

YOUNG LAWYERS CONFERENCE

O'Kelly E. McWilliams III, Chair

The Young Lawyers Conference had an active and productive year. The YLC sponsored programs benefitted the public and the bar, including the Admission and Orientation Ceremony, the Virginia Domestic Violence Safety Project, the *Senior Citizen Handbook*, Immigration Outreach, No Bills Night and the Oliver Hill/Samuel Tucker Pre-Law Institute. The Emergency Legal Services Program enabled the conference to respond to the events of 9/11. The following are highlights from the past year.

Admission and Orientation Ceremony. The Admission and Orientation Ceremony for new admittees was held in October 2001 and June 2002, at the Richmond Marriott. More than 1,200 new lawyers were admitted to the bar.

Professional Development Conference. The YLC's Second Annual Professional Development Conference was held on March 15th and 16th in Charlottesville, Virginia. Young lawyers from around the Commonwealth gathered in the state of the art facilities of UVA's Darden School of Business and attended a variety of programs intended to help them improve their lives and practices. The section on Education, The Virginia Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and LEXIS/NEXIS provided support.

Community Law Week. The YLC and the VBA Young Lawyers Division conducted programs on immigrant outreach and tolerance education during Community Law Week. Both organizations used the tolerance education videotapes and training materials in elementary schools to help students understand and embrace their differences. There were more than six visits to classrooms by young lawyers.

The YLC also reached persons who were under-represented and in need of legal assistance. The conference increased the involvement of minority attorneys within our organization. A pilot program (with The Virginia Bar Association Young Lawyers Division) in Northern Virginia was aimed at the Hispanic community. It consisted of preparation and distribution of informational pamphlets to Spanish speaking attorneys and court personnel. It informed them of immigration ramifications related to criminal charges and convictions.

The YLC distributed *Senior Citizen Handbooks* (Spanish) and brochures from Legal Aid.

Emergency Legal Services. Following the shocking and tragic events of September 11, Emergency Legal Services offered advice and assistance to victims of the terrorist attack at the Pentagon, and their families, through a Virginia lawyer referral hotline. It included information on social security claims, unemployment benefits, foreclosure and military issues. The hotline also was activated due to flooding in Southwest Virginia.

The Oliver Hill/Samuel Tucker Pre-Law Institute. The committee sponsored the institute in July at the University of Richmond. Designed for high school students, it included sessions on mock law classes, mock trial classes, career opportunities in the law, test taking-strategies, the college admission process, the Virginia State Bar character and fitness requirements, field trips, guest lectures and research and writing competitions. The faculty was comprised of law school professors, judges, visiting guest lecturers, state and local bar association members, college students and high school teachers.

Crime Victim Compensation Act. The YLC Pro Bono Committee initiated the Crime Victim Compensation Act in 2000. Under Virginia state law, victims of crime can receive compensation for physical injuries, funeral expense and counseling services resulting from the commission of a crime against them. In order to receive compensation, victims must apply to a state-sponsored fund that is funded by criminal fines and federal grants.

The program trained lawyers to provide pro bono legal services to victims who have been denied compensation by the Worker's Compensation Commissioner. Although crime victims can appeal a denial of their claims to the full body of the Worker's Compensation Commission, they routinely cannot afford counsel. The YLC committee conducted training sessions in a number of localities across the state to create a network of lawyers to take on these cases.

General Assembly Visits. The YLC hosted several high school and middle school students on visits to the General Assembly.

Circuit Representatives. The majority of YLC circuit representatives planned CLEs on ethics and conducted training for the Emergency Legal Services Committee. Many of them also planned mock trials, distributed *Senior Citizen Handbooks* and participated in immigrant outreach programs.

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Ongoing Programs. The YLC continued the following programs: No Bills Night, Access to Legal Services, Pro-Bono, Minority Pre-law Conference, Bench-Bar Dinner, First Day in Practice (with the General Practice Section), National Trial Competition, the *Docket Call* and Children and the Law and Public Education. We continued the Virginia Domestic Violence Safety Program. We will continue to develop the Peer Mediation Project.

Nominating Committee. The following individuals will serve on the YLC Board of Governors for 2002–2003:

President—Lori Elliott

President-elect—Kathleen Uston

Secretary—Savalle Sims

1st District—Holly Cox

2nd District—Jacqueline McIntryre

3rd District—Shawn Copeland

4th District—Kellye Curtis Clarke

5th District—Dan Gray

6th District—George Snead

7th District—Mary L. Daniel

8th District—Jimmy Robinson, Jr.

9th District—Greg Casker

10th District—Eric Thiessen

At Large Representative—Maya Eckstein

At Large Representative—Donald Haddock

At Large Representative—Robin J. Kegley

At Large Representative—Katrina Randolph

At Large Representative—Jennifer Short

