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Hoop Dreams

Family lawyers **Becky Beaver** and **Laurie Nowlin** weren't glued to their TVs watching the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in Beijing. They're too busy training for their own summer games. Beaver and Nowlin are members of a women's basketball team that will compete in the Texas Senior Games Championship in September. The Texas Senior Games Association is open to athletes aged 50 or better (Beaver is 56, Nowlin 53). Team Wild Oats grew organically, says Beaver, team captain and head of the **Law Office of Becky Beaver** in Austin. A longtime lover of the game — she played in college for Texas Tech — Beaver continued to play while in law school at the University of Texas and started a women's pickup game made up of local intramural athletes. That pickup game is still going strong today, some 30 years later. "It has women of all ages in it, and we got to the point where some of us were in our 50s and we thought, we should have a [senior] team," Beaver says. Nowlin, partner in Round Rock's **Akins, Nowlin & Prewitt**, was a pickup game participant and joined the team a couple years ago. She was drafted, she says, after Beaver found out she'd played in college for Texas Lutheran University. "It was the first year they let women run full-court," she notes. If Wild Oats wins at the state level next month — which they've done twice before — they'll qualify for the 2009 Summer National Senior Games taking place in Palo Alto, Calif. The games, open to all state-champion teams, take place every two years. In 2007, more than 500 athletes traveled to Louisville, Ky., to go for the gold. Although Wild Oats did not medal (the team lost to the Maine Hotflash), both women say the experience was profound. "I really think it's important for people to stay physically active their whole lives, and when you go to the senior Olympics, you see amazing things," says Beaver. "There was one woman [playing basketball] who was 86, and I thought, in 30 years, I want to be doing exactly that." Nowlin says she's optimistic about the team's chances next month and beyond, because this time, they have what they lacked the last time around: a coach. They're also training beyond the



BEAVER



NOWLIN

team's standing Sunday practices. Nowlin has been working out with a weight trainer and practicing with her husband, himself a former college b-baller; she keeps her shoes and two balls in her trunk at all times to stay pickup game-ready. Beaver says she'll continue working out and hitting the twice-weekly pickup games, which she describes as highly competitive. "No one who plays plays nice," she says with a laugh.

A Different Victory

There's a silver lining to not winning an election for president of the **State Bar of Texas**, says **Andrew L. Strong**, a partner in **Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman**. He ran for the post in 2006 and lost to **Vinson & Elkins** partner **Gib Walton**. Without the extra time commitment, Strong was able to increase his triathlon training and enter his first Ironman competition. The Ironman is a grueling type of triathlon that consists of a 2.4-mile swim followed by a 112-mile bike ride and topped off with a full 26.2-mile marathon. "It's a great way to stay healthy," Strong says. "It's almost like preparing for trial. Completing is like the verdict." Right now, Strong, 42, is preparing to compete on Oct. 11 in the Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii. He has run three Ironman races so far and is hoping, this time around, to beat his previous time of 10 hours and 15 minutes and complete the race 30 minutes faster. Strong, who practices environmental and natural resources law and is a former president of the **Texas Young Lawyers Association**, is a former Texas A&M University football player. He says he got out of shape, because he spent so much time doing volunteer work for the State Bar (he currently chairs its Legal Services to the Poor in Civil Matters Committee). In 2004, he resolved to lose weight and began with spin classes, which led to triathlons, half Ironman races and then the Ironman. Strong recommends triathlon training for attorneys who want to get in shape. "It helps me think clearer at work," he says. "I've burned off the anxious energy that builds up in this profession."

Competency Questions

Pending further order of the court, on Aug. 21, U.S. District Judge **Orlando Garcia** of the Western District of Texas in San Antonio stayed Jeffery Lee

Wood's execution, which was scheduled after 6 p.m. on Aug. 21. As noted in Garcia's opinion in *Wood v. Quarterman*, Wood claims in his motion for stay that he's incompetent to be executed. According to the opinion, Wood was sentenced to die for the 1996 murder of Kerrville store clerk Kris Keeran, whom Wood's accomplice, Danny Reneau, shot to death during a robbery. In support of his motion for stay, Wood argued, among other things, that the trial court found him incompetent to stand trial in May 1997 but found him competent only a few months later, even though he received no medical treatment or medication during the intervening period. Garcia's opinion provides the following procedural background on Wood's latest effort to prove his incompetence: On Aug. 14, Wood filed a motion in the state trial court, requesting the appointment of an attorney and mental health expert to assist him in proving his incompetence, but the trial court denied the motion Aug. 17, holding that Wood failed to make the "threshold showing" that he's incompetent, as required by Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Article 46.05. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals dismissed Wood's appeal on Aug. 19, and Wood filed motions for stay and for funding to obtain expert mental health assistance in the federal court. Garcia wrote in the opinion, "With all due respect, a system which requires an insane person to first make 'a substantial showing' of his own lack of mental capacity without the assistance of counsel or a mental health expert, in order to obtain such assistance is, by definition, an insane system." Lauri Saathoff, a spokeswoman for the **Texas Office of the Attorney General**, writes in an e-mail, "Our attorneys are reviewing the order and will make a decision whether to appeal." **Texas Defender Service** executive director **Andrea Keilen**, one of Wood's attorneys, says, "This is yet another Texas case that's about the insufficiency of the process. Clearly, Mr. Wood has not had an opportunity to present his mental health issues and have a court consider his mental health issues."

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