

# Young Lawyers Conference

by Lesley Pate Marlin, President



## Service Accomplished

WATER THE SEEDS, NOT THE WEEDS. Those are the words that come to mind, as I reflect upon the Young Lawyers Conference in the past twelve months. Perhaps it is because that's the motto I adopted almost four years ago when I faced an unexpected life challenge. Or perhaps it is because that's what I have seen the YLC do through its many leaders and volunteers. The YLC has continued its legacy of service in the 2009–10 bar year, serving our communities, the bar, and our members.

The YLC has served the communities of Virginia. This past year, we partnered with the Legal Information Network for Cancer (LINC) and created a *Legal Handbook for Cancer Survivors*. Thanks to Kristi N. Cahoon for chairing the project. She facilitated the partnership with LINC, recruited authors, editors, and contributors, and then coordinated the drafting and editing process. The handbook discusses paying for medical care (including health insurance issues), financial matters, employment issues, and how to plan for health care, financial, and other important decisions. It contains an appendix of sample documents and a resource list. Eight thousand copies of the handbook have been printed and will be distributed by the YLC and LINC in the coming months.

We have helped Virginia's citizens with legal issues. This year, for example, we provided wills to first responders in Arlington, Prince William County, Fredericksburg, and Roanoke. Thanks to Andrew G. Geyer for his efforts as our Wills for Heroes chair. We also offered free legal advice through No Bills Nights in Danville,

Richmond, Roanoke, and Warrenton. Particularly noteworthy is Roanoke's No Bills Night, during which approximately 240 telephone calls were answered in two hours—a fraction of the 3,500 people who tried to get through. Thanks to W. Wirt Brock for serving as the statewide chair of No Bills Night and to Travis J. Graham and Leigh R. Strelka for chairing Roanoke's No Bills Night.

We have taught about the legal profession through the Oliver Hill/Samuel Tucker Pre-Law Institute for high school students and Pre-Law Conferences for college students. The institute took place July 19–July 24, 2009, at the University of Richmond. The institute received not only a record number of applicants, but also rave reviews from the high school students who participated. Highlights included a field trip to the White House to visit with Melody Barnes, a graduate of Richmond Public Schools, and to U.S. Senator Mark Warner's office on Capitol Hill. Another highlight was U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Roger L. Gregory's keynote address at the closing banquet. Thanks to Yvette A. Ayala and Rasheeda Matthews for their efforts as the cochairs of the Oliver Hill Law Institute. A Pre-Law Conference occurred on September 12, 2009, at Washington and Lee University School of Law. Thanks to Christen C. Church and Lindsey A. Waters for serving as cochairs of that conference. Nearly seventy students attended the program. Kaplan donated free Law School Admission Test preparation courses to be raffled off to the attendees.

The YLC has served the bar through the Bench-Bar Celebration

Dinner, Virginia State Bar Annual Meeting programs, and other continuing legal education programs. On January 25, 2010, we hosted the Bench-Bar Celebration Dinner at the Bull and Bear Club in Richmond. Thanks to Sarah E. Bruscia for organizing the dinner. More than one hundred lawyers and judges attended the event, during which eleven newly appointed women and minority judges in Virginia were honored. Then-Virginia Justice Barbara Milano Keenan delivered the keynote address. The YLC appreciates the incredible support of the judges from the Virginia Court of Appeals, most of whom were in attendance. With regard to our other bar service programs, we thank Marie E. Washington for organizing a CLE program on Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Jennifer A. Haberlin for organizing a class at the VSB Annual Meeting on the legal issues facing cancer survivors. We also thank Andrew R. Tank for chairing the athletic programs at the annual meeting.

The YLC has served its members—approximately ten thousand young lawyers in Virginia—through our quarterly newsletter, the *Docket Call*, and e-mails with program information and volunteer opportunity announcements. Thanks to Joanna L. Faust for serving as the editor-in-chief of *Docket Call*. Not only has she overseen this year's transition to predominantly distributing the newsletter electronically, but she also has creatively added new features to the newsletter. We also hosted our Professional Development Conference on September 25, 2009, at

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the State Capitol in Richmond. Thanks for Robert E. Byrne Jr. and Monica A. Walker for organizing the conference. They recruited top-notch speakers for the CLE programs and arranged for then-Virginia Attorney General William C. Mims to address the attendees during lunch. A handful of attendees took advantage of the hardship discounts and scholarships that we offered to those who have been adversely affected by the economic crisis.

Behind so much of the great work done by the YLC is the Virginia State Bar staff, particularly Maureen D. Stengel and Catherine D. Huband. I thank them for their countless efforts and unwavering support of the YLC. Finally, to the outgoing YLC Board of Governors—Carson H. Sullivan, Christy E. Kiely, Jennifer L. McClellan, Kenneth L. Alger, Mollie C. Barton, Megan Bradshaw, Brian R. Charville, Maureen E. Danker, J. Barrett Lucy, Gerald E. Mabe II, Demian J. McGarry, Trevor A. Moe, Richelle D. Moore, Nathan J. Olson, Sarah Louppe Petcher, Rachael A. Sanford, Jennifer B. Shupert, and Nathan J.D. Veldhuis—many thanks for your leadership and efforts on behalf of the YLC.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served as the YLC president, and delighted to turn over the leadership reins. I will, however, remain a young lawyer for several more years. During that time, I look forward to helping the YLC continue to water seeds and plant trees through its service to young lawyers, the bar, and Virginia's communities.