

It's All Good

To get anywhere, strike out for somewhere, or you'll get nowhere.

—Martha Lupton



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

Last year, my predecessor, Tracy A. Giles, asked the YLC to support and assist him in developing a program that would address the needs of our members. He recognized that the YLC was traditionally known as the service arm of the bar. However, he was concerned about the many disillusioned young lawyers in Virginia that never experience the collegiality, camaraderie, and spirit of community service enjoyed by so many Virginia practitioners before them. What resulted, after several discussions among the board, was an initiative to create a program entitled the First Annual Professional Development Conference: *Seizing the Future*. The goals were to include both CLE and non CLE programming, specifically tailored to lawyers in their first decade of practice to take away something that would improve his or her life and practice. It was indeed a tremendous undertaking, but the YLC made it happen. The PDC was a resounding success featuring tremendous speakers and programming, such as emerging trends in the law, managing your law practice, rainmaking, partnership considerations, malpractice avoidance and many others.

In August, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division confirmed what the YLC already knew. The ABA/YLD awarded the PDC first place in the Awards of Achievement Competition in Division 1A (the largest of all divisions) for the bar service category. Not to be outdone, the YLC's *Docket Call* newsletter received a first place award in the newsletter category, and the YLC's Peer Mediation and other programs received special recognition from the ABA/YLD. Needless to say, we are extremely proud of these achievements and believe that they will increase the YLC's momentum heading into the new bar year.

Speaking of the new bar year, I wanted to take this opportunity to let the members of the YLC know that while we encourage young lawyers' participation in our activities and programs, we also value our role as a resource to our members. I realize that many young lawyers around the Commonwealth spend countless hours helping and serving others in their communities. Many of you are battling social injustice, seeking legal reform, fighting for the underdog and making a difference in your own quiet way. Let the YLC know how we can help you, or at least let us know what service you are providing, and perhaps we

can offer assistance in some way. Assistance may come in the form of volunteers, program ideas, funding, referrals and other resources, or it may be the YLC watching and cheering you on as you succeed in helping others.

But for those of you who are not involved and motivated by the desire to help and serve, I offer you the outstanding opportunities available in the YLC to serve the bar and the public. Let me quickly highlight a new program for the upcoming bar year that will need young lawyers' support. The ABA/YLD has worked closely with members of the California Hate Crimes Task Force and others to develop a comprehensive tolerance teaching program for children. Third graders were selected because at this age children begin to develop the peer norms that affect the formation of their lifelong values and behavior. It is in the third grade that children learn to bully and tease the child with braces, the child with glasses, the child with different skin color or religious practices, or the child who is always picked last for the baseball team. The YLC, with The Virginia Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, will launch this program during Community Law Week aiming to teach these children to respect rather than scorn differences, to feel that they belong, to boost their self-esteem and to be tolerant, peaceful human beings. We also plan to increase our distribution of our *Senior Citizen Handbook* that has been translated into Spanish, develop new programs relating to immigrant outreach, and continue our efforts to increase the diversity of our noble profession during Community Law Week.

Some young lawyers may be interested in other issues such as the professional development of young lawyers, emergency legal services, children and the law, peer mediation and other programs. If so, the YLC has an avenue that will allow you to accomplish your goals. If you are no longer a young lawyer, I encourage you to support the YLC, to support our programs, and to support young lawyers that participate in the YLC. Finally, the YLC board and I hope to meet many young lawyers across the Commonwealth this year and to help accomplish this goal, we are planning the following receptions at locations to be announced on November 30, 2001, in Williamsburg, and March 15, 2002, in Charlottesville. ☺