

# Criminal Law Section Continues Active, Successful Agenda

by Lisa Caruso

The Criminal Law Section of the Virginia State Bar was organized in 1967 specifically to concern itself with the problems of crime, criminology, and the administration of criminal law in Virginia, except for those subjects specifically excluded by direction of the president of the VSB. As one of the largest sections, currently with 2,360 members, the section represents prosecutors, defense counsel, trial judges, and academics concerned with the criminal justice system in the commonwealth. It also has one of the most active continuing legal education programs. For thirty years, the section has held its annual Criminal Law Seminar in February in two locations in the state. Outstanding speakers, including nationally renowned luncheon speakers such as Bobby Lee Cook and Gerry Spence, make this seminar the most highly successful CLE program on criminal law in Virginia. In addition, from time to time the section presents its “Carrico Professionalism Award” to a member of the public or the profession.

The section’s board of governors includes prosecutors, defense attorneys, a circuit court judge, a general district court judge, a juvenile and domestic relations district court judge, a U.S. magistrate judge, a representative of the Virginia attorney general, and a U.S. attorney. The board has been effective in speaking with one voice for the improvement of criminal justice in Virginia. If you have not already joined our section, we strongly encourage you to do so.

The articles in this issue of *Virginia Lawyer* reflect a variety of topics in the field of

criminal law including: gangs, the state of electrocution, perjury, and collateral consequences of juvenile convictions. Also in this issue is a submission by Thomas Haynesworth reflecting upon his twenty-seven years spent in prison and his subsequent exoneration in 2011, which is painfully illustrative of the sometimes imperfect nature of our criminal justice system.

I am very proud to be the chair of this esteemed board, and on behalf of the Criminal Law Section and its board, I would like to express our gratitude to Elizabeth Keller, assistant executive director for bar services and our VSB liaison, for her tireless commitment to her job and for all of her assistance. I would also like to thank the publications department of the Virginia State Bar for allowing our section to showcase the area of criminal law in *Virginia Lawyer*.



**Lisa Caruso** is in her second term as Dinwiddie County’s commonwealth’s attorney. Prior to being elected in 2007, she served as the deputy commonwealth’s attorney in the City of Colonial Heights. She also has worked as a public defender in Louisville, Kentucky, and Richmond, Virginia. She is a graduate of the University of Louisville and of the Salmon P. Chase College of Law.