



# LOCAL BAR Connection

Summer 2003

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## Chief Justice Seeks Bar Leaders Input for Volunteer Program

**H**ow many times in the past year have you personally been asked to help someone locate an affordable attorney in a contested custody matter? If you are a local bar president, the answer probably is: all too frequently. Well, help may be at hand if our new Chief Justice has his way.


On numerous occasions this year Chief Justice Leroy R. Hassell, Sr., has underscored the need for attorneys to help make affordable legal counsel available to parties in child custody cases. He delivered the message during his swearing-in ceremony in February, in his inaugural speech in May before the Judicial Conference of Virginia and, more recently, in less formal settings across the Commonwealth where he has been sharing his thoughts on the subject in meetings with representatives of law firms, bar associations and legal services providers.

With the appointment of attorney John M. Oakey, Jr., to chair a special study commission on the subject, Chief Justice Hassell has taken a step closer toward implementing his proposal. In view of the measurable benefits to children who maintain post-litigation contact with next-of-kin, he wants to make pro bono, sliding and reduced-fee services available to more parents with low incomes or modest means.

Chief Justice Hassell has repeatedly said that parents in domestic relations disputes should not have to proceed without an attorney when a court considers physical custody of a child. Trained, committed advocates are indispensable, he feels, in such emotionally-charged proceedings.

The Chief Justice is seeking input from bar leaders, members of the bench who deal with these issues and other interested parties who have ideas to share about ways to increase the pool of dedicated volunteers and other public service-minded lawyers.

A former litigation attorney and present Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, Mr. Oakey is the immediate-past chair of the Pro Bono Committee of the

Bar Association of the City of Richmond (RBA). He is a recipient of the RBA's prestigious John C. Kenny Pro Bono Award and a natural choice to head the initiative's study group. John says he learned family law after his retirement as he waded through contested domestic relations cases on behalf of pro bono clients and those found "over-income" for help from legal aid. He feels that this is an area where lawyers can really make a difference. 



*Affordable and pro bono representation in child custody cases tops Chief Justice Hassell's priority list.*

Replies should be addressed to the Chief Justice in care of Mr. Oakey at McGuireWoods LLP, One James Center, 901 East Cary Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219-4030.

## LETTER from the Chair

The one problem with becoming chair of the Conference of Local and Specialty Bar Associations is having to write this column for each edition of the *Local Bar Connection*. Sitting in Virginia Beach in June, it's hard to articulate my vision for a bar year that doesn't begin for several months.

The CLBA's annual breakfast/meeting was its usual resounding success for those willing to attend a 7:30 A.M. meeting. We distributed seven Awards of Merit, nine Certificates of Achievement and recognized Mary Benzinger of the Arlington County Bar as Bar Leader of the Year. In each edition of the *Local Bar Connection* we will highlight some of the outstanding programs that local bars around the state have developed. Please use these programs as a resource when your organization is looking for new ideas.

In addition to the two Bar Leaders Institutes in March and the publication of the *So You're 18* handbook, a new program the conference will be implementing this year is the ABA's "Dialogue on Freedom." We hope to choose an urban and a rural bar association to implement the program at a local high school and "engage high school students in a dialogue that explores American civic values and traditions" in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. More information about "Dialogue on Freedom" will be included in later editions of the *Local Bar Connection*.

I would like to thank Janine Saxe for her leadership and dedication as conference chair last year. Through her hard work we were able to publish the *So You're 18* handbook in Spanish and set the groundwork to print it in Vietnamese this year.

Thanks also to Aubrey Rosser for his many years of service—and to Butler Barrett—both of whom leave our conference this year. To the new members of the conference: Nancy Reed from the Page County Bar, George Eliades from the Hopewell Bar and Nancy Dickenson from the Russell County Bar—welcome aboard! We look forward to sharing your innovative ideas during the next year. Finally, I want to thank Barbara Allen of the Virginia State Bar and her assistant, Paulette Davidson, for their constant hard work and skills in steering this conference on course.

I may hesitate to write it, but I am looking forward to having an exciting year as conference chair. There are lots of changes in the works, and it should be a great year. Please contact me with all the innovative programs your bar is doing so I can pass them along throughout the rest of the state. 🌸



Judy Rosenblatt

## Conference of Local Bar Associations Executive Committee 2003–2004

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Among the members of the CLBA Executive Committee are (l-r): Janet Palmer, secretary; Aubrey Rosser, past chair; Judy Rosenblatt, chair; Manny Capsalis, chair-elect; Tracy Giles and Giff Hampshire.

# Three New Members Join CLBA Board

## Nancy C. Dickenson

Lebanon



A native of Russell County, Virginia, Nancy Dickenson has been a lawyer in the small town of Lebanon for the past 10 years. Her general practice includes real estate, domestic relations, wills and estates and municipal and criminal representation. She also serves as substitute judge for District Court of the 29th Judicial Circuit and was

appointed commonwealth's attorney for Russell County from 1994-95. Dickenson is a member of her district's disciplinary committee and is a past president of the Russell County Bar Association. She is a graduate of Randolph-Macon College and the T.C. Williams School of Law at the University of Richmond.

## Nancy Marie Reed

Luray



Nancy Reed moved to Virginia from her native Illinois in 1977. After attending the College of William and Mary for both undergraduate and law school, she moved to Luray in 1984 where she still resides and has practiced law (primarily domestic) since 1992. From 1984 to 1991, she practiced in Harrisonburg and was a

member of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Bar. She is now a member of the Page County Bar and is busy with its Law-Related Education Project. Besides her private law practice, which she shares with her husband (Reed & Reed, P.C.), Reed also serves part-time as assistant commonwealth's attorney and is actively involved with Blue Ridge Legal Services.

## P. George Eliades

Hopewell

P. George Eliades II is a partner in The Eliades Law Firm, located in Hopewell, where he practices civil litigation and criminal defense. A native of Petersburg, he received his undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia, a diploma in common law from the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, U.K., and J.D. from the University of Miami. Eliades is a member of the Hopewell and Chesterfield County Bar Associations, and he currently serves as president of the Hopewell Bar. He is a member of

the Commercial Law League of America and is chairman of its Young Members' Section. He is also a member of the National Association of Retail Collections Attorneys, the Virginia Creditor's Bar Association, the Homebuilders Association of Southside Virginia and the American Hellenic Education Progressive Association. Eliades practices law with his wife, Adrienne George-Eliades, who is also a principal in the firm.

## LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS IN YOUR AREA?

The VSB Young Lawyers Conference's Admissions and Orientation Ceremony will take place on October 29, 2003. If you wish to have membership information and/or applications handed out by the VSB Local/Specialty Bar Relations office, please contact Paulette Davidson at (804) 775-0521 or via e-mail [davidson@vsb.org](mailto:davidson@vsb.org).

## CLBA Information Available on the Web

The Web site for the CLBA is up and running. In addition to providing general information on the CLBA, the site contains information useful to both CLBA members and the general public, including:

- local and specialty bar contacts
- calendar of events
- listing of publication and library resources
- listing of CLEs
- information on Awards of Merit and the Bar Leader of the Year Award
- downloadable versions of *Local Bar Connection* and *So You're 18*

[www.vsb.org/clba](http://www.vsb.org/clba)

# New Resource Guide Could Enhance Lawyer Image

## *Can local bars be a key to improving lawyer image?*

VSB past-president Ben DiMuro seems to think so. Moreover, he's created the documentation to prove it.

The ever-sticky issue of lawyer image was a major initiative of DiMuro's 2002–2003 presidency. "It has been a thorn in my side for a long time," states DiMuro. "Growing up in Round Lake, Illinois, population 500, the two lawyers in town were among the most respected and outstanding civic leaders. Everyone looked up to them. Now, all that has changed."

All too aware that it often only takes one well-publicized frivolous lawsuit to undo the many positive things that lawyers do, DiMuro was look-

ing for something tangible to put forward to the public to help reverse the tarnished image. It didn't take too many visits to local and specialty bars throughout the state to figure out what that tangible could be. "Every time I traveled to a local bar meeting," he recalls, "I would ask the members what they were most proud of. The answer was always the same, and it would have to do with the civic and community activities that local bars sponsor. In many cases, I was stunned at the breadth and depth of these projects. Before I knew it, I had my project: a resource guide of local bar activities to distribute to civic and community organizations."

After nearly a year of writing letters to local and specialty bars, asking them to document their civic and community activities, DiMuro debuted *Legally Informed* at the Virginia State Bar's Annual Meeting in Virginia Beach. To date, the guide lists and describes more than 50 programs and services sponsored by local and specialty bars, including legal advice hotlines, scholarships and competitions and a wide variety of civic and community programs. And although only 22 bars responded to DiMuro's initial query, he is confident that as more bars see the finished product, those numbers will grow. "I already got a few 'gee, how come we're not in the guide' reactions after I passed it around at the annual meeting. If we let this project mature and continue to add to it, I

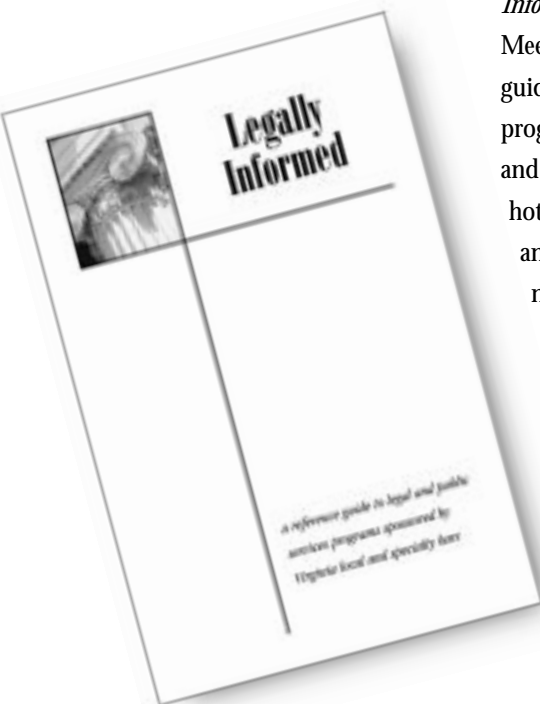


*DiMuro encourages local and specialty bar outreach projects.*

think we may be able to get sponsorship and mass produce 10,000 to 20,000 copies for use by civic meetings, the general assembly and the VSB speaker's bureau."

But ultimately, says DiMuro, this project is more than about touting the work of the bars. "Although it began as a means to promote a more positive image of lawyers, it really serves a number of other valuable functions: Given time it can be a statewide repository for bar projects and also a wonderful resource for Virginia's citizens on what's out there in terms of legal help and education." 🌿

*For a copy of Legally Informed, or to include your bar's projects in its contents, please phone or e-mail Paulette Davidson, (804) 775-0521 or [davidson@vsb.org](mailto:davidson@vsb.org).*



# VIRGINIA DEFENSE BAR FORMS INDIGENT COALITION

Over the past two years, a number of developments have moved indigent defense into the spotlight in Virginia, including legislative attention on post-conviction issues like the 21-day rule, DNA testing, high-profile exonerations and the Virginia State Crime Commission's ongoing study of indigent defense services in the commonwealth.

In 2001, several members of the Virginia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, including representatives from each of the major statewide bar associations, along with the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, formed the Virginia Indigent Defense Coalition (VIDC). The coalition seeks to improve the quality of defense services for the poor by enhancing standards of representation and increasing resources and funding available to counsel for poor defendants in our juvenile and criminal justice system. It quickly recognized the need for a broader reform cam-

paign that would be developed in partnership with a diverse group of community-based organizations and leaders. The VIDC has since been strengthened through the expertise and leadership of key statewide community organizations that include the Virginia Trial Lawyers Foundation, the Virginia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the Virginia Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants, the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy and the Mid-Atlantic Juvenile Defender Center.

In March 2003, VIDC recognized the 40th anniversary of *Gideon v. Wainwright*, which guaranteed legal counsel for poor people charged with a crime, by issuing a report card on Virginia's indigent defense system. The coalition used the ABA's Ten Principles of a Public Defense Delivery System as the grading standards for the report card. The poor grades the system received demonstrate that Virginians who

are unable to afford lawyers are often at the mercy of a one-sided criminal justice system because their court-appointed lawyers and public defenders lack the resources necessary to adequately represent their clients.

As a follow-up to the report card, the VIDC will be unveiling *Standards of Justice* in November 2003. The standards will give specific criteria for improvement to Virginia's indigent defense system. VIDC recognizes that unless we change Virginia's public defense system, we have no way to protect the innocent and secure justice for the poor.

For a copy of the report card or to learn more about the VIDC, please visit the Web site at [www.vidcoalition.org](http://www.vidcoalition.org) or contact Betsy Edwards at [bedwards@vidcoalition.org](mailto:bedwards@vidcoalition.org) or (804) 343-1712. 🌿

## For Seniors About Seniors By Seniors

Designed to meet the needs of Virginia's elder citizens, the *Senior Citizens Handbook* is available in English or Spanish. Topics include:

- Social Security • Food Stamps
- Estate and Gift Taxes • Medicare & Medicaid • Alzheimer's Disease • Choosing a Care Facility • Landlord/Tenant Issues
- Advance Directives • Protecting Yourself as a Consumer • Age & Disability Discrimination
- Elder Abuse • Helpful Contacts

See [www.vsb.org/publications](http://www.vsb.org/publications) for details.  
*English version available online only at this time.*



Help yourself,  
your profession  
and the people  
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Join Virginia Lawyer  
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See application at  
[www.vsb.org/vlrs.html](http://www.vsb.org/vlrs.html).

# Local & Specialty Bar Associations Honored for Public Service Projects

The Conference of Local Bar Associations recognizes outstanding public service projects conducted by local and specialty bars throughout the Commonwealth each year by presenting Awards of Merit and Certificates of Achievement. The Award of Merit is the highest recognition given to a project; the Certificate of Achievement recognizes programs and projects of high distinction. The awards were presented at the Bar Leaders Breakfast on Friday, June 20th at the Virginia State Bar's Annual Meeting in Virginia Beach.

## Awards of Merit

**Norfolk & Portsmouth Bar Association:** *Kids in Crisis: Community-Based Solutions Town Hall Meeting* on youth crime and violence in the community; and the twelfth annual *Legal Food Frenzy*, which pits local law firms in a competition to collect food for the hungry and working poor.

**Fairfax County Bar Association:** *Jazz for Justice*, a fundraising concert that combined the efforts of members of the Fairfax Bar with musicians from the George Mason University music department. *Comparative Jurisdiction Seminar*, a joint initiative of the Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax and Prince William County bar associations comparing judicial procedures unique to each district.

**Prince William County Bar Association:** *PWCBA Web site* providing online access to general information about the bar allowing the public to search members by firm name, family name or legal practice area.

**Bar Association of the City of Richmond:** *Independence of the Judiciary Symposium*, a symposium on the topic of judicial independence honoring Chief Justice Harry L. Carrico.

**Virginia Association of Black Women Attorneys:** *Step by Step*, an educational video that appraises victims of domestic violence about what the legal system offers them as protection from such violence.

## Certificates of Achievement

**Fairfax Bar Association:** *Online Judicial Evaluation Program*, offering bar members the opportunity to evaluate judges online and *Online Judicial Screening*, allowing members to screen judicial candidates online.

**Henrico County Bar Association:** *School Supply Challenge*, raising money for school supplies for the children of Highland Springs Elementary School; *Project Read Now*, a mentoring program; and, a *Mock Interview Program* teaching high school students interviewing skills for college and future employment.

**Metropolitan Richmond Women's Bar Association:** *Legislative Luncheon and Panel Presentation*, which invites state legislators to address the bar's membership on legislation that each sponsored or co-sponsored in the current General Assembly session.



**Fairfax Bar:** Carol Schrier-Polak accepts an Award of Merit for the *Jazz for Justice* project. Presenting the award are Ben DiMuro, VSB immediate past-president, and Aubrey Rosser, CLBA past chair.

**Prince William County Bar Association:** *Beat the Odds* program, which offers educational and vocational scholarships and other awards to area youth in the juvenile justice system; and *Legislative Issues Forum* bringing lawmakers and lawyers together to discuss issues of public policy of mutual concern to both groups.

**Richmond Chapter of the Old Dominion Bar Association:** *Oliver W. Hill/Samuel W. Tucker Law School Scholarships* for Virginia law schools; and *Brown v Board of Education Mock Trial* conducted at the Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center in Richmond.

**Virginia Beach Bar Association:** *Law Day Programs* featuring an "Ask a Lawyer," event and a *Mock Arrest and Trial Program* at the Legal Studies Academy located at First Colonial High School.

**Virginia Association of Black Women Attorneys:** *Silent Witness Memorial*, a traveling exhibit that memorializes 33 female victims of domestic violence in the commonwealth.



*Old Dominion Bar Richmond Chapter: Tracey Stith, Past President Alex Taylor and Jennifer Borum accept a Certificate of Achievement for the Oliver W. Hill/Samuel W. Tucker Scholarship and Brown v Board of Education Mock Trial. Presenting the award are Ben DiMuro, VSB immediate past-president, and Aubrey Rosser, CLBA past chair.*



*Virginia Association of Black Women Attorneys: Ida McPherson, President, and Roslyn Whitaker-Heck, director of Mass Communications and Journalism for Hampton University, receive a Certificate of Achievement for their Victims of Domestic Violence, Step by Step Video. Presenting the award are Ben DiMuro, VSB immediate past-president, and Aubrey Rosser, CLBA past chair.*

## Norfolk & Portsmouth Bar Association Awarded Top Honor for Town Hall Meeting

Eight years ago, the Norfolk & Portsmouth Bar Association sponsored a highly successful town hall meeting on juvenile justice. Attorney Cheshire I'Anson Eveleigh was on the committee for coordinating the event. She knew a good thing when she saw it.

Moving forward to 2002, and now serving as president of the bar, Eveleigh decided it was time to repeat history. "From serving on the committee in '95, I saw first-hand that the town hall meeting was not only successful from an educational standpoint, but also from one of outreach. It provided a clear example of how a bar association can give back to the community and show that lawyers really do care and do more than go to work and to court each day."

Eveleigh determined that the subject for the new town hall meeting would again focus on the adolescent, but this time on the topics of youth crime and violence. To help underwrite the event the bar applied for, and was awarded, a grant from the Virginia Law Foundation. After nearly a year of careful planning by co-chairs Kelly St. Clair and The Honorable M. Randolph Carlson

II, and a committee that included senior partners, young associates and law students, the Norfolk & Portsmouth Bar Association presented "Kids in Crisis: Community Based Solutions," a town hall meeting held on the evening of April 3, 2003, at the Norview Middle School. Nearly 250 local citizens attended.

Moderated by well-known local television anchor, Barbara Ciara, and keynoted by Jerrauld Jones, director of the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, the evening culminated in a panel discussion by experts who responded to a wide range of audience questions submitted on index cards and selected by panel members. The bar also invited exhibitors, such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, to display posters and materials in the lobby to provide parents and concerned adults with ideas for alternative activities for at-risk youths.

According to Donna Bausch, the bar's executive director, a town hall meeting is an excellent event for any bar to consider holding. She offers the following advice: "It is helpful to partner with the public schools



*Kelly B. St. Clair, co-chair, Barbara Ciara, moderator and The Honorable M. Randolph Carlson II, co-chair.*

and the juvenile court to identify the key players in the area who should be panelists. Another crucial factor is timely publicity to attract a large audience. Costs can be kept to a minimum by using a public school as a venue and local media for publicity."

For its work on the town hall meeting, the Norfolk & Portsmouth Bar Association was presented an Award of Merit at the VSB's annual meeting on June 20 in Virginia Beach. 🌸

# ARLINGTON BAR “STAR” RECEIVES WELL-DESERVED RECOGNITION

From developing a mentoring program, to constructing computer databases, to slinging burgers at the annual picnic (*on her birthday, no less!*), Mary Benzinger has seemingly done it all for the Arlington County Bar Association. Little wonder she was nominated and awarded the honor of 2003 Local Bar Leader of the Year at the Virginia State Bar’s Annual Meeting in Virginia Beach. For ACBA’s nominating committee, it provided this dedicated member with some well-deserved, documented recognition. “Never in our combined recollection has Mary declined any request to provide service to our bar. She has always given her very best efforts to any task she has undertaken, and her efforts have always been superlative in both quality and scope.”

Benzinger joined the Arlington bar in 1989, a few years after receiving her law degree from the Washington College of Law at American University. By 1992, she was chairing the bar’s Christmas in April project, which is part of a national initiative that repairs homes for the disabled and indigent. She has chaired that project ever since and was awarded the ACBA’s President’s Award in 1997 for outstanding contributions to the bar as its coordinator. In 2001, she co-founded, along with member Paul Barnett, the Earl E. Shaffer Mentoring Program. The program pairs


newer and less experienced practitioners with those more seasoned. Its success is evident by the number of mentoring volunteers: 40 members at last count. As if all that activity was not enough, Benzinger has been busy constructing computer databases for ACBA’s membership and lawyer referral services and improving the new-member welcome packets. “We used to just send a letter after the initial contact with a new member,” she says. “But that didn’t seem like enough to encourage someone new to become more actively involved and to get to know us better. Now we include a whole packet of materials: our journal, mentoring application form, CLE information, credit union application and a list of officers among other things.”

Is there any job remaining for this stellar bar member?

Actually, yes . . . . On July 1, she assumed the office of president-elect for 2003, which will be followed by serving as president in 2004, and past-president in 2005. Characteristically, the three-year time commitment doesn’t seem to bother Benzinger. “I work for the bar because it is both a professional and fun thing to do. I meet other attorneys, swap ideas and learn new things in the process. But mostly, I do it because working for the bar helps promote



*Local Bar Leader of the year Mary Benzinger has participated in Arlington Bar events since 1989 and has served in numerous leadership roles.*

the image of lawyers in the community. With all the negative press, it’s a great way to get the word out that we are really pretty nice ‘guys’ after all.” 

*Mary Benzinger practices law with her husband, Raymond, in the firm of Benzinger & Benzinger in Arlington. Her primary practice is civil litigation, including domestic and commercial cases. Raised in Andover, Massachusetts, she attended Phillips Academy before going on for her undergraduate degree at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.*

## Call for Local Bar Speakers Bureau Participation

Does your bar association have a speakers bureau? If so, the VSB Speakers Bureau would like to work with you.

In an effort to fill speaker requests more efficiently, the VSB Speakers Bureau would like to establish a cooperative referral policy with local bar associations. Since a number of local bar associations may have their own speakers bureau, the VSB would like to coordinate with them for administering requests for speakers in their own areas.

Ideally, if a request comes to the VSB speakers bureau in an area that has a local bar speakers bureau, the VSB liaison could contact the appropriate person at the local bar with the request information. Sometimes the VSB receives requests it cannot fill simply because it may have few or no volunteers in a particular geographic area. Such cooperation could help both the VSB and local bars better serve the people of Virginia.

If your bar association is interested in entering into such a referral policy with the VSB, please contact us with the name and contact information of the local bar speakers bureau coordinator. Or if you and other members of your bar are interested in serving on the VSB Speakers Bureau, please visit: [www.vsb.org/publications/speakersbureau/index.html](http://www.vsb.org/publications/speakersbureau/index.html). Jennifer Sparger, e-mail: [sparger@vsb.org](mailto:sparger@vsb.org), phone: (804) 775-0586



## The Idea Bar

# Is your bar looking to sponsor a unique program for the remainder of 2003?

**The Senior Lawyers Conference has an idea for you, which offers reimbursement for a portion of your costs.**


The week of October 19 through 25 is officially designated as National Health Care Decisions Week, designed to raise public awareness of the need to plan for health care decisions that may arise at the end of life. Currently, only a small percentage of adults make their wishes known about these important decisions through a living will or other advance directives. The absence of such legal documents not only makes things difficult for family members, but also may deprive organ recipients of vital tissues and organs that a potential donor was willing to give had his or her wishes been known. Did you know, for example, that:

- One individual organ donor can save or improve the quality of life for more than 50 people who suffer from organ failure, congenital defects, bone cancer, orthopedic injuries and burns or blindness.
- While over 24,000 organ transplants are performed each year, the waiting list of those needing a transplant has grown to more than 80,000.

The ABA and Senior Lawyers Conference hope that bar associations will host programs that address the need for medical directives and related issues. To date, over 60 bar associations nationwide have co-sponsored programs with local medical partners on the topics of health care directives and organ and tissue donation. Participating bars will receive up to \$500 reimbursement

for materials and advertising costs per event from the ABA. Although October 19–25 is the official National Health Care Decisions Week, the event can be held any time during the remainder of 2003.

If you are interested in setting up a program in your area, please contact Paulette Davidson at the Virginia State Bar at (804) 775-0521 or [davidson@vsb.org](mailto:davidson@vsb.org) for more information. Members of the VSB's Senior Lawyers Conference are also ready and able to assist you with your program, if needed.

More information can also be found on the ABA Web site at [www.abanet.org/rppt/committees/pt/e3/hcdw/home.html](http://www.abanet.org/rppt/committees/pt/e3/hcdw/home.html). 



## Spotlight on . . .

# Charlottesville Bar Plays Major Role in Legal Aid Justice Center's Capital Campaign

According to Josephine Conover, development coordinator of Charlottesville's Legal Aid Justice Center, the Charlottesville-Albemarle Bar Association should be particularly proud of its philanthropic nature. Understanding the changing nature of funding and the important role of legal aid in our society, the 350-member local bar donated a total of over \$300,000 to the Legal Aid Justice Center's \$2,000,000 Capital Campaign. She credits attorneys Ed Lowry, of Michie, Hamlett, Lowry, Rasmussen & Tweel; Rick Richmond, of Richmond & Fishburne; and Ralph Feil, of Feil, Pettit & Williams, for providing exceptional lead support in this effort.

After two years of searching unsuccessfully for an office space to rent in downtown Charlottesville, the Legal Aid Justice Center realized that it would have to purchase a building if the organization were to remain in an accessible location. With no spaces available at a reasonable rate large enough to house the growing organization, Legal Aid secured a building site at 1000 Preston



*New home of Charlottesville Legal Aid Justice Center*

Avenue to permanently house its offices. Built in 1938, the building was occupied by a beauty supply company that had been located there since the 1950s. Legal Aid hired Marthe Rowan, of RBGC Architecture, as the project architect, and Jack Stoner, of Alexander Nicholson, as the contractor. Renovations began in March 2002 and were completed in January 2003.

Centrally located, the building lies at the center of the Region Ten Planning District, a five county area served by Legal Aid's Charlottesville office, and is in a small commercial district, between two neighborhoods that are home to a number of clients, including Charlottesville's largest public housing community. It is

**Spotlight** continued on page 12

## HIGHLIGHTS from local bars

### Up and Coming

Ready for an evening of great music for a good cause? The **Greater Richmond Bar Foundation**, which conducts charitable work for six local bar associations (Richmond, Hanover, Henrico, Chesterfield, Old Dominion/Richmond Chapter and Metro Richmond Women's), is holding its Lawyer Palooza fundraiser on Friday, September 12. The event, featuring three "lawyer bands," *Legacy Bluegrass*, *The Members* and *The Captones*, will be held from 7:00 to 11:00 P.M. at the ACCA Temple Activity Center, 1712 Bellevue Avenue, in Richmond. Tickets are \$20 in advance (includes admission and beverages) or \$25 at the door and can be obtained by calling (804) 780-2600. Proceeds will benefit the Greater Richmond Bar Foundation's pro bono and educational projects.

The **Metropolitan Richmond Women's Bar Association** announces the following schedule for its 2003–2004 monthly luncheons: September 10, 2003; October 1, 2003; November 5, 2003; December 3, 2003; January 7, 2004; February 4, 2004; March 3, 2004; April 7, 2004; and

May 5, 2004. The bar is accepting nominations for its 2003 Women of Achievement Awards. For more information, please contact Kim Ramsey at (804) 697-5116 or [kramsey@fgb.com](mailto:kramsey@fgb.com). The recipient will be announced at their December awards luncheon.

*Charting Your Course* is the nautical theme of the **Fairfax County Bar's** Bench-Bar Conference to be held at the Tide's Inn, November 6–8, 2003. Topics will include *Calming the Waves* (Managing the Difficult Opposing Counsel); *Trimming the Sails* (Establishing Income in Spousal and Child Support Cases); and *Running a Tight Ship* (Civil Litigation Program) among others. Also included in the program is an oyster roast and a night golf outing complete with glow sticks and golf balls, sponsored by the **Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association**. Cost is \$290 for members and \$325 for non-members. Includes 7 hours of MCLE credits and 2 ethics credits (pending). For more information, contact the Fairfax Bar Association at (703) 246-2740 or [nemard@fairfaxbar.org](mailto:nemard@fairfaxbar.org).

The **Local Governments Attorneys of Virginia** (LGA) will be holding its fall 2003 Conference on September 18–20 at the Williamsburg Marriott Hotel. Topics will include the impact of homeland security and immunities of governmental entities and attempts to skirt sovereign immunity. Presentation of the Edward J. Finnegan Distinguished Service Award will be given at the Friday evening banquet. For more information, contact Leisa Stelle at (804) 371-0202, [lrs5c@virginia.edu](mailto:lrs5c@virginia.edu).

The **Prince William County Bar Association** is planning its third annual Uncontested Divorce CLE for October 15, 2003. This CLE, planned by the Family Law Committee, provides free training for those attorneys supporting the Uncontested Divorce Project in exchange for doing two pro bono uncontested divorces for legal aid over the next 12 months. For more information, contact Alissa Hudson at (703) 393-2306.

### Recent Local and Specialty Bar elections for the 2003–2004 bar year include the following:

The **Metropolitan Richmond Women's Bar Association**: **Stephanie E. Grana**, president; **Clair A. Harrington**, president-elect; **R. Jill Wells**, vice president; **Julie Whitlock**, secretary/historian; **Anne Marie Cushmac**, treasurer; **Carolyn A. White**, past president. Volunteers are needed to serve on the bar's various committees. Please contact one of the officers if you are interested.

**Louisa County Bar Association**: **Charles Purcell**, president and conference representative; **Fletcher W. Harkrader III**, vice-president; and **Joseph Bonistilli**, secretary-treasurer.

### Passing the Gavel

**Fairfax Bar Association**: **Richard John Ruddy, Jr.**, vice president; **Steven W. Ray**, treasurer; and **John 'Jack' R. Erickson**, secretary. Board of Directors: **David J. Gogal**, **David A. Hirsch**, and **Kyung 'Kathryn' Dickerson**. They join board members **Janine M. Saxe**, president; **John A. Wasowicz**, past-president; and **Sharon D. Nelson**, president-elect.

The **Northern Virginia Bankruptcy Bar Association**: **Alex Laughlin**, president; **Donald King**, past-president; **Thomas Repczynski**, president-elect; **Richard Stahl**, vice president; **Ann Kathan**, treasurer; and **Robert Marino**, secretary.

**Bristol Bar Association**: **Elizabeth Dillow**, president; **Dennis Godfrey**, president-elect; **Angela Figueiras**, secretary-treasurer; and **Christen Burholder**, conference representative.

**Scott County Bar Association**: **Michael Carrico**, president; **Kenneth Deskins**, vice-president; and **John Kilgore**, secretary-treasurer and conference representative.

**Salem-Roanoke County Bar Association**: **John Weber III**, president; **William Lindsey**, vice-president; **Marian Kelley**, 2nd vice-president; **Aaron Lavinder**, secretary-treasurer; **Thomas Bowers**, judge advocate; and **Joseph Obenshain**, conference representative.

**Virginia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers**: **Bruce Williamson, Jr.**, president; **Steven Benjamin**, president-elect; **Esther Windmueller**, vice president; **Charles Turbeville, Jr.**, secretary; and **Richard Gardiner**, treasurer.



## Around the Commonwealth

The **Roanoke Bar Association** was honored to welcome **The Honorable Leroy R. Hassell, Sr.**, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia at its Law Day celebration on May 1 at the Shenandoah Club. The Chief Justice spoke on the importance of community service and stewardship of the legal profession. Also in attendance were **Justices Steven Agee** and **Lawrence Koontz, Jr.**

The **Greater Peninsula Women's Bar** (representing the 7th, 8th and 9th judicial districts) held a successful annual meeting on June 26 in Williamsburg. Panel speakers included **Delegate Bob McDonnell** and **Delegate Bill Barlow** who spoke on the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program. In other news, the GPWB raised approximately \$4000 for the Avalon Battered Women's Shelter, the Transitions Domestic Violence Shelter and the Boys and Girls Club through its April foot race. Five members of the GPWB became judges: **Judy Kline, Peter Tench, David Pugh, Gary Mills** and **Bryant Sugg**.

Members of **The Virginia Bar Association** and the **West Virginia Bar**

**Association** held a joint summer meeting — their first such gathering since 1940 — July 10–13, 2003, at The Greenbrier. Special guest speakers included **U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller** of West Virginia, Virginia **Lieutenant Governor Tim Kaine** and American Bar Association **President A.P. Carlton, Jr.**, of Raleigh, N.C. The meeting featured a number of continuing legal education programs for attorneys on current legal issues, chief among which were general sessions on affirmative action, featuring the attorneys who argued the opposing sides in the University of Michigan case, and the hot-button issue of electronic access to court records.

The **Old Dominion Bar Association** held its 65th Annual Convention in Alexandria at the Alexandria Hilton, June 5th–8th, 2003. The convention was planned and hosted by the **Northern Virginia Black Attorneys Association**. A total of 17.5 hours of CLE credits were offered over the course of the convention weekend. Special luncheon and banquet speakers included former **Ambassador to Gambia George W. Haley**; the **Honorable Robert Bell**, chief judge of

the Court of Appeals of Maryland; and **Professor J. Clay Smith** of Howard University Law School. For any questions about this conference or other NOVABAA upcoming events, please contact Marcia K. Thompson at (703) 549-5152.

For the second consecutive year, the members of the **Lynchburg Bar Association** participated in the Central Virginia Mental Health Association's VIP walk on May 3. The lawyers' team walked and raised the second highest amount for a professional category, over \$1,600 in donations primarily from local bar members. These efforts and contributions help promote awareness and increase support for the critical mental health programs in Central Virginia. On another note, the Lynchburg Bar received a **Certificate of Recognition** from the Lynchburg City Schools on June 4. The bar was recognized for its 10 years of support and commitment to the Partners in Education program. Through this period, local bar members have volunteered in various activities in the schools including career day, Law Day and mock trials.

## Fairfax Bar Conciliation Program Receives National LexisNexis Community Outreach Award

The Fairfax Bar Conciliation Program was the recipient of the 2002–03 LexisNexis Community Outreach Award. The Conciliation Program, specifically the expansion into the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts, was chosen from a field of applicants including state and larger local bar programs from across the nation.

The 2003 LexisNexis Community & Educational Outreach Awards are designed to honor bar associations and bar foundations that are committed to public service. Awards are given to outstanding public service and law-related education programs

implemented during the 2002 calendar year. Judging was based on the following criteria: overall quality of the program; effectiveness of the project in achieving the desired objective; adaptability of the program by other bar associations/foundations; degree of innovation and originality in addressing problems in unique ways; size and diversity of target audience; and scope, importance and duration of benefits derived by target audience.

This program is due in large part to the Conciliation Program co-chairs Jay Myerson, Law Offices of Jay B. Myerson, and Joyce Henry-Schargarodski,

Schargarodski & Associates, P.L.C., and their co-coordinator Jen Hurwitz. The success of this program is also due to the many judges and attorney volunteers of the Fairfax Bar Association.

The award will be presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Bar Executives that precedes the ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco. To view the award winning Conciliation Program visit the National Association of Bar Executives Web site at [www.abanet.org/nabe/lexisawards/fairfax.pdf](http://www.abanet.org/nabe/lexisawards/fairfax.pdf).

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### Local Bar Connection

A newsletter published three times a year by the Virginia State Bar Conference of Local Bar Associations

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*The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Virginia State Bar.*

### Spotlight *continued from page 9*

also accessible to local attorneys, whose pro bono services are essential to the organization, and is in close proximity to the courts, which is equally important for clients, attorneys and staff.

In addition to providing legal representation to clients in need, the Legal Aid Justice Center continually seeks innovative ways to achieve economic and legal equity for its clients. Programs include:

- **Just Children**, dedicated to ensuring that Virginia's young people receive the help and support they need to be successful in their communities and schools and live their lives free from discrimination on the basis of race, disability or socio-economic status.
- **The Virginia Justice Center for Farm and Immigrant Workers**, supporting the efforts of hard-working farm workers, day laborers and low-wage immigrant workers to defend their rights in the workplace.
- **The Elder Law Clinic**, which will be established this fall in collaboration with the University of Virginia School of Law. With money from a grant from the Virginia Law Foundation, the clinic will provide legal support to families of long-term care residents as part of the newly formed Community Partnership for Improved Long-Term Care, a coalition of family members, Jefferson Area Board for the Aging staff, members of the medical profession and other concerned citizens.

For more information on the Legal Aid Justice Center, contact Josephine Conover at (434) 977-0553 or visit [www.justice4all.org](http://www.justice4all.org). 