



SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTION OF FEE DISPUTES

Frank W. Rogers III, chair

In the 2005–2006 Virginia State Bar fiscal year, the Special Committee on Resolution of Fee Disputes has instituted significant changes in the Fee Dispute Resolution Program (FDRP). The FDRP rules and guidelines have been revised, and mediation will soon be included as an additional means to resolve fee disputes between lawyers and clients.

The committee plans four training sessions this fall, at locations across the state. The training opportunities will be for mediators, new arbitrators, and previously trained arbitrators. The committee expects the new and improved FDRP to be fully functional by the end of calendar year 2006.

The committee in April 2006 convened the first-ever meeting of the chairs of circuit fee dispute committees. This provided a collaborative, information-sharing forum for those responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the local committees. The committee now includes three circuit committee chairs among its members.

At the urging of the special committee, circuit committee chairs have been encouraged to revitalize and strengthen local committee membership. Most committees are in the process of recruiting new lawyer and nonlawyer arbitrators, and are molding certified mediators into local committee membership. All of this is in preparation for the fall training sessions. If, as expected, the FDRP is fully and effectively functioning on schedule, the committee plans to turn its attention to ways to increase awareness of the program among attorneys and the general public, and ways to encourage its use—especially by lawyers.

The following individuals have worked extensively and diligently last year on behalf of the committee: Geetha Ravindra, vice chair; Deborah Marie Costello, Edward Allen Newcomb, Stephen E. Scarce, Timothy T. Szabo, Thomas J. Gallagher, Anthony F. Troy, George B. Mason Jr., Mark D. Seidelson and Robert S. Ballou. I would like to also personally thank Barbara O. Allen and Paulette J. Davidson of the Virginia State Bar staff for their hard work.

