissolved, its funds or property shall, after payment of all debts, become the property and be used as part of the general funds of the Academy.

**3.2 OFFICES.** The Chapter may have an office. The registered office of the Academy is located in Chicago, Illinois.

**ARTICLE IV. GOVERNMENT.**

**4.1 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS.** The Executive committee and the Board of Examiners consist of the President, the President-Elect, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and the Immediate Past President.

**4.2 BOARD OF REVIEW.** The judicial body is the Board of Review.

**ARTICLE V. ANNUAL MEETING.** Annual Meetings shall be conducted pursuant to the regulations of the Chapter.

**ARTICLE VI. PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS.** The principles of ethics and disciplinary rules shall govern the professional conduct of the Fellows of the Academy (hereafter Fellows). Fellows agree to adhere to the Bounds of Advocacy as established by the Academy.

**ARTICLE VII. FELLOWSHIP.**

**7.1 CLASSIFICATION.**

**Classes.** The Chapter shall have four classes of Fellows as defined by the Academy pursuant to the definitions established by the Academy:

- (1) Practicing Fellows;
- (2) Non-practicing Fellows;
- (3) Judicial Fellows (must be a member first, then judge); and
- (4) Emeritus Fellows.

**7.2 QUALIFICATIONS.** Fellowship in the Chapter is limited to persons:

- a. Who are board certified in Family Law, and have been board certified for no fewer than five years.
- b. Whose principal office is within Texas.
- c. Who are in good standing with the State Bar of Texas and the Texas Board of Legal Specialization.
- d. The applicant must be recognized by the bench and bar in his or her jurisdiction as an expert practitioner in the matrimonial area.
- e. Each applicant must demonstrate substantial involvement in the matrimonial field and have endeavored to encourage the study, improve the practice, elevate the standards and advance the cause of matrimonial law. This may include the following:
  - (1) Faculty member of continuing legal education presentations in the area of matrimonial law.
  - (2) Service on a standing committee or executive committee of the family law section of the applicant's state or local bar association, or the family law section of a national bar association.
  - (3) Service as an officer or director in any bar association.
  - (4) Authorship of published articles on matrimonial law.
  - (5) Participation as *amicus curiae* in matrimonial law matters presented to any appellate court.
  - (6) Significant activity or contribution, including pro bono work, related to matrimonial law.

- (7) Faculty member for law school courses in the area of matrimonial law.
- (8) Editor or publisher of any matrimonial law newsletter, journal or similar publication.
- (9) Authorship of a major treatise on marital law.
- (10) Service on a committee related to matrimonial law certification in Texas.

### **7.3 PROPOSAL FOR FELLOWSHIP.**

- a. Admission to Fellowship is pursuant to terms and conditions promulgated by the Academy.
- b. An application may be requested from the Executive Director by the applicant or a current Fellow may request that the Executive Director forward application documents to the applicant. Applicants are encouraged to contact two Fellows within their jurisdiction for sponsorship. The sponsors may propose the candidate for fellowship and assist in the application process.
- c. Completed applications for fellowship shall be forwarded by the Executive Director of the Academy (hereafter Executive Director) to the Chapter's Board of Examiners, which is a sub-board of the Academy's Board of Examiners, for review and vote.

### **7.4 ELECTION TO FELLOWSHIP.**

- a. Within a reasonable time after receiving an application from the Executive Director, the Chapter's Board of Examiners shall take action upon each application at the next meeting. Thereafter, the Chapter's Board of Examiners must notify the Academy's Board of Examiners, which has ultimate authority to act on the application.
- b. The Board of Examiners shall take an oath of confidentiality. This oath shall be imprinted in a form in the application and shall be signed by each member participating in any way in the Chapter's Board of Examiners' recommendation to the National Board of Examiners (hereinafter "National"). Any member of the Chapter's Board of Examiners who is determined to have breached this oath of confidentiality by discussing with any third party the application process shall be removed from the Chapter Board of Examiners and shall be presented to the Board of Review. No

member of the applicant's law firm shall be present during any portion of the meeting of the Chapter Board of Examiners at which that applicant's application is discussed or reviewed. The Chapter's Board of Examiners shall require a regular rotation of its members, with no member serving more than seven consecutive years in any capacity. No Fellow shall be chair of the Chapter's Board of Examiners for a longer period than two consecutive years.

- c. Unless the majority of the Chapter's Fellows indicate they have sufficient knowledge of the applicant, the applicant must be personally interviewed as part of the admission process. The Chapter Board of Examiners shall consider all the required qualifications in the interview. An applicant's race, creed, color, gender, or national origin shall have no bearing on an applicant's admission to fellowship.
- d. Results of the application process are based on a decision by National. Notification of either acceptance or denial of fellowship in the Academy shall emanate only from National. If National rejects an applicant for membership, or if an applicant withdraws his or her application for membership, the applicant may reapply no sooner than two (2) years after the date of rejection or withdrawal by complying with all of the requirements for membership at the time of the new application.

**7.5 GOOD STANDING.** A Fellow is continued in good standing by complying with requirements established by the Academy.

**7.6 PRIVILEGES.**

- a. Each Fellow is entitled to the honors and service accorded to all Fellows.
- b. Fellows are entitled to attend and vote at all meetings of the Chapter.
- c. Non-practicing Fellows may be appointed to committees, but shall not hold elective or appointive office.

**7.7 EVIDENCE OF AND CERTIFICATES OF FELLOWSHIP.** All evidences, certificates, or plaques of Fellowship are issued in accordance with terms and conditions of, and remain the property of, the Academy.

**7.8 DUES AND ASSESSMENTS.** Dues and assessments may be required from the Fellows in such amounts as are fixed by the Executive Committee and approved by the Board of Governors of the Academy.

**7.9 TERMINATION.** A Fellow's name shall be removed from the rolls of the Chapter

upon a Fellow's termination of Fellowship, resignation, death, disbarment, or during any period of suspension from practice before any forum in any jurisdiction, all as provided in the Academy bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VIII. MEETINGS OF THE FELLOWS.**

**8.1 MEETINGS.** The Chapter shall hold an annual meeting of the Fellows in the third quarter of each calendar year. The Chapter may, throughout the year, hold other meetings of the Fellows.

**8.2 QUORUM.** A quorum is one third of the Fellows in the Chapter. Less than a quorum may adjourn the meeting to another time or date, or seek ratification of the proposed action by later vote.

**8.3 CONTROLLING VOTE.** Actions of the Fellows shall be by majority of the vote of the eligible Fellows present for the vote (hereafter controlling vote).

### **8.4 VOTING ELIGIBILITY.**

- a. Only Fellows whose good standing can be certified by the Academy records for 30 days before a vote are eligible to vote.
- b. Voting may be in person, or electronically as scheduled by the Executive Committee. Voting for elections and Bylaw amendments may only be done in person.

**8.5 ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA.** The business transacted at the annual meeting of the Fellowship shall include:

- a. The election of the Treasurer. Election shall be by a majority of the votes cast, and if a majority vote is not initially obtained, a run-off election shall immediately be held with the candidate receiving the fewest votes on the prior ballot being eliminated from the ballot, until one receives a majority.
- b. The Executive Committee shall report to the Fellows on the activities of the chapter.
- c. Such other business:
  - (1) as decided by the President; or
  - (2) as may properly come before the meeting.

- d. Any item placed on the agenda by petition which is:
  - (1) received by the Secretary at least 60 days before the meeting; and
  - (2) signed by six Fellows.

#### **8.6 SPECIAL MEETINGS.**

- a. A special meeting of the Fellows shall be called by the President:
  - (1) when so directed by the Executive Committee; or
  - (2) upon the written request of at least 10% of the Fellows.
- b. The business is limited to the purpose specified in the notice, plus such other business reasonably related to or necessary for implementation of the specified purpose.

#### **8.7 NOTICE OF MEETINGS.**

- a. Every meeting of the Fellows shall be held at a place, on a date and at a time, designated by the Executive Committee.
- b. Advance Notice. Written notice of the meetings shall be sent to the Fellows at least 30 days before the meetings.
- c. Content of Notice. The notice shall contain the time, place and date of the meetings and a proposed agenda. Additional items may be added to the agenda without the need for further notice to the Fellows so long as the items are reasonably related to or necessary for implementation for an agenda item.

### **ARTICLE IX. ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICES.**

#### **9.1 ELECTED OFFICES.** At its annual meeting, the Fellows shall elect:

- a. A Treasurer who shall serve a term of one year.
- b. As required, a Fellow to fill any vacancy in the office of President-Elect, Vice President, or Secretary.

**9.2 OFFICE SUCCESSION.** All terms of office are for a period of one year. The President-Elect shall automatically succeed to the office of the President. The Vice President shall automatically succeed to the office of the President-Elect. The Secretary shall automatically succeed

to the office of the Vice President. The Treasurer shall automatically succeed to the office of Secretary.

**9.3 CONCURRENT OFFICES.** No Fellow may be nominated for, elected to, or serve at any one time in more than one of the positions referenced in 9.2.

**9.4 ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE.**

- a. Only Fellows eligible to vote, pursuant to 7.6 and 8.4a, shall be eligible for office.

**9.5 TIME, PLACE, AND METHOD OF ELECTION.**

- a. The President shall have the place and approximate time of all required elections stated in the official notice of the annual meeting of the Fellows.
- b. Each contested position shall be voted upon separately by written ballot.
- c. Election shall be by a majority of the votes cast, and if a majority vote is not initially obtained, a run-off election(s) shall immediately be held with the candidate receiving the fewest votes on the prior ballot being eliminated from the ballot, until one receives a majority.

**9.6 TERM OF OFFICE.** The term of all offices shall begin with the adjournment of the annual meeting of the Chapter and end following the annual meeting at which a successor has been duly elected. If, at the close of any term of office, a successor has not been elected, then the term of that office is extended until a successor is elected.

**ARTICLE X. OFFICERS.**

**10.1 OFFICERS.** The Officers of the Chapter shall be the President, President-Elect, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and one immediate Past President.

**10.2 PRESIDENT.** The President shall:

- a. preside at all meetings of the Fellows, Board of Examiners and Executive Committee;
- b. appoint the committee chairs and members of all committees who are to serve during the President's term subject to approval of the Executive Committee, except as otherwise provided in these bylaws;
- c. plan the goals and objectives of the Chapter subject to the directions and

- approval of the Executive Committee;
- d. carry out decisions of the Fellows, supervise the performance of all activities of the Chapter and keep the duly informed;
- e. report to the Fellows at the annual meeting on the status and activities of the Chapter;
- f. perform such other duties and acts as may be designated by the Fellows; and
- g. generally supervise the administration of the Chapter.

**10.3 PRESIDENT-ELECT.** The President-Elect shall:

- a. except for committees otherwise constituted in these regulations, appoint, in consultation with the President, the committee chairs and members of all committees who are to serve during the President-Elect's coming term as President;
- b. assist the President in the performance of the President's responsibilities in such manner and extent as the President may request;
- c. perform such further duties and have such further powers as may be designated by the Executive Committee.
- d. perform the duties of the President:
  - (1) in the event of the President's death, disqualification or resignation for the remainder of the President's term; or
  - (2) in the event of the President's absence or disability, for the length of the absence or disability;
- e. plan and supervise the Chapter's educational program for its annual meetings and for any other meeting of the Fellows which may occur during the President-Elect's term as President;
- f. supervise the planning of any regional meetings, subject to the direction and approval of the Executive Committee; and
- g. submit to the Fellows at the annual meeting proposed Chapter budget for the following fiscal year.

**10.4 VICE PRESIDENT.** The Vice President shall:

- a. assist the President in the performance of the President's responsibilities in such manner and extent as the President may request; and
- b. in case of the death, disqualification, resignation, absence or disability of the President-Elect, the Vice President shall perform the duties (except duties in 10.3d, which shall be performed by the President-Elect) but not assume the office of, the President-Elect until such time as there is a President-Elect able to perform those duties and not obligated to perform the duties of the President.

**10.5 SECRETARY.** The Secretary shall:

- a. be responsible for the retention and maintenance of books, papers, documents, and other property pertaining to the work of the Chapter;
- b. keep and true record of the proceedings of all meetings of the Fellows and Executive Committee whenever assembled; and
- c. give all notices.

**10.6 TREASURER.** The Treasurer shall:

- a. keep an accurate record of all money appropriated and expended by the Chapter;
- b. monitor all accounts, reports, and other documents prepared in connection with Chapter funds, revenues, and expenditures and seek to make certain that these accounts, reports, and documents are accurate;
- c. report the present and projected financial condition at each meeting of the Fellows and, at the request of the President, at meetings of the Executive Committee;
- d. advise if an action or proposed action of the Officers, or Executive Committee would have a significant impact on the financial condition of the Chapter;
- e. before the annual meeting, prepare for the President-Elect a projected chapter budget which would be operative during the coming year;
- f. prepare such other financial recommendations and special reports as may be

requested by the President; and

- g. perform other duties incident to the office.

**10.7 IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT.** The Immediate Past President shall assist and consult with the President in connection with all ongoing Chapter programs and committee assignments and shall perform such further duties as may be designated by the President or the Executive Committee.

## **ARTICLE XI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.**

### **11.1 MEETINGS.**

- a. The Executive Committee may meet in person, by telephone, mail, fax, or email.
- b. Upon giving advance notice of at least 72 hours to each member of the Executive Committee, a meeting of the Executive Committee may be called by the President or by any three other members of the Executive Committee. Notice may be by mail, courier delivery, email, fax, telephone, or other actual notice setting forth the day, time, and place of the meeting.
- c. Action of the Executive Committee shall be by a majority vote of its members. Absentee and proxy voting is permitted.
- d. Minutes shall be kept of all meetings and the minutes or a summary of the minutes forwarded to each Executive Committee member within a reasonable time after each meeting.

## **ARTICLE XII. BOARDS.**

**12.1 TITLE.** The permanent boards of the Chapter are the Board of Examiners and the Board of Review.

### **12.2 BOARD OF REVIEW.**

- a. The Board of Review shall consist of all Past Presidents and the Executive Committee.
- b. The Board of Review is the judicial body of the Chapter. The Board of Review may, after preliminary inquiry, upon application by the Executive Committee, a Fellow of the Academy, or on its own, make inquiry into the conduct of any Fellow of the Chapter, hold hearings on such matters or render

findings, opinions, and recommendations to the Executive Committee or Academy.

- c. The Board of Review:
  - (1) may render opinions on any question of ethics requested by Fellows of the Chapter, whether or not there shall be a current dispute involving said question, but no opinion shall be given on a matter in litigation;
  - (2) shall hear disputes between its Fellows and between its Fellows and the Chapter and make recommendations to the Executive Committee or National for the resolution of such disputes; and
  - (3) shall also hear such other matters as are submitted to it by the Executive Committee for its consideration and opinion.
- d. Recommendations, findings, or opinions submitted by the Board of Review to the Executive Committee or National shall specify the number of votes for or against each proposition. Minority or concurring findings, opinions, and recommendations may also be made.

### **12.3 BOARD OF EXAMINERS.**

- a. The Board of Examiners shall consist of the Executive Committee with the President to serve as Chair.
- b. The Board of Examiners shall, subject to policies established by the Chapter and the Academy, set, apply, and administer the specific standards, criteria, and admission procedures for admission to Fellowship.

## **ARTICLE XIII. COMMITTEES.**

### **13.1 COMMITTEES.**

- a. Each committee of the Chapter shall be established and authorized by the President with approval of the Executive Committee and such committee shall be responsible to the Executive Committee, except for those committees specifically constituted otherwise.
- b. Committees have no policy-making power and may not exercise the authority of the Executive Committee.

**13.2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS AND MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES AND BOARDS.**

- a. No later than the close of the annual meeting, the President-Elect shall (except for those committees and boards otherwise constituted) designate the members and the Chair of each committee of the Chapter for the following year.
- b. The members and Chairs designated pursuant to 13.2a shall:
  - (1) serve co-terminus with the President, who appointed them;
  - (2) serve at the pleasure of the President; and
  - (3) be Fellows.

**13.3 REPORT.** Each committee shall submit through the Secretary, an annual report of its activities to the Fellows with a copy to the President, such report to be available to the Fellows at their annual meeting.

**ARTICLE XIV. NOMINATIONS.**

**14.1 COMPOSITION OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE.**

- a. No later than 45 days before the annual meeting, the President shall appoint a Nominating Committee of three Fellows as provided below who, if they accept appointment, cannot at the next election, be candidates for elective office.
- b. The three members shall be a Past President (or if none, then the President), the President-Elect (who shall serve as Chair), and one Fellow nominated by the Executive Committee but not a member of the Executive Committee.
- c. The names and addresses of the members of this committee shall be published to each Fellow within 15 days of their appointment.
- d. The President may fill any vacancy which may thereafter arise in the Nominating Committee by appointing an appropriately qualified Fellow or, if the vacancy is in the President-Elect position, by appointing a Past President.

**14.2 REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE.**

- a. The Nominating Committee, no later than July 1 in each year shall make its report by nominating one Fellow for each open position which is to be filled by election as provided elsewhere in these bylaws; and
- b. The President shall have the report of the Nominating Committee published to each Fellow no later than 15 days before the annual meeting.

**14.3 CRITERIA AND NOMINATION.** Generally, the Nominating Committee shall select those who it determines are the most able Fellows available for service in the chapter, consistent with an attempt to attain wide representation and participation.

**14.4 NOMINATIONS BY PETITION.**

- a. Additional nominations for any position to be filled by election may be made by a petition which is signed by not less than one-fourth of the Fellows, but not less than 15 Fellows.
- b. The petition shall:
  - (1) state that the Fellow nominated has consented to the nominations; and
  - (2) be sent to the President so that it is received not more than 60 days or less than 10 days before the annual meeting.
- c. The President shall immediately advise the Nominating Committee and the other candidates, of all nominations made by the petition.
- d. The Secretary shall publish a notice of all contested elections to the Fellows not later than 5 days before the annual meeting.
- e. A petition for nomination may be submitted to the President at any time during the year, so long as it complies with 14.4b.
- f. In case of a contested election, the notice referenced in 14.4d shall state the name, address, and a brief statement of each candidate's activities in the Academy, the chapter and, generally, in the legal profession.

**ARTICLE XV. REPRESENTATION OF CHAPTER POSITION.** Any position taken on behalf of the Chapter must be approved by the Executive Committee or its designees.

**ARTICLE XVI. AMENDMENTS.**

- 16.1** These Bylaws may be amended or repealed at any meeting of the Fellows by a two-

thirds vote of those present, the notice for which contained an intention to act thereon. Thereafter, they may take effect only upon approval by the Board of Governors of the Academy.

- 16.2** The proposed amendment shall first have been presented in writing at a previous meeting of the Fellows, the notice for which contained an intention to act thereon.
- 16.3** Before adoption at the second meeting which considers the proposed amendment(s), the wording, but not the substance, may be altered or amended.

## **ARTICLE XVII. FINANCES.**

**17.1 FISCAL YEAR.** The fiscal year of the Chapter shall be the same as that of the Academy.

**17.2 FUNDS.** All checks, drafts, or other orders for payment of money, notes, or other evidence of indebtedness issued in the name of the Chapter, shall be signed by such officer(s) or agent(s) of the Chapter and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Executive Committee. In the absence of such determination, such instruments shall be signed by the Treasurer.

**17.3 DEPOSITS.** All funds of the Chapter shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Chapter in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Treasurer may select with the consent of the Executive Committee.

## **ARTICLE XVIII. RECORDS.**

The Chapter shall:

- a. keep correct and complete books and records of account; and
- b. keep minutes of the proceedings of its Fellows and Executive Committee.

**ARTICLE XIX. AWARDS.** The Executive Committee may provide for the granting of awards for outstanding service, scholarship, or other contribution to advancing the purposes of the Chapter or in the field of matrimonial law.

**ARTICLE XX. INDEMNIFICATION.** The Chapter shall indemnify and hold harmless each elected or appointed officer, committee member, or other bodies who serve or served the Chapter, from and against any and all claims and liabilities to which they may be or become subject by reason of service or acts on behalf of the Chapter and shall reimburse each such person for all legal and other expenses reasonably incurred in defending against any such claim or liability other than those

arising from that person's or body's own willful misconduct. These are in addition to rights which each person or body is otherwise entitled.

**The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers  
Texas Chapter**

Approved by the Texas Chapter:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

Attested By:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

Approved by the Academy:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director