

Candidates Seek President-elect Endorsement

Statement of Raymond B. Benzinger

The candidate who is elected this November will assume the responsibilities of president of the Virginia State Bar in June 2016. Many things will occur between now and then and the president must be prepared to react to such concerns as they arise. My experience participating in local and state-wide bar positions as well as in thirty-plus years of private practice has prepared me to meet the challenges that will arise.

Looking ahead to 2016, my current goals and priorities fall into two areas — outreach and funding. I believe it is important that all members of the bar be represented and included in bar management, programs, and activities. I intend to reach out to underrepresented specialties, such as Intellectual Property. And I will be available to all local and specialty bar associations. Funding is also of utmost importance. There are currently three areas of concern with budgets and funding. First, our VSB staff is woefully underpaid. We

are fortunate they have loyally served despite the failure to keep their salaries current. Second, our association has four conferences with specific programs — Senior Lawyers, Young Lawyers, Local Bar Associations, and Diversity. Of these four, three are funded by the bar out of members' annual dues. It is an embarrassment that the conference intended to promote *inclusion*, Diversity, is the only one that is not funded by VSB contributions. And third, we must keep up our efforts to see that judicial vacancies are funded.

I have the experience and desire needed to lead our bar association. As I have retired from active practice, I am and do commit to devoting 100 percent of my time to the position of VSB president. Please see my website — raymondbenzinger.com — for additional information about my background and experience. I ask for your consideration and vote.



Benzinger is a graduate of Georgetown University Law School and also has an LLM from Georgetown. He is a member of the VSB Council. He has been the recipient of honors for his public service and service to the bar, and has been awarded the James Keith Public Service Award from the Fairfax County Bar Association. He is married and has three children and seven grandchildren.

Statement of Thomas A. Edmonds

Over my legal career spanning more than forty-five years I practiced law; taught law and served as dean of two schools, including ten years at the University of Richmond; and for nineteen years was the VSB's executive director. As executive director, I worked closely with the officers, Executive Committee and the council. I handled Supreme Court and legislative matters, advised many of the bar's committees and boards, and served as president of the National Association of Bar Executives. After retiring as executive director in 2008, I was elected by my peers to the VSB Council, representing the fourteenth circuit. During my two terms, I have helped council resolve such difficult issues as payee notification and strengthening the Clients' Protection Fund.

My long, comprehensive state bar experience has prepared me well to continue my volunteer service. I am ready and able to respond effectively to issues that confront the bar, and I look forward to assisting it in formulating rules and poli-

cies, when needed, that are fair and make sense to both bar members and the public. I pledge to keep the VSB's resources focused on its core responsibilities: improving and regulating the profession, and helping assure availability of quality legal services for all Virginians.

While no one seeking office in the VSB should have a personal agenda, I recognize there are some issues that require on-going attention. Examples: we must continue improving our educational and ethics advisory efforts to keep lawyers out of the disciplinary system, while resolving ethics complaints that are received fairly and expeditiously. We need to find means of more effectively assisting and strengthening the services provided by our legal aid organizations, which have suffered severe funding and staffing cuts in recent years. The VSB Council has grown too large, and we should curtail further growth that could impair its functionality.

Thanks very much for considering my candidacy.



Edmonds is a graduate of Mississippi College and Duke University School of Law. He is a member of the VSB Council. He also served as executive director of the VSB. He was dean, director of the Law Center, and professor of law at The University of Mississippi, as well as dean and professor of law at The University of Richmond. He has served on numerous committees and organizations, including as president of the National Association of Bar Executives. He is married and has three children.

Statement of Michael W. Robinson

As Virginia lawyers, we share the privilege and responsibility of regulating our profession through the Virginia State Bar. We must serve our profession in a manner that befits the continued grant of this privilege.

We draw the bar's leadership from our colleagues, and it is important for our regulation to be guided by those with a shared experience of practicing law. I understand the daily demands we face, whether practicing in small or large firms, as sole practitioners, or in public service. Service to the profession has been an important part of my career, and my judgment on bar matters will be guided and tempered by the experience which has come from my twenty-eight years as a practicing attorney.

As the practice of law continually grows more complex, we must couple our appropriate regulatory efforts with the bar's service as a resource for its members. Our commitment to professionalism guides our mission: self-regulation of our

profession, improving the availability and quality of legal services, and improving our judicial system. The VSB must continue to work collaboratively with and foster the role of our voluntary state-wide and local bar associations as a resource in meeting our shared goals of improving our profession and the public's access to legal services.

My active practice and past commitment to the bar has prepared me to serve as president, and demonstrates that I will commit the time and energy that the position demands. I have served on Bar Council since 2008, currently serve on the Executive Committee, and chair the Standing Committee on Legal Ethics. I previously chaired the Special Committee on Bench-Bar Relations, and was honored to serve on the faculty of the Professionalism Course.

I believe strongly in the VSB's mission. I ask for your vote and your support.



Robinson is a graduate of George Mason University with a BA in Philosophy. His law degree is from the George Mason University School of Law. He has been a member of the VSB Council since 2008 and chairs the Standing Committee on Legal Ethics. He has served on the faculty of the professionalism course and has chaired the Special Committee on Bench-Bar Relations. He is a partner with Venable LLC. He is married to Courtney R. Robinson and has five children.

F O R T Y - F I F T H A N N U A L

CRIMINAL LAW 2015 SEMINAR

FEBRUARY 6, 2015
DoubleTree Hotel, Charlottesville

FEBRUARY 13, 2015
DoubleTree Hotel, Williamsburg

Video Replays in Several Locations
MCLE Credits (including ethics credit) Pending

V I R G I N I A S T A T E B A R
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