

We're in this together



O'Kelly E. McWilliams, III 2001–2002 Young Lawyers Conference President

Since the terrible and sudden loss of life on September 11, I've felt a need to reflect on my faith, values, goals and hope for America's future. The events were so overwhelming that I found myself, literally, in shock. Like many of you, I have experienced anger, fear, sorrow and grief. As I discussed the terrorist actions with close friends, I recognized that I did not fully comprehend the impact of these events, but I realized that America had suffered a great loss that would certainly mean that none of us would ever be the same again.

As we live through the present national danger, the country's core values—humanity, democracy and civility—are even more treasured. Lawyers across the country can offer their skills, support and assistance during this tragic time. Indeed, many lawyers around our country have already selflessly donated their time and talents to assist those affected most directly by this tragedy.

Virginia lawyers are also doing their part. On September 25, in the wake of the World Trade Center and Pentagon crises, the Young Lawyers of the Virginia State Bar and Virginia Bar Association conducted Emergency Legal Services training for nearly 100 northern-Virginia lawyers. The program was pre-

sented in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. Volunteers were instructed in emergency legal issues such as probate and insurance claims for victims. Arent Fox Kintner Plotkin & Kahn, P.L.L.C supported the training. Christopher Dunn, U.S. Navy, outlined the legal assistance efforts for servicemen and women coordinated by the U.S. military.

Victims and their families need help in a variety of areas, and our volunteers will do whatever they can to assist. Volunteer lawyers around the Commonwealth have invested several hundred hours already. Many of them have served at the expense of their own practices. I thank them for their tireless effort and personal sacrifice.

On behalf of the Virginia State Bar Young Lawyers, I offer my sympathy and prayers for everyone who lost a loved one, family member, friend or colleague. God Bless America. ☪

If you are interested in donating your time and skills to our Emergency Legal Services effort, please contact Brett Zwerdling at (804) 355-5719 or bzwerdling@zoandu.com for further information.