

Milestone Plaque Dedicated

On February 16, 2004, a “Milestones of the Legal Profession” plaque was dedicated by the VSB and The Virginia Law Foundation at the College of William & Mary’s Marshall-Wythe School of Law. Shown at the bronze marker outside of the new law school building in Williamsburg were Law Foundation grants committee member Jimmy F. Robinson Jr., VSB President Jeannie P. Dahnk and William & Mary Law School Dean W. Taylor Reveley III. The plaque commemorates the founding of the Law School as the first in America. Also due to a grant by the Law Foundation, a commemorative marker was installed on September 17, 2003, in the Old Hall of the Virginia House of Delegates, the site of the treason trial of Aaron Burr (see October 2003 *Virginia Lawyer*).



The Metropolitan Richmond Women’s Bar Association celebrated its thirtieth anniversary last month by rounding up its founders and former presidents for a luncheon. The event was marked by a certificate of recognition from Governor Mark R. Warner. Four of the founders, from left, are Virginia H. Hackney, Mary R. Spain, Sally James Andrews and Jerri Gilbreath Cowan.



Above left: Virginia Beach attorney Richard G. Brydges (right) received the Harry L. Carrico Professionalism Award, which Carrico (left) presented at the Virginia State Bar Criminal Law Seminar in Williamsburg February 13. The nomination letter for the award cited Brydges’s fifty-four-year legal career and his service to the profession and the community. “Dick Brydges has above all else served as a mentor and exemplar for several generations of young lawyers in Tidewater and in the Commonwealth,” the letter stated.



Above right: Richard “Racehorse” Haynes, a celebrated criminal defense lawyer from Houston, Texas, regaled attendees at the Williamsburg Criminal Law Seminar with this advice: “Whenever you get in a hassle in the courtroom, ask yourself, ‘What would a real lawyer do at a time like this?’” He recalled one case in which a pathologist witness turned red in the face while Haynes was questioning him. “The doctor said, ‘I’ve aspirated a toothpick.’ I said—what would a real lawyer do here? I didn’t know what aspirate meant—I said, ‘Doctor, I know you want to change the subject, but what I want to know is . . .’ He finally got around to saying, ‘I swallowed a toothpick.’ I said, ‘Good God, man! What would a real lawyer do with that scenario? I said, ‘I didn’t want you to choke to death! I just wanted the *truth* out of you!’”

IN MEMORIAM**W.O. Bivens Jr.**

Bluefield

April 1924–September 2003

Thomas B. Cantieri

Portsmouth

December 1932–November 2003

Richard Alan Cohn

Arlington

October 1948–November 2003

Robert B. Hood Jr.

Falls Church

August 1927–September 2003

J. Randolph Larrick

Winchester

July 1920–October 2003

Davidson Church Miller

Arlington

March 1914–July 2003

Nina Kilian Peace

Ashland

August 1950–February 2004

Leslie M. Mullins

Norton

April 1917–January 2004

Thomas Kyran Purcell

Jacksonville, Florida

January 1947–February 2004

Roy Morton Tolleson Jr.

Charlottesville

August 1918–February 2004

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Richmond's Housing Law Program Turns Fifteen: Hundreds of Lawyers Have Served Thousands of Clients

The Richmond Bar Association's Housing Law Program will celebrate its fifteenth year in 2004, making it, supporters say, one of the longest-running pro bono projects in the United States.

The program, which operates through the Legal Aid Justice Center, pairs indigent people facing housing disputes with trained volunteer lawyers, who see the case through to the end, including appeals if necessary.

The program—founded by Richmond lawyer Thomas G. Slater Jr., and Anne B. Holton, now a Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Relations judge—has become one of the Richmond Bar's flagship programs, said Tara Louise Casey, who chairs the RBA's Pro Bono Services Committee. It receives considerable support, in terms of volunteer lawyers and financial contributions, from Richmond's biggest law firms.

Up to one thousand lawyers have volunteered through the Housing Law Program over the years, serving as many as five thousand clients, said Marcellinus L.M.B. Slag, a Legal Aid Justice Center attorney who oversees the program. The program has contributed to the development of housing law, with one case going as high as the Supreme Court, he said.

Appeals are made possible through a Tenant Appeal Bond Fund, managed through the Greater Richmond Bar Foundation. A person who wants to appeal an eviction to Circuit Court must post a bond of up to six months' rent, Slag said. If the client's attorney, working with Slag, deems that the case has merit, the fund posts that bond—up to \$750—for the client, who then pays the money back in lieu of monthly rent payments.

The fund is particularly helpful to people who live in subsidized public housing, who are at highest risk of becoming

homeless, Slag said. "We have had many cases where, because of that fund, we could appeal."

The volunteer lawyers are given continuing legal education classes that cover landlord-tenant law, federal regulations governing public housing and Section 8 subsidized private housing, and state procedure. The training prepares them for cases that involve failure to pay rent, lease violations, evictions and the avalanche of judgments, attorneys' fees and late fees that drive people into homelessness, Slag said.

The cases don't always involve going to court, Casey said. "Oftentimes, the attorney really just acts as an advocate for the tenant," and can negotiate a settlement with the landlord.

The program won the Richmond Bar Association a Harrison Tweed Award from the American Bar Association in 1991.

Administering the program can be tricky. Potential conflicts are always an issue, with many of the landlords and the Housing Development Authority represented by the firms that supply the volunteers. Slag said the program is trying to recruit more small-firm lawyers and corporate counsel, to expand the pool. Thirty to fifty lawyers work for the program at any one time.

In addition to the service the project provides for the poor, "It's very good . . . for the attorneys themselves and for Legal Aid. The contact between the private bar and Legal Aid enhances both sides incredibly," he said.

More information on the program can be obtained by calling Slag at (804) 643-1086.

—Dawn Chase