

## CONFERENCE OF LOCAL BAR ASSOCIATIONS

*M. Janet Palmer, chair*

Virginia State Bar fiscal year 2005–2006 marked the successful continuation of existing programs and an enthusiastic implementation of a new initiative. Added to the Conference of Local Bar Associations's Executive Committee were Andrew M. Conclin of the Henrico Bar Association and Dillina W. Stickley of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham County Bar Association. Departing members Manual A. Capsalis and Nancy C. Dickenson are to be thanked for service and dedication to the CLBA.

The Bar Leaders Institute (BLI) again provided a vehicle for leadership training, networking and information regarding projects of other local bars. There were two locations: Williamsburg and Abingdon. New topics of discussion included the Indigent Defense Task Force report, Lawyers Helping Lawyers and ethical issues of contingency planning. We were honored to have College of William & Mary President Gene R. Nichol as our luncheon speaker in Williamsburg and Robert J. Grey Jr., immediate past president of the American Bar Association, in Abingdon. W&M and the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center provided inspiring venues for these events.

The CLBA became the permanent home for the Solo & Small-Firm Practitioner Forums, initiated by the Supreme Court of Virginia and led by Chief Justice Leroy R. Hassell Sr. and Justice Cynthia D. Kinser. Three forums were presented, building on the first in March 2005. James Madison University in Harrisonburg, The College of William & Mary (in conjunction with the BLI) and the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville were selected to host these events. Solo and small-firm attorneys attended programs geared to their specific needs. Topics included ethical issues crucial to solo and small firms, law-office management, technology, trust accounting, and protecting clients in the event of a lawyer's death or disability. In addition to President Nichol in Williamsburg, keynote speakers were Chief Justice Hassell in Harrisonburg and Chief Deputy Attorney General William C. Mims in Danville.

Each forum concluded with a Town Hall meeting led by the Chief Justice, with Justice Kinser, VSB President Phillip V. Anderson and VSB Executive Director Thomas A. Edmonds as panelists. A candid question-and-answer period that ended each meeting was well-received and endorsed for future forums.

Thanks to a grant from the Virginia Law Foundation, awarded in May 2006, the signature publication of the CLBA, *So You're 18*, will again be updated and published in English and Spanish with a fall beginning-of-school, distribution date. A new emphasis includes distribution and presentations of the booklet at local drivers licensing ceremonies. Interest expressed by juvenile and domestic court judges has been positive.

Information regarding local bar activities and pro bono opportunities will continue to be available through the *Legally Informed* booklet, CLBA monthly columns in the *Virginia Lawyer* and the *Local Bar Connection* newsletter.

Two exceptional individuals were honored at the CLBA annual meeting in June at Virginia Beach. Carolyn M. Grimes of the Alexandria Bar Association and George W. Dodge of the Arlington County Bar Association each received a Bar Leader of the Year award. They represent achievement and volunteerism of the highest order. Thirty-two Awards of Merit and Certificates of Achievement were given for excellence to local and specialty bars of all sizes. Multibar projects were also recognized.

Many thanks to my fellow committee members and the VSB staff. We have much to be proud of.

