

# REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

## SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BENCH-BAR RELATIONS

*Arthur L. Moshos, Chair*

The mission of the committee is to improve the administration of justice, enhance service to the community and increase professionalism within the legal community by promoting the exchange of information and ideas between the judiciary and practicing attorneys of the commonwealth. The committee's activities range from the monitoring of changes in the judicial system to actual involvement in legal education programs for both judges and lawyers. The following matters or projects were addressed during the Virginia State Bar year 2001 to 2002.

- **Responding to the Unjust Criticism of Judges and the Judicial System.** This year, the committee was not asked to respond to the unjust criticism of a judge in Virginia. The guidelines approved by the bar council are a very effective tool in making a decision as whether to respond to the unjust criticism of a judge and in suggesting the form of the response. The committee needs to make local bars aware of it and encourage its use.
- **Regional Judicial Conferences.** The committee continues to have a program for regional judicial conferences that are held twice a year in six judicial regions across the commonwealth. This year there were presentations made by the committee.
- **Annual Seminar at the VSB Annual Meeting.** The committee and the litigation section of the Virginia State Bar, again, jointly sponsored a program, this time on "Jury Orientation and Management: Practical and Ethical Issues and Solutions." The presenters were the Honorable Elizabeth B. Lacy, the Honorable Lydia Calvert Taylor, Paul M. Black, Gregory A. Giordano and Michael F. Urbanki.
- **Orientation Video for Jurors.** The jury orientation video to be used by circuit courts statewide was scripted, and final approval was obtained from the Virginia State Bar and Supreme Court of Virginia. The filming was in process as the report was written. All funding has been obtained, and the final version of the video should be available for use in the fall.
- **Jury Task Force Report.** The committee continues to monitor the jury reform task force report.
- **Judicial Merit Selection and Retention.** The committee continues to monitor the legislation or judicial issues that affect the process of evaluating, nominating, electing or retaining statewide judges.
- **Annual Judicial Conference.** The committee continues to monitor and encourage attendance by lawyer invitees. The conference is worthwhile and more lawyers should attend it.
- **Other Projects.** The committee established a notebook that contains project and seminar materials that were completed over the year by the committee. It is hoped this availability will encourage use by judges, members of the Virginia State Bar and the local bar associations.

