

Georgia Association of Professional Private Investigators, Inc.

Constitution

Preamble

We, the membership of the Georgia Association of Professional Private Investigators, Inc., in order to establish and promote a state-wide association which will serve to educate members, enforce code of ethics, establish mutual feelings of trust and friendships among its members and other investigative agencies throughout Georgia and the United States of America, do hereby enact this Association.

Article I: Name

Section 1

The name of the Association shall be known as the "Georgia Association of Professional Private Investigators, Inc." (GAPPI).

Section 2

Its purpose shall be to form a unifying board for the industry of private investigation in the State of Georgia; provide special standards of conduct; promote high business standards and professionalism; encourage networking and cooperation among investigators; and to conduct lobbying for equitable laws and practices.

Section 3

All meetings and assemblies of the Association will be governed by procedures as outlined in the "Robert's Rules of Order" except where there may be a conflict with the constitution or by laws.

Article II: Location, Seal, Emblem

Section 1

The address of the principal office shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 2

The official emblem will be an outline of the State of Georgia displaying initials GAPPI. The State will be enclosed by a circle and within the circle will be written Georgia Association of Professional Private Investigators, Inc.

The official emblem may be used by any member in good standing only to identify themselves as a member of this Association. Any other use of the emblem must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Article III: Membership

Section 1

Membership is restricted to active members, associate members, student members, retired members, and honorary members.

(a) Active membership shall be granted only to licensed Private Investigators in the State of Georgia who must be in good standing with the Georgia Board of Private Investigators and Security Agencies.

(b) Application for membership shall be by submission of the approved form accompanied by the annual fee set by the Board of Directors. Submitting false information on the application for membership will be grounds for removal from membership. Any member no longer considered to be in good standing with the Georgia Board of Private Detective and Security Agencies or who conducts ones self in a manner determined by the Board of Directors to be detrimental to the profession shall be expelled from membership.

(c) Any member delinquent in dues for a period of more than sixty (60) days shall be notified by letter from the Association and have their membership privileges suspended.

Section 2

Associate membership shall be granted to those persons not holding a Private Investigator's license with the State of Georgia but engaged in related fields. Associate members shall enjoy all Association benefits with the exception of being able to vote or hold elective office.

Section 3

No member shall act as official spokesperson for the Association without the approval of the Board of Directors.

Section 4

Student membership shall be granted to those persons not holding a Private Investigator's license with the State of Georgia, but enrolled in a Private Detective Course taught by an instructor with an instructor's license from the Georgia Board of Private Detective and Security Agencies. This membership shall not be renewable and shall not last for more than one year.

Section 5

Honorary membership shall be granted upon the recommendation of one member, seconded by another member, and an affirmative vote by a majority of the present members at a regular meeting.

Section 6

Any person who has been a member of GAPPI for at least 5 years, (not necessarily consecutively) and has also been a licensed investigator in the state of Georgia for at least 5 years should be allowed to continue their membership in GAPPI as a voting member in retired status if they retired from the Private Detective profession in good standing with the State of Georgia Professional Licensing Board.

Article IV: Organizational Structure

Section 1

The Georgia Association of Professional Private Investigators, Inc. shall be governed by a Board of Directors.

Section 2

Whenever the term Board of Directors is used, it shall mean the elected officers, i.e., President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer as well as the President and Vice President from the previous year's administration, any Regional Chapter Chairperson that has been elected according to Section 3 of this Article, and any At Large Board members who are elected to serve for a two-year term, according to Article VI, Section 5.

If the President and/or Vice President from the previous year's administration are already Board members by virtue of their holding another Board position, the vacant previous year's President and/or Vice President seats shall not be filled and shall be treated as non-existent until such time as the circumstances which caused the vacancy change or until the following year's officers take office. Any other board positions that become vacant shall also be treated as non-existent for quorum purposes until such time as they are filled according to Article VI, Section 6.

Section 3

Regional Chapters will be established by the Board of Directors and will be responsible for a specific geographical area. A Chapter Chairperson shall be elected annually from each regional chapter and will serve as a member of the Board of Directors, representing that region for the following calendar year.

Section 4

On issues voted on only by the Board of Directors, the President will vote only in instances needed to break a tie.

Section 5

The Board of Directors has the discretion to set new rules and regulations, as warranted, in the best interest of the Association.

Article V: Dissolution of the Association

If the Association is dissolved, any remaining funds must be distributed equally among its membership. The Treasurer will make this distribution no later than 60 days after the dissolution. However, should these funds be less than \$1,000.00, a contribution will be made to a public charity voted on by the Board of Directors.

Article VI: Election of Officers

Section 1

The positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and At Large Board members shall be filled by elections at an annual meeting to be held no later than 30 days prior to the end of the fiscal year but no sooner than 90 days prior to

the end of the fiscal year. The Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected for one-year terms. The President shall be elected for a two-year term, and shall be elected in odd numbered years, to serve beginning in the following even numbered year.

Section 2

All candidates for these positions must have been an active member in good standing for one full year prior to the end of the fiscal year. In addition, candidates for the office of President must have a minimum of two years of prior service as a member of the Board of Directors. This time of service on the Board need not be two consecutive years.

Section 3

If no one has declared their candidacy for these positions, then nominations will be accepted from the floor at the annual meeting.

Section 4

Voting will be done by secret ballot at the annual meeting or by absentee ballot. There will be no voting done by proxy. All absentee ballots shall be postmarked at least 15 days prior to the first day of the annual meeting. All absentee ballots will be opened and verified by an election committee. The election committee will count and verify the votes and their spokesperson will notify all of the candidates of the results of the election within 24 hours of the completion of the ballot counting. All ballots will be preserved for seven days after the election has been verified and then will be destroyed unless an election is challenged. If an election is challenged, all ballots will be preserved until this challenge has been resolved.

Section 5

The Board shall have three At Large Board Member positions. At Large Board Members shall be elected for two-year terms. Two At Large Board Members shall be elected in even numbered years, to serve beginning in the following odd numbered year, and the third At Large Board Member shall be elected in odd numbered years, to serve beginning in the following even numbered year. The candidate or candidates receiving the most votes from the field of At Large nominees each year shall be elected for the two-year term.

Section 6

In the event the President is unable to serve a full term of office, the Vice President shall become President for the remainder of the current term. The Board of Directors will name a Vice President for the remainder of the current term. In the event the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or an At Large Board Member is unable to serve their full term of office, the Board of Directors will name a replacement for the remainder of the current term. In the event a Chapter Chairperson is unable to serve their full term of office, their respective Chapter shall name a replacement.

Article VII: Support of Legislation

This Association will not lobby elected representatives on behalf of or against any proposed legislation without the approval of a majority number of Active Members' responses to a mail ballot. If time does not allow for a mail ballot, an affirmative vote of the Board of Directors will suffice.

Article VIII: Discipline

Section 1

Any member or officer of the Association may be censured, suspended, or expelled from the Association or office held for unethical or unlawful behavior or conduct that violates the constitution, by laws, or code of ethics adopted by this Association. The Board of Directors will administer all discipline.

Section 2

Discipline matters may be initiated by any member in good standing of the Association or by any member of the general public and any state, local, or federal law enforcement agent. Discipline matters must be submitted in writing to the President of the Association. The President of the Association will then convene a committee of three members to conduct the necessary investigation of the allegations. At this time, the member of the Association against whom the allegations have been made must be notified of the investigation and the member concerned must be afforded the opportunity to present evidence. No later than 90 days after being assigned an investigation, the investigating committee will submit a written report to the President of the Association. This written report will contain the results of the investigation along with any appropriate materials and any recommendations from the investigating committee. The member against whom the allegations are made shall be promptly advised of the findings of the investigating committee and shall have 14 days from

the date of notice of the investigative committee's report to file a request for a formal hearing before the Board of Directors. This prompt notification should be done by certified mail. After considering all the evidence, the Board of Directors by majority vote may (1) dismiss all the charges, (2) find that the charges are sustained and either censure, suspend, or expel the member from the Association. Any member of the Association that has been censured, suspended, or expelled shall have the right to appeal this decision of the Board of Directors. This appeal will be conducted as follows: The affected member must notify the President and Secretary of the Association by certified mail postmarked no later than 30 days prior to the annual meeting. The President and Secretary will ensure that during the regular business conducted at the annual meeting that sufficient time be afforded to the affected member to appeal in person before the membership in attendance. The President will make the general membership aware of the allegations against the member, the result of the investigation, and the action take by the Board of Directors. The affected member shall then have the opportunity to appeal in person before the membership in attendance. After the appeal has been made, the membership in attendance by secret ballot shall by two thirds majority (1) sustain the discipline assessed, (2) reduce an expulsion to a suspension for a certain period of time, (3) reduce an suspension to a censure or (4) reduce a censor to a reprimand. All records pertaining disciplinary actions that result in a censure, suspension, or expulsion shall be maintained in a file for a period of three years. At the end of this three-year period, all materials will be destroyed. In the event a complaint is filed against the President of the Association, the Vice President will act in the capacity of the President regarding these allegations. Also in the event that a single complaint names both the President and Vice President, the remaining Board of Directors will appoint one of its members to handle the complaint in this instance and to handle the duties of the President of the Association regarding this particular complaint.

Article IX: By Laws

By laws shall be instituted in order to maintain an orderly operation of the Association. No by laws shall be adopted that in any way alter or modify the articles of this constitution. Proposed by laws and changes in by laws shall be adopted by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Article X: Amendments

This constitution shall only be amended by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of Active Members and Retired Members present at the annual meeting and by those voting by absentee ballots. Proposed amendments shall relate only to a single article of the constitution and shall not affect or repeal any other article of this constitution not specifically outlined in the amendment. Proposed amendments will be published in the association newsletter no later than one month prior to the annual meeting.