

On Reading Coke

On page six of the *Virginia Lawyer*, June/July 2004, there is an article entitled "Another Reason to Read Coke," in which reference is made to a book review article on Sir Edward Coke, and his "Institutes and References." I think it might be interesting to read, or possibly review, a book entitled "The Lion and the Throne," which is a historical review of not only Sir Edward Coke's life, but the life and times of England's monarchs from 1600 to 1650—Queen Elizabeth I, King James I and King Charles I. The book is very broad in scope as it covers not only Sir Edward Coke's life but many other relevant happenings in that time; and I must add there were many!

Gilliam Conrad
Lynchburg

Favorable Impression

I am writing to you to express my high regard for a member of the Virginia State Bar, Ms. Jean Galloway Ball, who practices in Fairfax. I have had the privilege to work for her for the past four and a half months and have had the opportunity to observe her interactions with clients and with those she supervises. I have also been a part of the general day-to-day work routine, and have observed how the law office is run. I have been consistently impressed by Ms. Ball's high ethical standards, her honesty and generosity and her dedication and commitment to her clients. In her field of law, clients and their families may be struggling with challenging health issues and loss. Ms. Ball treats her clients with kindness and consideration and provides reassurance in trying times. Ms. Ball has also impressed me with the courteous and respectful way she treats those she supervises. She leads by example—by working consistently and efficiently, adhering to high standards and going the extra mile.

I believe that the way a person acts when there are no clients around reveals something about their character. Ms. Ball's actions—whether clients are present or not—make me feel that she is not only someone with knowledge and expertise, but also someone with an inner core of

high ethics and self-discipline. Ms. Ball is consistently professional and ethical, hard working, dedicated and trustworthy. All too often, lawyers are depicted in complimentary ways in our culture. Ms. Ball represents a truly good lawyer in every sense of the word. I would like to see her receive recognition for her hard work and excellent character.

Susan Bartlett

Successful Results from Application of Virginia ADR Program

I consider myself a very fortunate American veteran with combat-related disabilities. I have served my country by maintaining combat-ready status for virtually twenty years in fighter aircraft, with three year of fierce combat air-to-ground support in Vietnam. I flew 250 combat sorties that were credited with saving thousands of Vietnamese and American lives. Those of us flying in support of our ground troops between 1965 and 1969 never asked for any "quarter" and risked our lives on a daily basis. The daily risks left my damaged body with numerous painful replacement parts.

In 1982 my wife and I purchased a building in an Alexandria subdivision and restructured it into an industrial office building. Unbeknownst to us, the City of Alexandria authorized a high-rise development area that engulfed our office building.

Yes, our purchase was profitable, and yes, many pseudo-professionals in Alexandria had personal designs for relieving us of our retirement funds—particularly since my wife and I reside in Florida throughout the year. We terminated all of the deceptive parties and sold the property ourselves. During the following five months an attorney continued to harass us for overcharges that he created. Although he had been replaced he continued to claim that he was involved during the reselling phase of the building.

I made a decision to put a stop to this attorney's claims. I had to find out what tools were available for me to educate myself on Virginia statutes that might aid a non-attorney like myself to "participate in

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combat on a level field" with the attorney. I called the Virginia State Bar and told Paulette J. Davidson my plight. She provided me with information on the Fee Dispute Resolution Program. She, along with Mark D. Seidelson, chair of the Fee Dispute Resolution Committee in my local circuit, graciously provided pamphlets that instructed me about two available options. With this "chest of tools," I was able to develop a tactical scheme for my former attorney "with an itching palm" that he could not afford to challenge. I was able to convince the attorney to settle in my favor.

The VSB Fee Dispute Resolution Program is excellent and, if properly exercised, can more often than not settle without unjustly damaging the attorney through formal charges; that is, unless the attorney refuses to cooperate. Most importantly, Ms. Davidson and Mr. Seidelson were very sincere and knowledgeable in their individual efforts to assure the programs worked for me. Please encourage their continued support for others like me. It is refreshing.

I am enclosing a check for fifty dollars payable to the order of "Arlington County Bar Association, c/o Mark D. Seidelson," in appreciation of the help I received.

John E. Downey, Col USAF (Ret)
Palm City, Florida