

## Local Bar Leaders, Small-Firm Lawyers Training Provided by the CLBA



AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, the Conference of Local Bar Associations (CLBA) endeavors to teach local and statewide bar associations how the Virginia State Bar operates and the types of programs it offers to them. The CLBA executive committee comprises fourteen lawyer representatives from voluntary bars around the state. The VSB coordinator is Paulette J. Davidson.

CLBA programs include the Bar Leaders Institute (BLI) and the Solo and Small-Firm Practitioner Forum. The BLI provides instruction to bar leaders about projects that promote good legal practice and pro bono opportunities. The Solo and Small-Firm Practitioner Forum is oriented to the nuts and bolts of practicing law and managing a law office. There is also an ethics component.

While some bar associations are active and present thought-provoking, imaginative, and effective programs, other bar associations are lethargic. Bar associations in the latter category need to be inspired by the CLBA. I have also observed that when local judges—juvenile and domestic relations, general district, and circuit—are involved in their local bar associations, the associations seem to do better. I call this the “Mary’s Little Lamb” philosophy: wherever judges go the lawyers “are sure to follow.” Although some judges are reluctant to become too involved in bar activities, most of them do so. They frequently have been inspired by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia. In recent years, both former chief justice Harry L. Carrico and current Chief Justice Leroy R.

Hassell Sr. have encouraged judges to become more active in their local bar associations.

Past VSB president Edward B. Lowry, former VSB executive director Thomas A. Edmonds, and I once visited Chief Justice Carrico to discuss this concept. He was receptive to our suggestion that judges ought to be more active in their local bars and agreed to encourage them to do so.

The next BLI is scheduled for April 15, 2009, at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond. If you are a leader in your local bar association, or if you aspire to be, please attend.

In addition, the CLBA will present a Solo and Small-Firm Practitioner Forum in cooperation with the Supreme Court of Virginia on Wednesday, May 20, 2009, at Shenandoah University in Winchester. Chief Justice Hassell will conduct a town hall meeting, during which he will take questions and comments from the audience. Again, I urge you to attend.

Details and registration information for both events will be posted on the CLBA website at <http://www.vsb.org/site/conferences/clba/>.

The *So You’re 18* booklets are a great resource for many organizations. These booklets tell high school seniors about issues that face them when they reach adulthood. The bar has distributed more than twenty-six thousand booklets in English and 784 in Spanish. Many J&DR courts distribute the booklets at driver’s licensing ceremonies. Schools, libraries, and departments of social services also use the booklets. If your bar association is looking for ways to reach the community and would like to distribute the booklets at a local high school or conduct a panel discussion, we have a blueprint available for your presentation. You may contact Ms. Davidson at [davidson@vsb.org](mailto:davidson@vsb.org) or (804) 775-0521 for a copy of the blueprint.

If you need advice or assistance please do not hesitate to call Ms. Davidson or me. My telephone number is (540) 962-4986.

### CLBA Conferences

More information will be posted at <http://www.vsb.org/site/conferences/clba/> when it becomes available.

**Solo & Small-Firm Practitioner Forum**  
Shenandoah University, Winchester  
Wednesday, May 20, 2009

**Bar Leaders Institute**  
Virginia Historical Society, Richmond  
April 15, 2009