

Executive Director's Message

by Karen A. Gould



Service in the VSB Disciplinary System

THERE ARE TWO LEVELS of adjudication involving volunteer lawyers in the VSB disciplinary system: the district disciplinary committees and the Disciplinary Board.¹ The purpose of this column is to help you understand the appointment process, if you wish to be appointed to a district committee or the Disciplinary Board.

District Committee Appointments

Appointment to a district committee can be difficult because so many people apply, particularly in the more populated areas of the state. You must be an active member in good standing of the Virginia State Bar to serve.

Virginia's ten districts are divided into thirty-one judicial circuits. The map following this column shows how the circuits are assigned to the districts. Some district committees have two or three sections in order to adequately cover the disciplinary cases arising in that district. Each fall, the VSB advertises in *Virginia Lawyer* what vacancies will be available on the district committees. The advertisement for vacancies coming up on July 1, 2016, also appears after this column. Note that some of the "vacancies" are actually reappointments. A member can serve two three-year terms on a district committee. If a member has faithfully served during his or her first term, then they will be reappointed. Therefore, reappointments are not true vacancies. There may be only one or two true lawyer vacancies on a district committee. Each district committee also has at least two lay members.

If a lawyer vacancy exists on the district committee in your jurisdiction, i.e., the same jurisdiction as where you live or work, and you wish to apply to serve, please follow the instructions in the advertisement and submit your resume and a letter of interest as indicated.

Your efforts in obtaining the position should not end here, however. The district committee appointments are made by the VSB Council. You need to let the council member(s) who represents your circuit know of your interest in the position. You can identify your council member by going to the VSB council directory at <http://www.vsb.org/site/about/council>. In perusing that list, you will note that there are numbers beside the council members' names. These are circuit numbers. Therefore, if you live or work in the 3rd Circuit, your council representative is Nick Renninger from Portsmouth, and you would want to let him know of your interest in the district committee position. Council members are urged to get to know the candidates for the district committee positions, so that they can select the best candidates.

Council members are looking for VSB members with sufficient experience to know how to practice law ethically. Volunteers should also have a good reputation in the legal community. Paragraph 13-4.F sets forth criteria rendering candidates ineligible to serve. Another selection criterion is diversification of the district committees, including practice diversity, ethnic diversity, gender diversity, and geo-

graphic diversity. Each committee should have a prosecutor and a criminal defense attorney, if possible. A family law lawyer would be helpful, as well as a real estate lawyer.

Because several circuits may comprise the jurisdiction of a district committee, multiple council members may be involved in the decision-making process, but generally decision-making deference is given to the member where the vacancy is occurring. An effort is made to keep the committee proportionally balanced by the number of attorneys in the predominant geographic areas comprising the district, and reassignment of seats occurs on occasion to reflect that rebalancing.

The ballot of district committee appointments and reappointments goes to the council at its June meeting, and the council as a whole approves the slate.

Disciplinary Board Appointments

By Rule of Court, you must have served on a district committee to be qualified to serve on the Disciplinary Board.² Paragraph 13-6.B delineates who is ineligible for appointment. The board consists of sixteen lawyers and four lay members. Each member may serve two three-year terms, and the terms are staggered.

Disciplinary Board appointments are made by the Supreme Court of Virginia. The process is started in July to replace outgoing members the following July 1, with a request in *Virginia Lawyer* for interested candidates to submit their resumes and letters of

interest or nomination. Letters of support may be submitted. The VSB's Nominating Committee, composed of council members and chaired by the VSB immediate past president, meets and considers the candidates. For each vacancy, two individuals are selected to give the Supreme Court a choice as to whom to appoint. The Nominating Committee's recommendations are then voted on by the council at the October

meeting, and the names are submitted for consideration by the Supreme Court of Virginia. The bar is usually notified after the Court's December business meeting as to whom has been selected to replace outgoing members effective the next July 1.

If you have any questions regarding either the district committee appointment process or the Disciplinary Board appointment process, please do not hesi-

tate to contact me at gould@vsb.org or (804) 775-0550.

Endnotes:

- 1 A respondent may also request that his case be considered by a three-judge panel, which consists of circuit court judges.
- 2 Paragraph 13-6.A, *Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia Part 6, § IV.*

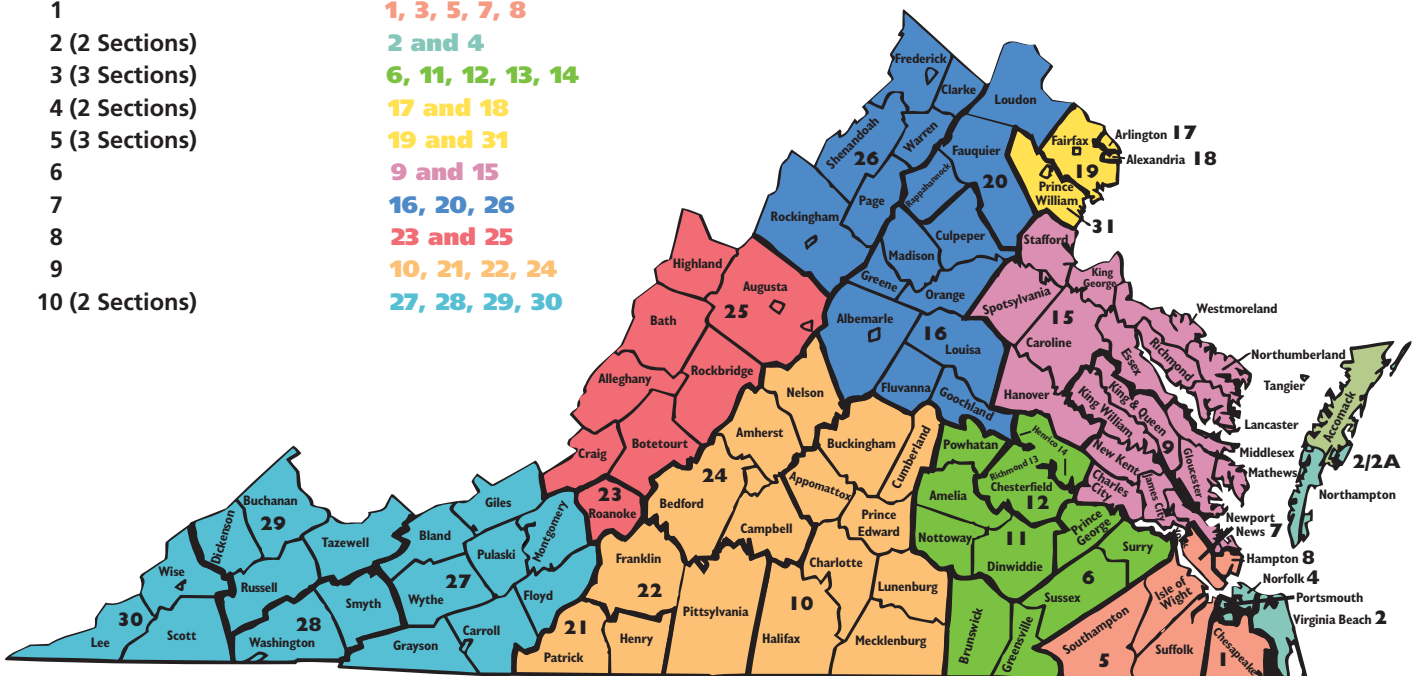
Map of Judicial Circuits and Districts of Virginia

District Committees

as of January 1, 2003

District Committee consists of Judicial Circuits

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 1, 3, 5, 7, 8 |
| 2 (2 Sections) | 2 and 4 |
| 3 (3 Sections) | 6, 11, 12, 13, 14 |
| 4 (2 Sections) | 17 and 18 |
| 5 (3 Sections) | 19 and 31 |
| 6 | 9 and 15 |
| 7 | 16, 20, 26 |
| 8 | 23 and 25 |
| 9 | 10, 21, 22, 24 |
| 10 (2 Sections) | 27, 28, 29, 30 |



NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR DISTRICT COMMITTEE VACANCIES

The Standing Committee on Lawyer Discipline calls for nominations for district committee vacancies to be filled by Council in June. Note that there are vacancies which may not become available because some members are eligible for reappointment.

To review qualifications for eligibility, see Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-4 – Establishment of District Committees, specifically 13-4.E (Qualifications of Members) and 13-4.F (Persons Ineligible for Appointment).

FIRST DISTRICT COMMITTEE: 3 attorney vacancies (2 current members are eligible for reappointment). Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th or 8th judicial circuits.

SECOND DISTRICT COMMITTEE, SECTION I: 4 attorney vacancies (2 current members are eligible for reappointment). Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 2nd or 4th judicial circuits.

SECOND DISTRICT COMMITTEE, SECTION II: 2 attorney vacancies (both members are eligible for reappointment); 2 non-attorney vacancies. Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 2nd or 4th judicial circuits.

THIRD DISTRICT COMMITTEE, SECTION I: 3 attorney vacancies (2 current members are eligible for reappointment). Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 6th, 11th, 12th, 13th or 14th judicial circuits.

THIRD DISTRICT COMMITTEE, SECTION II: 3 attorney vacancies (all 3 current members are eligible for reappointment); 1 non-attorney vacancy (current member is eligible for reappointment). Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 6th, 11th, 12th, 13th or 14th judicial circuits.

THIRD DISTRICT COMMITTEE, SECTION III: 1 attorney vacancy (current member is eligible for reappointment). Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 6th, 11th, 12th, 13th or 14th judicial circuits.

FOURTH DISTRICT COMMITTEE, SECTION I: 2 attorney vacancies (1 current member is eligible for reappointment); 1 non-attorney vacancy (current member is eligible for reappointment). Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 17th or 18th judicial circuits.

FOURTH DISTRICT COMMITTEE, SECTION II: 3 attorney vacancies (1 current member is eligible for reappointment); 1 non-attorney vacancy. Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 17th or 18th judicial circuits.

FIFTH DISTRICT COMMITTEE, SECTION I: 2 attorney vacancies (both current members are eligible for reappointment); 2 non-attorney vacancies (1 current member is eligible for reappointment). Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 19th or 31st judicial circuits.

FIFTH DISTRICT COMMITTEE, SECTION II: 2 attorney vacancies; 1 non-attorney vacancy. Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 19th or 31st judicial circuits.

FIFTH DISTRICT COMMITTEE, SECTION III: 3 attorney vacancies (2 current members are eligible for reappointment); 1 non-attorney vacancy (current member is eligible for reappointment). Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 19th or 31st judicial circuits.

SIXTH DISTRICT COMMITTEE: 2 attorney vacancies; 1 non-attorney vacancy. Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 9th or 15th judicial circuits.

SEVENTH DISTRICT COMMITTEE: 4 attorney vacancies (3 current members are eligible for reappointment). Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 16th, 20th or 26th judicial circuits.

EIGHTH DISTRICT COMMITTEE: 1 attorney vacancy (current member is eligible for reappointment); 1 non-attorney vacancy. Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 23rd or 25th judicial circuits.

NINTH DISTRICT COMMITTEE: 1 non-attorney vacancy (current member is eligible for reappointment). Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 10th, 21st, 22nd or 24th judicial circuits.

TENTH DISTRICT COMMITTEE, SECTION I: 2 attorney vacancies; 1 non-attorney vacancy. Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 27th, 28th, 29th or 30th judicial circuits.

TENTH DISTRICT COMMITTEE, SECTION II: 1 attorney vacancy; 1 non-attorney vacancy. Vacancies are to be filled by members from the 27th, 28th, 29th or 30th judicial circuits.

Nominations, along with a brief resume, should be sent by February 28, 2016, to:
Stephanie Blanton, Virginia State Bar,
1111 East Main Street, Suite 700, Richmond, VA 23219-0026
Blanton@vsb.org