

## EDUCATION OF LAWYERS IN VIRGINIA

*George A. Somerville, chair*

The Section on the Education of Lawyers:

- exchanges information and promotes constructive action on legal education issues
- promotes communication and enhances cooperation among the academic community, the judiciary, and the practicing bar in Virginia
- sponsors projects on the education of lawyers in law school and throughout their careers
- publishes materials and offers programs that enhance cooperation between law schools, the bench, and the practicing bar

The section pursued those purposes during fiscal 2007 through a newsletter, professionalism programs at Virginia's law schools, and a Mini-Conclave on Legal Education in partnership with the American Bar Association's Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar.

Professor James M. Boland of Regent University School of Law was editor of the section's newsletter. The section published two issues this year, including an interview with Chief Justice Leroy R. Hassell Sr. in the spring issue. Boland will continue to serve as newsletter editor in fiscal 2008.

The Professionalism Program for Law Students, developed by the education section and the Virginia State Bar's Standing Committee on Professionalism, was offered to first-year students at each of Virginia's eight accredited law schools. All sessions were well-attended and student evaluations were strongly positive. The program will remain a staple for those beginning the study of law in the commonwealth. Circuit Judge J. Martin Bass was chair of this annual project, and U.S. Magistrate Judge B. Waugh Crigler served as cochair.

The Mini-Conclave on Legal Education was held at the University of Virginia School of Law on June 8, 2007. William R. Rakes, chair of the ABA Legal Education Section, and Thomas A. Edmonds, executive director of the Virginia State Bar, presented opening remarks. Dean John C. Jeffries Jr. of the U.Va. Law School welcomed attendees. Dean Rodney A. Smolla of the T.C. Williams School of Law at the University of Richmond led a discussion on preparing lawyers for their roles in a global society. Panelists for a discussion of ways to improve diversity in the legal profession and bar organizations included Carolyn B. Lamm (White & Case LLP), Dean Jeffries, Professor Blake D. Morant (associate dean for academic affairs and a professor of law at Washington and Lee University) and Mathew D. Staver (dean of Liberty University School of Law). Virginia Justice Elizabeth B. Lacy led the second panel, which included Jeffrey A. Brauch (dean of the Regent School of Law), Karen A. Gould (president of the VSB), Annamaria L. Nields (assistant dean at George Mason University School of Law), Judge Cleo E. Powell (Chesterfield County Circuit Court), Clinton W. "Wes" Shinn (dean of Appalachian School of Law), and W. Scott Street III (secretary of the Virginia Board of Bar Examiners). Dean W. Taylor Reveley III of Marshall-Wythe School of Law at the College of William and Mary closed the program with an address on "The Lawyer as Public Citizen."

The section gratefully acknowledges the financial support to the conclave from law firms Christian & Barton LLP; Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore LLP; Hunton & Williams LLP; Michie, Hamlett, Lowry, Rasmussen & Tweel PC; Oblon Spivak McClelland Maier & Neustadt PC; Patten, Wornom, Hatten, & Diamonstein LC; Troutman Sanders LLP; and Vandeventer Black LLP.

In addition, Virginia's accredited law schools and a number of leading law firms contributed to the section's annual operating budget. The section board of governors offers thanks to all the law schools and the following firms for their support: Edmunds & Williams PC; Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore LLP; Rees Broome PC; and Troutman Sanders LLP.

The board also wishes to express thanks to three outgoing members for diligent and excellent service. Those members are William G. Broaddus, Eric R. Thiessen, and Bruce C. Stockburger.

This report would not be complete if it did not include one major disappointment — the failure at the VSB Council of a proposal for a statutory amendment to allow admission of full-time law professors as active members of the Virginia State Bar. At a series of meetings between October 2005 and March 2006, the section Board of Governors discussed, debated, and ultimately endorsed a proposal to request an amendment to Virginia Code § 54.1-3931. The proposed amendment would have authorized the Supreme Court to provide by rule that law professors in Virginia who have been admitted to practice in another state may be admitted without examination to active membership in the Virginia State Bar. The statute currently provides for only associate membership, except that any attorney who has been admitted to practice law in another state or territory or the District of Columbia for at least five years may be admitted to the Virginia State Bar. At its meeting on October 27, 2006, the VSB Council rejected the section's proposal by a vote of 38-13.

George A. Somerville served as chair of the section's nominating committee, with members who included Circuit Judge J. Martin Bass (a member of the section board); Warren County Attorney Blair D. Mitchell; Sharon K. Eimer, a public defender in Lynchburg; James E. Brydges Jr. of Taylor & Walker PC in Norfolk; Robert S. Ballou of Johnson Ayers & Matthews PLC in Roanoke; and Professor Margaret I. Bacigal of the University of Richmond.

New officers are Professor Henry L. Chambers Jr., chair; Lawrence H. Hoover Jr., vice chair; and Winston S. "Sid" Moore, secretary. Prince William Circuit Judge Rossie D. Alston Jr., UR Professor Paul M. Thompson, John D. Sharer of Dominion Resources Services Inc., Frank K. Friedman of Woods Rogers PLC, and John H. Foote of Walsh Colucci Lubeley Emrich & Walsh PC are new and returning members of the board of governors.

