

Senior Lawyers Conference

by Homer C. Eliades, Chair



To Uphold the Honor

IN TAKING PEN IN HAND to write my first column as chair of the Senior Lawyers Conference, it occurred to me that many of you may not know a lot about us. The conference was established in June 2001, and was formerly known as the Senior Lawyers Section. The conference's focus is directed toward issues of interest to senior lawyers, their clients, and the general public. Membership comprises all active and associate Virginia State Bar members in good standing and aged fifty-five and older. Membership increases on a daily basis as Virginia lawyers reach that magical age of fifty-five. Currently, the SLC has approximately fourteen thousand members.

Our mission, as stated in our bylaws is, "To uphold the honor of the profession of law, to apply the knowledge and experience of the profession to the promotion of the public good, to encourage public discourse and interaction among the members of the Virginia State Bar and to serve the particular interests of senior lawyers and promote the welfare of seniors generally."

Here are some of the ways we strive to fulfill our mission:

The SLC hosts a website at <http://www.vsb.org/slc/index.html> that offers useful information and links for the public and the legal profession. The site received approximately two thousand hits during the past year. Frank O. Brown Jr. does a splendid job as editor of our newsletter, *Senior Lawyer News*, as well as our website editor. All newsletters are posted on the website, and a hard copy of the Spring 2008 edition was mailed to conference members.

Guardianship and Conservatorship Proceedings Regarding Incapacitated Adults was produced by the SLC and continues to be the fourth most downloaded file on the VSB's website.

A continuing legal education course titled *Ethics: Protecting You and Your Clients' Interests in the Event of Your Disability, Death or Other Disaster* is presented by Frank O. Brown Jr. to bar associations throughout the state. The course provides two ethics credits and is by request. If your bar association is interested in this program, please call (804) 775-0576 or e-mail Patricia "Pat" A. Sliger at sliger@vsb.org.

The *Senior Citizens Handbook* has been the VSB publication most requested by the public and those in the legal profession. The SLC is in the process of editing and implementing extensive revisions to the handbook. It will be available in late fall or early winter. We would like to acknowledge the Virginia Law Foundation for its grant to offset the handbook's printing expenses. Handbooks are distributed to libraries, hospitals, and other state agencies, and at Senior Citizens Law Day programs across the commonwealth.

The Senior Citizens Law Day program was designed and implemented by William T. "Bill" Wilson, a former chair of the conference. He developed a blueprint with ideas and instructions for presenting a program and contacted local bar associations and others to promote it. A copy of the blueprint is available from Pat Sliger by calling (804) 775-0576 or sliger@vsb.org.

The Senior Citizens Law Day program has been successful due to the promotion and participation of local

bar groups and civic organizations. The program provides community service that is visible, meaningful, focused, and appreciated. Although the program is for senior citizens, it also is extremely beneficial to family members and caregivers. The program generates goodwill and a positive image of lawyers and the legal profession.

OTHER VENTURES THAT HAVE BEEN A SOURCE OF PRIDE include our involvement with the VSB's Annual Meeting in June. The conference sponsored a workshop with the General Practice Section and the Virginia Joint Committee on Alternative Dispute Resolution. It was titled "When and How to Use Mediation in Cases Involving Elderly Clients: Nursing Home Issues, Estate Settlement and Trust Disputes, Power of Attorney, Conservatorship, Guardian Matters, and More." Panel members were retired Judge Robert L. Harris Sr., William H. Oast III, and Edward E. Zetlin. Frank O. Brown Jr. was the moderator.

The conference also hosted a luncheon in honor of those who recently completed fifty years of service as a member of the VSB. Spouses, family members, and guests were invited to the luncheon, at which the honorees were presented certificates. Many attendees renewed friendships, and everyone seemed to enjoy the camaraderie.