

Working with the Senior Lawyers Conference— A Collaboration with a Difference

Savalle C. Sims, 2004–2005 Young Lawyers Conference President



The Senior Lawyers Conference has long stressed the restoration of civility in the profession and emphasized professionalism in every facet of the practice of law. With more than seven thousand members, the Senior Lawyers Conference has nearly as many members as the Young Lawyers Conference. The Senior Lawyers Conference provides a wealth of resources, including a program on planning for a lawyer's own disability or death and programs on retirement planning for lawyers.

For several years, the Young Lawyers Conference has had the privilege of working with and learning from the Senior Lawyers Conference. The collaboration between organizations results in a collaboration with a difference—the perfect blend of youthful enthusiasm, wisdom and perspective.

One such collaboration produced the *Senior Citizens Handbook*—an invaluable public resource. The Young Lawyers Conference was pleased to have the opportunity to assist the Senior Lawyers Conference in the publication, distribution and translation into Spanish of the *Senior Citizens Handbook*.

In addition to the strong working relationship that the Young Lawyers Conference has developed with the Senior Lawyers Conference, the Senior Lawyers Conference serves as an unofficial mentor for the Young Lawyers Conference. We call upon members of the Senior Lawyers Conference to speak at our leadership and professional development conferences.

I have learned many lessons from working with the Seniors Lawyers Conference. Here are a few:

- **Value professionalism:** Do not feel that, as a young lawyer, you have to cast aside principles such as civility to gain a competitive edge against more seasoned lawyers. Always maintain professionalism in your dealings with opposing counsel, the court and your clients.
- **Follow the Golden Rule:** Treat your colleagues, clients and others as you would wish to be treated.

- **Find a Mentor:** Find a senior mentor with whom you can develop a meaningful relationship. The perspective and experiences of senior lawyers are invaluable. They have seen and done it all.
- **Get Involved:** Get involved in professional and bar organizations beyond young lawyer conferences to increase knowledge, networking and interaction with senior lawyers or find ways to partner on projects with senior lawyers.

Many young lawyers have contacted me recently mourning the death of Robert R. Merhige Jr., an honorary member of the Senior Lawyers Conference and a noted jurist before he retired and resumed the practice of law in 1988. I understand that Judge Merhige was a wonderful mentor to many young lawyers. The Young Lawyers Conference will miss him.

The Young Lawyers Conference looks forward to continuing our work with the Senior Lawyers Conference—and to joining the ranks of the Senior Lawyers Conference to continue our tradition of collaboration. ☪

R. EDWIN BURNETTE JR. YOUNG LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Seeking Nominations

The Virginia State Bar Young Lawyers Conference is seeking nominations for the R. Edwin Burnette Jr. Young Lawyer of the Year Award.

This award honors an outstanding young Virginia lawyer who has demonstrated dedicated service to the YLC, the profession and the community.

The nomination deadline is April 29, 2005. Letters of nominations and any supporting materials should be sent to:

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