

Hill Birthday Thanks

On behalf of the Oliver White Hill Foundation and Oliver W. Hill Sr. and his family, I would like to thank Governor Kaine, former Governors Holton, Robb, Baliles, Wilder and Warner, Chief Justice Hassell and the Justices of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Senator Webb, Congressmen Scott and Cantor, the Virginia State Bar and its president and officials, the Virginia Law Foundation and its president and board, The Virginia Bar Association, the Old Dominion Bar Association, the Richmond Bar Association, the Roanoke Bar Association and its incoming president, George A. McLean Jr., members of the General Assembly, and all of the judges, law firms and lawyers who supported the Oliver White Hill 100th Birthday Gala.

Mr. Hill really enjoyed the event, and it is because of all of your support that this was possible.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Clarence M. Dunnaville Jr.
Richmond

MCLE Job Well Done

I am an Air Force attorney and a member of the Virginia State Bar who essentially has been an Air Force lawyer from day one of my VSB membership. With the exception of one year, I have spent my entire practice (starting six days after my graduation from the University of Virginia in 1968) in every state but Virginia.

Despite this long-distance relationship, I have enjoyed great support from the VSB whenever I have requested help, informa-

tion or guidance. In the present case, I have been working with the mandatory continuing legal education office concerning allowance of CLE credit for the various judge advocate general courses I have taken over the past year. Not only has your office been supportive in every sense of the word, your staff has gone out of their way to ensure I was aware of the distance-learning options available to me. In a job which often involves 24-7 work, such proactive advice is most appreciated.

In particular, I would like to pass on my thanks to Gale M. Cartwright, who patiently worked with me on my latest "ping" of your office. Her helpful and patient (worth repeating) e-mails have reminded me of the quality of VSB service compared to some other state bars (it's very easy to make comparisons in a multi-bar environment such as the Air Force). I am very aware it often is far easier for clients to complain than compliment. In this case, I would like to ensure Ms. Cartwright receives proper recognition for her help and guidance. Thank you.

Charles E. Laedlein, Chief Counsel
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Letters

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<http://www.vsb.org/site/publications/vlawyer/>.

Lawyers Should Support Court Data Collection

Criminal defense attorneys who represent indigent defendants in Virginia now have a new system where they can actually be compensated for the time required to represent clients properly.

It is imperative that all attorneys accurately and completely fill out the Revised Form

DC-40(A) and Waiver of Fee Cap forms, whether they request a waiver or not. The new forms are more cumbersome to fill out, because they require attorneys to provide greater specificity as to services rendered, time spent in and out of court, and why they are requesting a waiver of the fee cap. But the data is essential.

The Supreme Court will be collecting all of the information submitted, and that infor-

mation will form the basis for future budget requests. Even if the \$8.2 million allocated for this upcoming year runs out before the year is up, it is critical that lawyers continue to submit the forms to provide the Supreme Court with accurate statistical information so that future budgets will adequately cover the cost of fulfilling Virginia's Sixth Amendment obligation.

Our trial court judges will serve as the gatekeepers for fee-cap waivers and, just as importantly, will ensure that attorneys account for all their time when completing their list of allowances. Those of us who have worked hard for many years to win an increase in court-appointed pay urge every judge who signs a request for payment to instruct their local attorneys to bill for every necessary hour spent on a case. This should be done irrespective of whether a fee-cap waiver is requested.

The new system serves the greater good of ensuring that people who will need competent counsel in the future will be protected, because we were able to document how much money is needed to fund indigent defense. If we fail to take the time to do it right, indigent defense will never be properly funded, and the momentous legislative decision to allow fee-cap waivers will be squandered.

Let us all work together to finish a job well-done by leaders across the political spectrum who realize that justice and fairness requires competent counsel for our less fortunate.

Alex N. Levay Jr.
Chair, Virginia State Bar Indigent Defense Task Force
Leesburg

Editor's Note: See the Supreme Court of Virginia's related article on the new waiver system on page 32 of this issue, as well as an article on the Virginia Fair Trial Project on page 30.