

# One-on-One Bar Tutorial Program

by Donald J. Richardson

The One-on-One Bar Tutorial Program began in the summer of 1998 as a result of a conversation I had with Wade Berryhill, a professor at my alma mater, the T.C. Williams School of Law at the University of Richmond. Wade and I were discussing the bar passage rate among minorities who have taken the Virginia bar exam. I reminded Wade that several of the other African-Americans who graduated in my class had failed to pass the July 1997 bar exam. I told Wade that I wanted to do something to help make it easier for my friends and other African-Americans to pass the bar exam. I knew that Wade could offer some good advice on the subject because he has been teaching the Richmond Bar Review Course and tutoring students for the Virginia bar exam for more years than he cares to admit. I asked Wade if he would be willing to teach me how to tutor and prepare students for taking the essay portion of the Virginia bar exam.

After receiving the appropriate training from Wade, I began tutoring African-American graduates of T.C. Williams to take the essay portion of the Virginia bar exam. It is now known as the One-on-One Program. Tutor and student meet four times during the months of January and February or June and July—depending on whether the student is taking the February or July bar exam. Each of the four tutorial sessions lasts two hours. During each session, the person studying for the bar is required to give written answers to three or four essay questions. The tutor reviews each answer with the student. The tutor can test the student's knowledge of any of the subjects in the Virginia bar exam. The tutor is not paid for his or her services, and the student is not charged a fee. Currently, the program is offered only to individuals who have been unsuccessful in passing the bar after at least two attempts. To date, ten students have participated in the program. Of the ten, eight subsequently passed the bar exam. They said that the program helped them prepare for and pass the bar exam. It must be stressed, however, that the program is not a substitute for taking a bar review course. In fact, only individuals who are enrolled in a bar review course are eligible to participate.

Thanks to funding from Theophlise L. Twitty, Robert J. Grey, Jr., and the law firms of Williams, Mullen, Clark & Dobbins, P.C., and Condo & Masterman, P.C., the program will have five additional tutors. The tutors will receive the necessary materials, as well as training from Wade Berryhill, so that they can tutor individuals for the July 2001 bar exam. Once additional funding is received, the program will include all law schools in Virginia. Additionally, the program will include all minorities, as well as so-called "non-traditional" students. Non-traditional students include individuals who enroll in law school after having reached the age of thirty. Ultimately, the program will include minorities and non-traditional students who are taking the bar exam for the first time. 🍷