

REPORTS OF THE SECTIONS

GENERAL PRACTICE

Carol B. Gravitt, Chair

The General Practice Section made significant achievements during the 2002–2003 fiscal year. These are the highlights of our activities:

First Day in Practice Seminar

The section's headline production is its annual First Day in Practice Seminar, co-sponsored by the Young Lawyers Conference, and made available to all new bar admittees at a minimal cost. The faculty of the 2002 First Day in Practice Seminar was as stellar as ever, including the following pre-eminent speakers: former Supreme Court Justice Charles Thomas, U. S. District Court Judge Robert R. Merhige, Circuit Court Judge Leslie Alden, General District Court Judge Jacqueline Ward Talevi, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Judge Denis Soden, Glenn Lewis, Frank Thomas, Craig Cooley, Frank Brown, Malissa Giles, Gerald Swartz and Frank Blatt. These speakers donated their time for this worthwhile cause, and several make return visits each year. The evaluations for this program are always glowing.

The Tradition of Excellence Award

The General Practice Section annually recognizes an attorney with at least ten years of experience practicing law and five years as a general practitioner who “embodies the highest tradition of personal and professional excellence in Virginia and, in doing so, enhances the image and esteem of attorneys in the Commonwealth.” The 2003 Tradition of Excellence Award was presented this year to Alexandria attorney Kenneth McFarlane Smith.

Midyear Meeting in Italy

The section sponsored a CLE program for the Virginia State Bar mid-year seminar in Rome, Italy. The seminar focused on technology for the small firm, discussing and showing how case management software and other computerization of an office can bring client satisfaction and monetary benefits to the attorney.

Bar Leaders Institutes

The General Practice Section, under the leadership of new board member George Shanks—and with the Senior Lawyers Conference—participated in the Bar Leaders Institutes in Richmond and Abingdon. The programs concerned our duty and responsibility, as practitioners, to plan for our unexpected inability to practice law due to death or disability and how to avoid receiverships when that unexpected disaster occurs.

As a complement to our First Day in Practice Seminar, the section is planning a Last Day in Practice Seminar designed to address how to retire or reduce workload, how to ethically sell a law practice (or assets from it) and how to fulfill the ethical duty to plan for unexpected death or disability. The board hopes to offer this seminar to seasoned practitioners for a minimal fee in the spring of 2004.

Annual Meeting Workshop

At the state bar annual meeting in Virginia Beach this June, the General Practice Section co-sponsored a seminar with the Senior Lawyers Conference and the Trusts and Estates Section on “Tax Reform and Estate Planning.” The program was particularly relevant since it explained the newest tax reforms passed by Congress less than a month earlier.

Section Newsletter

Last year, the section continued its tradition of high quality newsletters under the supervision of our immediate-past chair, Evan Farr. Evan has served as newsletter editor for several years and with the last issue turns the reins over to board member Kathleen McKee from the Regent University School of Law.

2003–2004 Board

The new officers for the section are: Powell Duggan, chair; Judy August, vice-chair; and Mona Flax, secretary. Other board members include: Andrea Erard, Mechanicsville; Debora C. Embrey, Lynchburg; Daniel Farnsworth, Keysville; Linda Lambert, Richmond; Kathleen McKee, Virginia Beach; George Shanks, Luray; Alexander Simon, Richmond; Jill Dickerson, Farmville; Alexander Dillard, Tappahannock and Charles Adams, Richmond. Judicial members include: the Honorable Thomas Branch Hoover of New Kent, the Honorable Barbara Joan Gaden of Richmond, and the Honorable Winship Carver Tower of Virginia Beach. *Ex officio* members are Evan Farr, second immediate past chair and Carol Gravitt, immediate past chair.

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Acknowledgments

Our section's accomplishments would not be possible without our bar liaison, Pat Sliger, who has been indispensable. This section would have perished long ago without Pat's nurturing and supervision. The section is tremendously grateful to Ellen Coates—our only retiring board member—for her steadfastness and her tireless efforts handling the Tradition of Excellence Award.

