

Notes from the Conference Chair



William T. Wilson, 2005–2006 Senior Lawyers Conference Chair

The featured articles in this edition of the *Virginia Lawyer* are either authored or sponsored by members of the Senior Lawyers Conference (SLC). The conference has more than 11,200 members. When members of the Virginia State Bar reach fifty-five years of age, they automatically become members, making the Senior Lawyers Conference the largest conference of the VSB—fast becoming even larger as baby boomers come on board.

As I have chaired the Senior Lawyer's Conference, and even before that, as a member of the conference's Board of Governors, I have been impressed by the energy, insight and productivity of the senior lawyers. Many of them give countless hours to our conference programs when they just as easily could be enjoying the rocking chair of retirement. We are also blessed with a Board of Governors that is as active as any group of young lawyers I know. I thank them all for their service. I also thank the very able Patricia A. Sliger, our liaison with the Virginia State Bar, for her help.

Although mentioned elsewhere in this magazine, it is worthwhile to list again some of the Senior Lawyer Conference programs:

- **Senior Law Day Program**—The conference has been encouraging all local bar associations to conduct Senior Law Day programs in their jurisdictions. This is a program patterned after one that was successfully executed in Covington by the Alleghany-Bath-Highland Bar. A panel of eight lawyers, including a general district court judge, divided the *Senior Citizens Handbook* and explained it to an audience of one hundred senior citizens. Because of the success of that program, the conference has not only enthusiastically sponsored the program but has also agreed to furnish *Senior Citizens Handbooks* to bar associations willing to put on similar programs. Both Chief Justice Leroy R. Hassell Sr. and VSB president Phillip V. Anderson have endorsed the program. If you are interested in putting on a Senior Law Day Program, please contact Pat Sliger at (804) 775-0576.
- **Senior Citizens Handbook**—This is the handbook that is jointly produced and distributed by the Senior Lawyers Conference and the Young Lawyers Conference. It is a great book for both senior citizens and younger citizens who are interested in senior law issues.

- **Frank O. Brown Jr.**, former Senior Lawyer Conference chair and now editor of the conference newsletter, is stumping the commonwealth explaining to local bar associations the value of lawyers' preparing for death and disability.
- **Emeritus Rule**—The conference was instrumental in getting the Supreme Court of Virginia to adopt a rule that permits retiring lawyers to provide free legal services to indigents without having to meet some of the requirements of active membership.
- **Program for VSB Annual Meeting**—Entitled "So You're Going to a Nursing Home/Assisted Living Facility," this program fits in well with our Senior Law Day program and is designed to educate senior citizens and their families about the technicalities, complications and pitfalls involved when one is considering becoming a resident of one of these institutions. The panel will include state Senator R. Creigh Deeds; Commissioner Anthony Conyers Jr. of the Virginia Department of Social Services; Linda L. Wilhelm, Director of Training and Education for the Virginia Department of Health Center for Quality Healthcare; T. Daniel Frith III, a plaintiff's litigator in nursing home and assisted living facility cases; and Andrew H. Hook, whose practice focuses on elder law estate issues. I will moderate the panel.
- **Web site**—The Senior Lawyers Conference has a Web site designed to provide helpful information to the profession and the public. Again, Frank Brown keeps that program going (and, in fact, set it up). www.vsb.org/slc/index.html.
- **Other programs**—Senior lawyers are also well represented on the committees and commissions set up through the initiatives of Chief Justice Hassell, i.e. "Involuntary Commitment," "Fees for Lawyers who Represent Indigent Defendants" and "Courts in the Twenty-First Century".

Senior lawyers give unselfishly back to the profession while they try to demonstrate to the younger lawyers, by example, the value of civility and professionalism. It's been "quite a trip so far" (as "Gus" said in *Lonesome Dove*). Thanks for having me serve.