

Executive Director's Message

by Karen A. Gould



Good News: VSB Budget Is in the Black

I FREQUENTLY HAVE COMPARED THE Virginia State Bar to an ocean liner trying to reverse course mid-voyage. In recent years, the bar has operated with a deficit budget. Our expenses have significantly exceeded our revenue, and we have dipped into reserves to cover the difference. In FY2006, the deficit amount covered by reserve funds was \$287,261. In FY2007, the reserve was tapped for \$425,353. In FY2008 the projected deficit was \$620,000, but the ship began to turn, and at the end of the year, the actual deficit was only \$215,526.

I am delighted to report that the bar ended FY2009 in excellent financial shape. Two significant developments occurred last year: The Supreme Court decided that the judicial system, of which the bar is a part, would follow the governor's lead and eliminate raises for employees. And mindful of the dire state of the economy, the bar's staff continued to find ways to save money, which I have discussed in previous *Virginia Lawyer* columns:

- April 2008: http://www.vsb.org/docs/valawyer magazine/vl0408_exec-dir.pdf
- June/July 2008: http://www.vsb.org/docs/valawyer magazine/vl0708_exec-dir.pdf,

- October 2008: http://www.vsb.org/docs/valawyer magazine/vl1008_ed.pdf
- February 2009: http://www.vsb.org/docs/valawyer magazine/vl0209_ed.pdf
- April 2009: http://www.vsb.org/docs/valawyer magazine/vl0409_ed.pdf

Rather than using \$544,400 from the reserve in FY2009 — as was originally projected — we supplemented the reserve by approximately \$780,000. This is excellent news for Virginia's lawyers, because the dues increase previously thought to be needed in 2010 can be further delayed.

Additional good news is that the bar's budget for the next fiscal year is \$476,816 less than this year's budget. This means that the bar's revenue will exceed expenses by approximately \$290,000, and this money can be added to the reserve. Unfortunately, this savings comes at the expense of the hard-working bar staff, for whom a raise has been deferred for the second year.

I thank the bar staff for their efforts in turning the ocean liner that

was headed on a collision course with the realities of a failing economy. I also want to thank the bar's officers, Manuel A. Capsalis, Jon D. Huddleston, and Howard W. Martin Jr., the VSB Executive Committee and Council, and our hundreds of volunteers for their support in reducing expenses and maximizing revenue. Having been on the job now for approximately eighteen months, I can attest to the collaborative nature of our work to protect the public, help Virginia's lawyers, and improve access to justice for all, regardless of whether they can pay for legal services.

On a point of personal privilege, I want to thank Manny Capsalis, the outgoing bar president, for his zeal and enthusiastic leadership of the bar this year. He has spent countless hours on the road between his office in Arlington and Richmond, as well as to numerous bar functions throughout the state. He has succeeded resoundingly at the very difficult job of balancing family and a successful criminal law practice and serving as president of the mandatory statewide bar. Thanks, Manny, for all you have done for the lawyers of Virginia this year!

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