

## REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

The 2003–2004 bar year was a very successful one for the Virginia State Bar. I thank all of the members of the bar and the staff for making this a successful year and continuing to improve the legal system in all respects. The bar will continue its outstanding work on behalf of our members, the judiciary and the general public with our future leaders. The following are a few highlights from the bar year.

### **Law School for Legislators**

This was a program created and produced by the members of the VSB to assist our legislators in a better understanding of the bar and the legal system. It was well attended and well received by the legislators. This program covered the organization of the judiciary, the VSB and the legal system. The legislators have requested that the program be offered again in 2005.



### **Better Annual Meeting Committee**

Following the 2002 VSB Annual Meeting, a committee reviewed the existing structure of the annual meeting and considered new ideas to reinvigorate future annual meetings. This committee, along with the bar staff, made numerous improvements to the annual meeting. These improvements met with rave reviews and increased attendance. This committee continues its important and productive work which means that future annual meetings will be even better.

### **Local Bar Contact**

Your officers continued and increased contacts with local and statewide voluntary bars throughout the commonwealth. It was a pleasure to meet and speak with as many bars as possible. More importantly, the work of the local bars and statewide bars was truly inspiring. It was wonderful to see the increased communications by the local bars among themselves and with the VSB to share programs and ideas for the benefit of their communities. This important work was greatly promoted and assisted by the Conference of Local Bar Associations.

### **Review of *Pro Hac Vice* Admission**

Virginia is one of the few states that does not have any type of registration for *pro hac vice* admission of attorneys from other states. This has caused great concern over the number of nonregulated, non-Virginia attorneys who are admitted regularly *pro hac vice* to appear in Virginia courts. A task force has been studying the need to propose rules that require the registration of non-Virginia attorneys and to monitor the frequency with which they appear in Virginia courts.

### **VSB Computer System**

The VSB office has been long overdue for a new computer system. Over the last several years the state bar staff, officers and the Computer Committee have been working hard to implement a new system. That new system—which will enable the bar to do everything faster and better for our members, the courts and the public—is being implemented and installed at the bar. Given the varied and complex nature of the bar’s work, the complete implementation of the system is scheduled for 2006.

### **Legal Aid Support**

Legal aid has suffered markedly in recent times because of changes in the economy. The officers, VSB Council and many members of the state bar increased long-standing efforts to improve legal aid funding to all Virginians. The state bar continues to work with the members of the legal aid community to help find additional funding to meet the needs of legal aid.

### **General Assembly Contacts**

The efforts to meet with and speak to as many legislators as possible regarding the organization and work of the bar began in the 2002–2003 bar year under President Ben DiMuro and continued with great success during this bar year. The legislators, their staff and the General Assembly could not have been more gracious with their time and input. It was very productive for both the state bar and the legislators to share information and questions regarding the functions of the VSB and the process and procedures of the legal system.

### **Lawyers’ Good Works**

It was and remains one of the greatest pleasures to be able to tell the public—but especially lawyers—about the good works of lawyers throughout the commonwealth. The invaluable benefit of the good works of lawyers can be

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seen on a daily basis and has and will continue to have a tangible positive impact on the lives of all citizens. The most striking characteristics about these good works are that lawyers do them because it is the right thing to do and almost always do them without attribution. The VSB Publications Department published a pamphlet entitled "Legally Informed," that details the pro bono, civic and charitable activities of local and statewide bars.

### **Finally**

As always, the conferences, committees and sections of the VSB continued their invaluable and superior work on behalf of our members, the judiciary and the public. There are two individuals who should be noted for their outstanding efforts:

- Pat Barton, immediate past chair of the Senior Lawyers Conference. Pat's tireless work on the numerous projects of the SLC was truly awe inspiring.
- Katie Uston, immediate past chair of the Young Lawyers Conference. She was equally outstanding in her energetic work and gold-medal leadership of the YLC.

We all have benefited from these hard-working, humble and gifted lawyers.

During this past bar year there were many challenges and rewards. I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of such a wonderful group of people. The members of the bar are to be commended for all of their good and hard work on behalf of all of us. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeannie P. Dahnk