

Senior Lawyers Conference

by Homer C. Eliades, Chair



Senior Lawyers Assist the Elderly and Others

AS WE LOOK FORWARD, we remember the past and we attempt to set goals that are realistic and that benefit the elderly.

The Senior Lawyers Conference includes attorneys and judges ages fifty-five and older who are motivated to assist the elderly in walking through the mine fields of life. Life today is very complicated, and these complications make life more challenging to seniors. We are also acutely aware that the process of aging can alter physical and mental capacities.

The Senior Lawyers Conference adopts projects that will benefit the elderly. The conference has been asked to take on many projects, and we continue to evaluate which of these projects should be supported by the conference. Bear in mind that we have no staff other than Patricia A. Sliger, our liaison with the Virginia State Bar, who is a great asset to us.

The single largest project is our *Senior Citizens Handbook*. This book provides information about law that affects the lives of seniors, including wills, appointment of guardians, Medicare and Medicaid, powers of attorney, long-term care, Alzheimer's disease, and real estate transfers. This invaluable reference book has been distributed by our conference, and the public's appreciation is evidenced by the numerous requests that the conference has received for copies. This enormous project has been successful because of the tireless efforts of the senior lawyers in our conference. These

outstanding lawyers have contributed their time and effort to reviewing and updating the information. We thank those individuals, as well as the bar staff, for a job well done.

The conference, through the efforts of William T. "Bill" Wilson, initiated a Senior Law Day Program, which has been presented in several locations throughout the state. John H. Tate Jr. recently presented this program in conjunction with Virginia Intermont College and the Bristol Bar Association. The conference hopes to see more of these programs presented in other areas. We thank Bill and John for their efforts, and we encourage local bar associations to become familiar with the program and use it.

The conference has been approached to consider promoting a Liberty Day Program, which educates Americans about the Declaration of Independence. We also have been asked to put together a group of senior pro bono attorneys to help victims recover monies they lost due to the defalcations of millions of dollars by Steven Conrad, a now-disbarred Prince William County attorney.

The conference adopts projects that benefit not only the elderly, but all citizens of the commonwealth. It has been suggested that the conference circulate a booklet, *So You're 18*, to juniors and seniors in high schools throughout the state and present a program about their responsibilities when they reach age eighteen. It is a deserving program and one that the conference will con-

sider accepting as a project. *So You're 18* is published by the VSB Conference of Local Bar Associations.

There has been concern that many estates are being managed by individuals who are not equipped to carry out the responsibilities of an executor, administrator, or attorney-in-fact. There also are cases in which estates have been mismanaged, wasted, or embezzled. The recovery of wasted or embezzled funds is difficult if the qualifying fiduciary has limited assets or no assets at all. The Senior Lawyers Conference has been asked to study whether every fiduciary should be required to post a bond with surety, in order to ensure recovery of assets that were mishandled or embezzled.

John M. Oakey Jr., as chair of the Senior Lawyers Pro Bono Committee, continues to investigate the proposed projects, and his committee will submit its recommendations.

We of the Senior Lawyers Conference strive to improve the lives of seniors and their children and grandchildren as well. Our future endeavors will be dedicated to successfully coping with seniors' ever-changing lives and doing what we can to support them in the challenges they face.