

YLC Served the Public and the Bar

Savalle C. Sims, 2004–2005 Young Lawyers Conference President

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During the past year, I had the privilege to work with talented, creative and dedicated young lawyers across the commonwealth—all of whom have sacrificed time from their families and professional obligations. YLC volunteers answered the call and went above and beyond to honor our profession and to improve the perception of our profession in the community. The YLC year could not have been successful without our volunteers and the help of non-young lawyers.

Throughout the year, the YLC served the public with a number of programs. In September, the YLC partnered with the Virginia State Board of Elections in its voter education initiative. The YLC distributed a “Know Your Rights and Responsibilities” brochure to more than one hundred thousand citizens. In partnership with The Virginia Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, the YLC’s Emergency Legal Services Committee provided assistance after tropical depression Gaston and hurricanes Frances and Ivan. The YLC also presented the American Bar Association’s Diversity Tolerance Initiative to more than two hundred third-grade students at Varina Elementary School.

During Community Law Week, the YLC tailored the American Bar Association’s “We the Jury” program to Virginia’s judicial system and presented it to more than six hundred high school students. Students participated in a mock *voir dire* and deliberated in connection with a civil or criminal case. The YLC’s Minority Pre-Law Conference in April at the University of Richmond’s T.C. Williams School of Law exposed students to all phases of a legal career, from the law school admissions process to the selection of career opportunities. In May, the YLC partnered with the VBA young lawyers to implement “Wills for Heroes” in Williamsburg. The YLC provided wills, advance medical directives and powers of attorneys to approximately two dozen Williamsburg first responders.

The YLC also served the bar. In March, the YLC hosted its fourth annual professional development conference in Charlottesville, featuring courses on transactions, in-house counsel and litigation. One of the highlights of the conference was one of the YLC’s jury-based initiatives for the year: “A View from the Box: A Panel Discussion of Judges, Trial Lawyers and Former Jurors.” The panel consisted of jurors from state and federal criminal and civil trials and noted litigators Craig S. Cooley and Julia B. Judkins. The Honorable James P. Jones of the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia served as moderator. In October and again in June, the YLC welcomed new attorneys to the Virginia State Bar at our admission and orientation ceremonies. At the VSB Annual Meeting in June, the YLC hosted an attorney general candidates’ debate.

At its annual luncheon, the YLC honored this year’s R. Edwin Burnette Jr. Young Lawyer of the Year award recipient, O’Kelly E. McWilliams III. O’Kelly exemplifies outstanding service to the YLC, the legal profession and the community.

As my year as president of the YLC comes to an end, it is my pleasure and privilege to pass the reigns of YLC leadership over to Jimmy F. Robinson Jr. Jimmy is a talented and creative lawyer with unending energy and dedication to the YLC. I am confident that you will enjoy working with him. ♣