

Spotlight on the YLC

The Committee on Women and Minorities in the Profession

The Young Lawyers Conference established its Committee on Women and Minorities in the Legal Profession in 1989 to encourage and promote bar leadership and involvement among young women and minority lawyers. The committee now sponsors a variety of programs to meet its mission.

Each year, the committee hosts a bench-bar dinner to honor recently appointed women and minority judges in Virginia. The "Celebration Dinner" provides young attorneys an opportunity to meet and mix with members of the bench and more senior members of the bar in a relaxed and supportive environment. The initial celebration dinner in 1994 was recognized by the ABA for its effectiveness in fostering relationships between bench and bar. The sixth annual celebration dinner was held in the Dome Room of the Rotunda at the University of Virginia in September 1999. Martha Barnett, president-elect of the ABA, addressed the audience and six judicial honorees about the importance and value of diversity in the legal profession. The committee is currently planning the fall 2000 dinner, which will be held in Northern Virginia. Look for more detailed information in upcoming issues of the *Virginia Lawyer*.



Martha Barnett

The committee also conducts the Minority Recruitment Project Pre-law Conference. This annual one-day event is designed to introduce minority undergraduate students to the legal profession and to provide information about the law school admissions process. It includes presentations by law school admissions officers, a mock law school class, a mock trial conducted by area attorneys and judges, an LSAT preparatory class, and a

panel discussion concerning non-traditional avenues to law school and legal career opportunities. The popularity of this seminar has required a move from the John Marshall Courthouse to more spacious quarters at the University of Richmond, where this year's seminar was held on April 8, 2000.

The Board Match Program provides a forum for young lawyers interested in doing community service work, both legal and non-legal, to match their skills and interests with non-profit organizations in need of new members for their boards of directors. The nationally recognized program provides information to the participants on effective board service, with a focus on the legal implications of service on the board of a non-profit community service organization. Representatives of more than 20 area non-profit organizations attended the most recent Board Match program in Richmond in March. The next Board Match program, on a date still to be determined, will be held in Northern Virginia.

Finally, the committee publishes the Pathways to Leadership Directory, a comprehensive directory of local and specialty bar organizations and their activities. The committee distributes the directory to new bar admittees and other young lawyers and promotes involvement by young lawyers in local and specialty bar associations.

Each of the committee's projects is designed to encourage women and minorities to become leaders in their profession and in their communities. At the same time, the committee hopes to highlight the contributions of talent and energy that women and minorities have brought and continue to bring to the practice of law.

For more information about the Committee on Women and Minorities in the Profession and its projects, please contact one of the co-chairs: Julie Cillo, Jennifer McClellan, Ashley Rowe, and Jennifer Short. ☺