

# Young Lawyers Conference

by Jennifer L. McClellan, President



## The YLC at 35: A History of Service

AT OUR LAST YOUNG LAWYERS CONFERENCE BOARD MEETING, while reviewing the conference's bylaws, I lingered over the preamble:

Pursuant to the Resolution adopted by the Virginia State Bar Council at its June 1971 Annual Meeting that an organization of younger members of the Virginia State Bar be created, James A. Howard, 1973–74 president of the Virginia State Bar, appointed an Initial Board of Governors for such organization consisting of nine active members of the Virginia State Bar and charged that Board with the responsibility of implementing the Council Resolution by organizing the “Virginia State Bar Young Members Conference.”

That's right: The YLC celebrates its thirty-fifth anniversary this year.

The YLC's first president, Karen W. Kincannon, was the only president to serve two terms. In her first year, the YLC organized the conference, recruited volunteers, and developed programs to assist the bar and improve the legal system.

During the 1977–78 bar year, the YLC, under the leadership of Diane M. Strickland, developed a long-range plan. President Frank W. Morrison (1979–80) developed the committee structure and recurring projects.

During the term of R. Edwin Burnette Jr. (1985–86), the YLC president became an ex officio voting member of the VSB Executive Committee. Since then, the YLC has had a voice in developing VSB policies,

provided services to its members and the public, and promoted its members for appointment to bar leadership positions.

The YLC has published brochures and handbooks to educate the public about its rights and responsibilities. The *Senior Citizens Handbook*, which until recently was a joint project between the YLC and the Senior Lawyers Conference, was first published in 1979 and updated several times. This handbook addresses laws, issues, and programs that affect Virginia's elder citizens; provides practical guidance; and lists resources and contacts at public and private organizations that serve seniors. In 1998, in response to needs of Virginia's Hispanic population, YLC President Julie D. McClellan (1998–99) launched a project to translate the handbook into Spanish. The conference has distributed tens of thousands of copies of the *Senior Citizens Handbook* to senior citizens at retirement communities, community gatherings, churches, mall walkers programs, government agencies, public libraries, law offices, and senior citizens groups.

Under the leadership of Julie McClellan, the YLC founded the Virginia Domestic Violence Safety Project, chaired by future YLC president Maya M. Eckstein (2006–07). This committee developed pamphlets that outline the legal rights of domestic violence victims and a safety brochure, which were distributed across the commonwealth through corporations, police and sheriff departments, social services agencies, and the courts. These publications were also translated into Spanish.

More recently, under the leadership of Savalle C. Sims (2004–05), the YLC helped distribute voting rights brochures and handbooks developed by the Virginia State Board of Elections in response to the Help America Vote Act. Under the leadership of Jimmy F. Robinson Jr. (2005–06) and Eckstein and in partnership with JustChildren, the YLC developed, published, and distributed the *Juvenile Rights Handbook* to educate children younger than eighteen about their rights and responsibilities with respect to schools, the courts, and the police. Under YLC President Daniel L. Gray (2007–08), this handbook was translated into Spanish.

In the early 1980s, YLC President Bruce M. Wallinger (1981–82) fostered programs to educate the public about the law and the legal system, including Community Law Week. Held in conjunction with Law Day on May 1, Community Law Week promotes programs that educate communities about the law, including individual legal rights and responsibilities, and that provide pro bono legal service to the public. The YLC has also sponsored a No Bills Night program during Community Law Week, and provided educational programming on *Brown v. Board of Education*, the jury system, and the Bill of Rights.

In conjunction with the Virginia Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, YLC presidents James A. Hoffman II (1993–94) and Sharon Moon (1994–95) developed the Emergency Legal Services Response Plan to provide legal services to victims of natural disasters. The plan was

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implemented for the first time in 1995 in response to heavy rains and flooding in the Shenandoah Valley, and again in response to Hurricane Felix, the blizzard of 1996, and flooding in Southwestern Virginia. Since then, the Emergency Legal Services team has activated hundreds of volunteers to provide legal services to victims of natural disaster across the state—most recently, tornadoes in Suffolk and Colonial Heights.

Other projects implemented by the YLC in its thirty-five years include setting up child witness waiting rooms at courthouses, hosting regional trial competitions, and operating programs for crime victim compensation, peer mediation, and diversity.

I am proud to serve as president during this thirty-fifth anniversary. When I pass leadership in June to Lesley A. Pate, the YLC will be older than most of its members. However, our dedication to serving our members, the bar, and the public, will be as strong as the day President Kincannon took the gavel.

## Virginia State Bar Harry L. Carrico Professionalism Course

See dates and registration  
information at  
<http://www.vsb.org>.

### Seeking Nominations

The Virginia State Bar Young Lawyers Conference is seeking nominations for the **R. Edwin Burnette Jr. Young Lawyer of the Year Award**.

This award honors an outstanding young Virginia lawyer who has demonstrated dedicated service to the YLC, the profession, and the community.

The nomination deadline is May 1, 2009. Nominations should be sent to:

**Daniel L. Gray**  
Immediate Past President  
Cooper Ginsberg Gray PLLC  
10201 Lee Highway, Suite 520  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
703-934-1480  
Fax: 703-280-4370  
[dgray@cgglawyers.com](mailto:dgray@cgglawyers.com)

Learn more about the Young Lawyers Conference at  
<http://www.vsb.org/site/conferences/ylc/>

### YLC Board Elections

At its Annual Meeting on June 19, 2009, the Virginia State Bar Young Lawyers Conference will be electing members to the Board of Governors.

All nomination are due on May 1, 2009, and any letter of interest or nomination should be sent to:

**Daniel L. Gray**  
Immediate Past President  
Cooper Ginsberg Gray PLLC  
10201 Lee Highway, Suite 520  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
703-934-1480  
Fax: 703-280-4370  
[dgray@cgglawyers.com](mailto:dgray@cgglawyers.com)

Any VSB member who is active and in good standing, and under the age of 36 or in the first 3 years of practice is eligible to serve on the YLC Board.