

Handbook, Law Days In Conference Mission

by Jack W. Burtch Jr., 2006–2007 Senior Lawyers Conference President



Part of the mission of the Senior Lawyers Conference is “[t]o serve the particular interests of senior lawyers and promote the welfare of seniors generally.” Sometimes it is difficult to put the abstract aspirations of a mission statement into programs which actually help people. But keeping an eye on our mission statement helps us stay on course. So far this year, the conference has emphasized two initiatives that have widespread, practical results.

We are revising the *Senior Citizens Handbook*. First released in 1979, the handbook had gone through eleven complete revisions by 2005 and revisions were made for a limited reprinting in late 2006. It is so popular we had simply run out of copies. This year, William H. Oast III, of Portsmouth is leading the revision project. The handbook provides up-to-date information about Social Security benefits, health-care and long-term care opportunities, housing issues, information about legal rights and future planning, including estate planning and advance medical directives. It is a resource for individual senior citizens and the institutions and organizations that serve them. The easy part of our job is distributing the handbook. Almost everyone who sees it wants one. The hard part is keeping the book current. Our conference is grateful to those who continue to make the handbook a valuable resource.

As part of another conference initiative, local bar associations and area agencies on aging sponsored Senior Citizens’ Law Days. Recently the Smyth County Bar Association presented a Law Day with 125 attendees. This was a cooperative effort of the local bar and Smyth County governmental agencies including the health and social services departments. There were presentations by lawyers, family advocates, social workers, state executives and judges. A bank advertised the event, which included lunch. Our board member, John H. Tate Jr. of Marion, brought the law day together.

If your bar association is interested in presenting a Senior Citizen’s Law Day, we have a template to make it easier. Call Patricia A. Sliger at the VSB’s office in Richmond (804) 775-0576 or email sliger@vsb.org, and she will send you the road map to a successful program.

Part of our mission is to “serve the particular interests of senior lawyers.” This aspect of the mission is being addressed by Frank O. Brown Jr.’s frequent presentations before lawyers on “Protecting Your and Your Clients’ Interests in the Event of Your Disability, Death or Other Disaster.” None of us wants to think about death, disability or disaster, but our duty to protect our clients extends beyond our personal ability to do so. If you have the oppor-

tunity to be present at one of Frank’s presentations, you will be glad you heard him.

The Senior Lawyer’s Conference is a service of our Virginia State Bar. All lawyers over fifty-five years old are members. If there is a project you feel would help us accomplish our mission, please write or call me. Our board and our staff do not have a monopoly on good ideas. If you want to participate more actively, please let me know. For me it is simply a privilege to serve with a group of lawyers who want to continue to serve our profession and our communities. ♪