

Virginian Jimmy Morris Takes Helm of Trial Lawyers' College

by Dawn Chase

James W. "Jimmy" Morris III of Richmond is the 2004–2005 president of the American College of Trial Lawyers. He was installed as head of the 5,400-member organization at its annual meeting in October.

And what a Virginia-influenced meeting it was, Morris says. Speakers included Richmond lawyer Robert J. Grey Jr., president of the American Bar Association, and novelist/attorney John Grisham, who has a home near Charlottesville. Retired United States District Judge Robert R. Mehrige Jr. of Richmond received the ACTL's Samuel E. Gates Litigation Award. And Oliver W. Hill, an ACTL fellow from Richmond, was recognized for his work in *Brown vs. Board of Education*.

Morris concedes he might be biased. But, "The Virginians so distinguished themselves that many people said it was easily the best program of any time."

A Virginia lawyer for forty-four years, Morris follows attorney R. Harvey Chappell Jr. of Richmond and the late United States Supreme Court Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr. in the ACTL presidency.

Morris defends products liability cases and represents clients in professional and trial matters at Morris & Morris, a fourteen-member firm where he practices with his brother, Philip B. Morris.

He estimates that he and his wife Jane will travel to forty or fifty cities representing the college during his term.

The ACTL was founded in 1950. It selects its fellows from the United States and Canada by invitation only after an investigation, and its aim is to "maintain and improve the standards of trial practice, the administration of justice and the ethics of the profession." Fellows are lawyers "who have mastered the art of advocacy and whose professional careers have been marked by the highest standards of ethical conduct, professionalism, civility and collegiality." Less than one percent of trial lawyers receive an invitation. Jimmy Morris was inducted into the college in 1984.

Morris attended Virginia Military Institute and Randolph Macon University. He received his law degree from the University of Richmond in 1958.

He is a former president of the Virginia Association of Defense Attorneys, the Richmond Bar Association and the Defense Research Institute, a national organization.

The ACTL gets involved in national issues that include defending the independence of judges and addressing a deteriorating relationship between Congress and the federal judiciary.

In the past two years, under the leadership of Richmond lawyer Michael W. Smith, the college's Virginia Committee has expanded its definition of who qualifies as a "trial lawyer," and Morris says he wants to see that continue. In the ACTL's early days, fellows were limited to plaintiffs' and

defense lawyers with experience in jury trials. Recently, however, the college has inducted Henry W. McLaughlin III of the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society, who represents indigent people in consumer law and housing disputes, and Gerald T. Zirken, a federal public defender in Richmond with a national reputation in habeas appeals. Morris said he also wants to see the college draw in more women and minorities.



In Virginia, the ACTL also has drawn on the volunteer time of its 141 active Virginia fellows to provide free training in trial skills to legal aid and pro bono lawyers. Last year's training also drew in high school students, who served as "jurors" in a mock trial and gained insight into the practice of law.

The ACTL also sponsors regional mock-trial and moot-court competitions for law students. And it bestows national awards.

The college has bestowed its Courageous Litigator Award only fourteen times. Two of the recipients—the late Richmond trial lawyer George E. Allen Sr. and civil rights icon Oliver Hill—are Virginians, Morris said.

IN MEMORIAM

Geoffrey F. Birkhead

May 1946–September 2004
Norfolk

L. Franklin Davis

March 1925–June 2004
Accomac

Harold G. Hernly Jr.

January 1936–May 2004
Alexandria

The Honorable

Henry J. Schriberg

April 1914–October 2004
Richmond

Edwin A. Shalloway

May 1934–September 2004
Alexandria

McDonald Wellford Jr.

February 1942–November 2004
Richmond

LOCAL & SPECIALTY BAR ELECTIONS

**Fauquier County
Bar Association:**

Tracy Ann Gallehr, President
Whitson Winstanley Robinson,
President-elect
Hanna Lee Ethel Rodriguez,
Secretary
Jerome Charles Loftus, Treasurer
Susan Flournoy Pierce, Conference
Representative

**Fredericksburg Area
Bar Association:**

Thomas Yates Savage, President
Tracy Ann Houck, President-elect
Brenda Lee Greene, Secretary
Albert Henry Jacoby, Jr., Treasurer
Andrea Smith McCauley, Assistant
Secretary
Barry Jay Waldman, Assistant
Treasurer
Thomas Yates Savage, Conference
Representative

**Prince William County
Bar Association:**

Tracy Calvin Hudson, President
William Michael Phipps, President-
elect
Dennis Robert Carluzzo, Secretary
Robert Paul Coleman, Treasurer
Gifford Ray Hampshire, Conference
Representative

**Virginia Association Of Criminal
Defense Lawyers:**

Esther Jeanette Windmueller,
President
John Hunter Cobb, Jr., President-
elect
Charles Thomas Turbeville, Jr.,
Secretary
Richard Ernest Gardiner, Treasurer

Mediation Programs To Be Held in March

In recognition of March as Mediation Month in Virginia, several programs will promote alternative dispute resolution throughout the commonwealth next month.

The programs, which are supported or sponsored by the Council of the Virginia ADR Joint Committee, will include:

- A Mediation Competition, February 26-27 at Regent School of Law, and ADR Joint Committee members are needed to serve as judges and mediators.
- A Peer Mediation Conference at George Mason University on March 15 for elementary students and March 16 for middle school students. ADR Joint Committee members are needed to support these programs and serve as mediators.
- Public information booths at courthouses statewide.
- Programs for caregivers, guardians ad litem and other professionals who provide services to seniors in Richmond, Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia.
- A continuing legal education program, "Skills and Strategies for Lawyers Representing Clients in Mediation" on May 12 in Richmond and May 13 in Northern Virginia. The course is offered in collaboration with Virginia CLE and the Virginia Mediation Network

To assist with the programs, call Marge Bleiweis at (703) 876-5247 or email her at mbleiweis@fcp.edu.
March was designated as Mediation Month by Virginia Governor Mark Warner.