

REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

THE VIRGINIA LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE

Zaida Cordero Thompson, Chair

For 20 years the Virginia Lawyer Referral Service (“VLRS”) has provided effective and quality legal assistance to the citizens of the Commonwealth, as well as many other states and Canada. The VLRS is the public service arm of the bar and strives to promote the image of the legal profession.

The VLRS received approximately 30,000 calls and made more than 23,000 referrals this past bar year. The VLRS assisted many more with referrals to public service or government agencies. VLRS representatives attended twice yearly the VSB admission and orientation ceremonies for new attorneys and participated in the accompanying first day in practice activities. Three hundred to eight hundred admittees returned home with VLRS information. The VLRS assisted the Virginia State Bar’s Young Lawyers Conference and The Virginia Bar Association’s Young Lawyers in disaster relief efforts, through its “800” hotline, with free legal advice to affected citizens.

Surveys were mailed to members who responded that the VLRS provides a valuable public service. The VLRS brown bag lunch series invited members as guest speaker/lecturers to the staff to educate them about the nuances of legal claims.

VLRS revised its rules and regulations. The appeal process was addressed and the administrative remedies process was severed from bar counsel involvement. This action reduced any confusion a member may have regarding his/her status with the disciplinary arm of the VSB. In addition, the member application now includes the revised rules and regulations for the first time. This enables the members to be fully informed of VLRS requirements at the time of enrollment.

The VLRS became a self-supporting branch of the Virginia State Bar, exceeding its revenue projections.

The success of the VLRS would not have been possible without the efforts of the VLRS staff, Barbara O. Allen, director, Victoria Meadows, Toni Dunson and Erin Weston.

A special thanks goes to all of committee members: Sally Andrews, Cheryl Avery, Bradley Cavedo, David Furrow, Catherine Lee, Jay C. Paul, David Pugh, Eric Spencer, Richard Stahl, John Tran and Steve Whitaker.

