



Service to the Bar—New Bar Members Can Begin Now

ON OCTOBER 27, 2008, more than one thousand lawyers were sworn in to the Virginia State Bar at the Admission & Orientation Ceremony. I welcome these new colleagues not only to the bar, but also to the Young Lawyers Conference. I echo VSB President Manuel A. Capsalis's call to these new young lawyers to become civically engaged, and I invite them to become involved in the conference. With more than seven thousand active members, the YLC is one of the VSB's largest conferences. It is also among the most active.

The YLC has a variety of programs that serve the public and the bar. For those interested in pro bono opportunities, we have the Emergency Legal Services Program, the Virginia Domestic Violence Safety Project, No Bills Night, and Wills for Heroes.

We also offer a number of projects to educate the public, such as Community Law Week, Students Day at the Capitol, We the Jury, and distribution of a juvenile rights handbook and voting rights brochure.

As part of our service to our members and the bar, the YLC sponsors the Admission & Orientation Ceremony and First Day in Practice Seminar (cosponsored by the VSB General Practice Section), the Professional Development Conference, the Leadership Conference, seminars and athletic events at the Virginia State Bar Annual Meeting (including an attorney general candidates' debate every four years), Board Match, and our award-winning *Docket Call* newsletter.

Some projects serve both the public and the bar. For example, our Immigrant Outreach Committee conducts continuing legal education programs on the consequences of criminal convictions for immigration status, and the Mental Health Reform Committee advises pro bono clients with mental illnesses, and will conduct CLEs on the civil commitment process.

As mentioned in the October 2008 edition of *Virginia Lawyer*, we also have programs devoted to increasing or celebrating diversity in the profession, including the Celebration Bench-Bar Dinner (see photos on page 23), the Minority Prelaw Conference, the Oliver Hill/Samuel Tucker Prelaw Institute, and Choose Law.

In addition, we have three commissions that explore issues for which the YLC may need to develop programs. These include the Women and Minorities in the Profession Commission, the Children in the Law Commission, and the Pro Bono Commission.

We are constantly evaluating and adding new programs. This year's new programs include Unlock Your

The YLC is only as good as those members who choose to participate and volunteer for our programs. As conference president, I am amazed at the energy, creativity, and dedication of our volunteers. But we need to do more to be excellent—not just great.

Becoming involved in the YLC offers more than simply the satisfaction of serving the public and the bar. It offers long-lasting friendships with a variety of attorneys from across the commonwealth—and the referral network they bring with them. It offers opportunities for developing leadership and project development skills that many young lawyers do not get until much later in their careers. It offers the opportunity to network with the best and brightest Virginia attorneys, judges, lawmakers, and academics. And yes, it offers a bit of fun.

So, to paraphrase Thomas Jefferson, come forward then and give us the aid of your talents and the weight of your character towards our mission to serve the public and the profession. Get involved and enjoy the friendship, networking opportunities,

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Potential, a program to provide young lawyers the tools they need to evaluate whether to make a career change. This year, we will focus on those lawyers considering starting a solo practice.

and leadership development that your service can provide.