

Senior Lawyers Advise End-of-Practice Planning



AS I WRITE THIS FINAL ARTICLE for the 2009–10 year, I want to express my deep appreciation for the opportunity to serve over the past year. It has truly been a wonderful experience.

I have worked with the excellent board of the Senior Lawyers Conference, which included current and retired members of the state judiciary, former members of the Virginia General Assembly, commissioners of accounts, and many outstanding attorneys. This group is a reservoir of knowledge and wisdom about our legal system and society. They consistently work together on worthwhile projects with a fine sense of collegiality.

It has also been my privilege and pleasure to work with Jon D. Huddleston, 2009–10 president of the Virginia State Bar, and to support his effort to emphasize the contributions of Virginia lawyers — not only in their law practices, but also in their communities.

The fall meeting of the Virginia State Bar committee and conference chairs, held in Richmond on September 29, 2009, was extremely helpful and educational. This workshop allowed leaders to network and share their group's work and their plans for the coming year, including programs for the bar's annual meeting. It was also very helpful to meet and hear presentations made by state bar staff, who work diligently and conscientiously on our behalf.

It was my pleasure to attend meetings of the VSB Executive Committee and Council and to participate in a strategic planning conference with the Executive Committee. These attorneys volunteer their time and expertise to

improve the professionalism of attorneys and to protect their clients. Spirited debates are conducted in a civil and respectful forum.

I attended Senior Citizens Law Day programs in Tappahannock and Charlottesville. The first one was on October 24, 2009, and was the third sponsored by a Northern Neck bar association. F. Warren Haynie Jr. was the catalyst for this effort. On May 4, 2010, I observed an excellent program in Charlottesville, sponsored by the Charlottesville Albemarle Bar Association. This session was videotaped and later broadcast on public television. Joseph W. "Rick" Richmond Jr. spearheaded the Charlottesville program. Earlier this year, Frank O. Brown Jr. and his son Matthew headed up a Senior Law Day program before 350 individuals at First Baptist Church in Richmond. As a part of these programs, the sponsoring group distributed the *Senior Citizens Handbook*.

At the suggestion of VSB Executive Director Karen A. Gould, the Senior Lawyers Conference launched a project to develop a checklist for closing a law practice. Frank Brown has drafted a document that is now being reviewed by a committee. We hope that this publication will help prevent costly and time-consuming receiverships. Frank Brown also continues to offer continuing legal education program, "Protecting Your and Your Clients' Interests in the Event of Your Disability, Death, or Other Disaster."

As I prepare this article, we are looking forward to two excellent projects at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Virginia State Bar in Virginia Beach. John M. Oakey Jr. leads our plans for a

workshop on "Basic Estate Administration for the General Practitioner," which will feature four panelists and will be cosponsored by the VSB General Practice and Trust and Estates sections. The senior lawyers will once again host a brunch at the annual meeting to recognize and honor fifty-year members of the bar.

I cannot summarize the year's efforts without mentioning the tremendous contributions made by both Patricia A. Sliger and Paulette J. Davidson. In December, we bid farewell to Pat Sliger in her retirement from the VSB staff after many years of service, including more than fourteen years working with the Senior Lawyers Conference and its predecessor section. She was truly a major force in helping maintain the conference projects. Since January, Paulette Davidson has admirably assumed the staff liaison role and has been tremendously helpful in carrying on the work of the Senior Lawyers Conference.

As I move to the position of immediate past chair for the conference, I do so with the assurance that it has an excellent slate of officers for the coming year, led by John H. Tate Jr., whose warm and personable style of leadership will serve us well. I also salute the incoming Virginia State Bar president, Irving M. Blank, who will admirably lead this important agency.

I urge each of us to exhibit civility in all areas of the law and to take seriously the concept of making an orderly transition plan for our own law practices because our clients and the public deserve nothing less.