



## **SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BENCH-BAR RELATIONS**

*Sterling E. Rives III, chair*

The purpose of the Bench-Bar Relations Committee is to support and improve the administration of justice, enhance service to the community, and increase professionalism within the legal system by promoting the exchange of information and ideas between the judiciary and lawyers of the commonwealth. The committee has continued or initiated the following undertakings during the 2005–2006 fiscal year:

**Orientation Video for Jurors:** The orientation video for jurors was updated and has been distributed to circuit courts across Virginia. The committee is exploring sources of funding and means of distribution to make this video available for use by classroom teachers and others.

**Judicial Independence and Merit Selection and Retention of Judges:** The committee believes this continues to be an issue that requires the attention and advocacy of members of the bench and bar. Several members of the committee will prepare educational articles for publication in major newspapers in the commonwealth for the purpose of increasing public awareness of this issue. The committee has offered to provide speakers in the upcoming year for regional judicial conferences and meetings of statewide bar associations.

**Bench-Bar Communications:** The committee has offered to provide speakers to regional judicial conferences, statewide bar associations and the Bar Leaders Institute to discuss the many effective formal and informal methods of communicating concerns and information between the bench and the bar on the local level.

**Presentation at the VSB Annual Meeting:** The Litigation Section and Family Law Section of the Virginia State Bar, joined by the Bench-Bar Relations Committee, sponsored a continuing legal education seminar, “Extreme Makeover: Preparing Your Client to Testify,” at the VSB Annual Meeting. The program featured skits and a panel

discussion by judges and veteran litigators and included a one-hour ethics component addressing the boundary between good witness preparation and improper witness coaching.

The committee, which meets at the Richmond offices of the VSB, has established the second Tuesday of August, November, February and May as its regular meeting dates.

