

REPORTS OF SPECIAL BOARDS

CONFERENCE OF LOCAL BAR ASSOCIATIONS

Janine M. Saxe, Chair

The past year was a busy and productive one for the Conference of Local Bar Associations (CLBA). With the support and direction of its executive committee, the conference sought to enhance the relationship between the Virginia State Bar (VSB) and local bar associations throughout Virginia. This effort included the creation of increased opportunities for bar leaders and members to meet and share information, to highlight innovative bar programs and to learn about the excellent resources available through the VSB.

The 2003 Bar Leaders Institutes (BLI) were held in March at the T.C. Williams School of Law at the University of Richmond and at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon. The BLIs included panel discussions on multi-bar partnering opportunities, CLE preparation and presentation, and professionalism and civility from a judicial point of view. Virginia Supreme Court Chief Justice Leroy R. Hassell, Sr., inspired Richmond attendees with his remarks regarding judicial independence. In his luncheon address to Abingdon BLI attendees, Dr. Thomas R. Morris, president of Emory and Henry College, provided humor and insight into the state and national political scene.

Thanks to another generous grant from the Virginia Law Foundation (VLF), the CLBA published a Spanish language version of the *So You're 18* handbook—expanded to include an immigration section. With the assistance of local bar associations, the booklets were distributed to high schools, libraries, juvenile courts and other agencies throughout Virginia. Looking ahead to 2004, the VLF granted the conference funds to prepare and distribute a Vietnamese version of the booklet.

At the VSB annual meeting in June, the CLBA presented its Bar Leader of the Year award to Mary M. Benzinger—an outstanding and dedicated leader of the Arlington Bar Association. The CLBA also recognized many remarkable local and specialty bar programs with awards of merit and certificates of achievement.

Many thanks to my fellow executive committee members for their continuing commitment to the work of the CLBA, and to Barbara Allen and Paulette Davidson for their tireless assistance to the conference. Thanks also to bar members throughout Virginia for their enthusiastic support of their local bar associations.

