

## Second Indigent Criminal Defense Seminar Scheduled; Free CLEs for Court-Appointed Lawyers

For a second year, the Supreme Court of Virginia and Virginia State Bar have assembled a prestigious and diverse panel of national experts to present “Indigent Criminal Defense: Advanced Skills for the Experienced Practitioner,” a seminar for public defenders and court-appointed counsel in the commonwealth.

This year’s program will take place April 7, 2006, live at the Richmond Convention Center, with a video conference at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon. Lawyers who take court-appointed criminal cases, either as private attorneys or public defenders, may attend without charge. The program will carry 7.5 hours of Continuing Legal Education credit.

Advance registration is required and space will be limited. For details, watch the VSB Web site at [www.vsb.org](http://www.vsb.org).

The seminar grew out of Chief Justice Leroy R. Hassell Sr.’s desire to provide more resources to Virginia’s court-appointed lawyers, who receive the lowest fees in the nation for their work.

Last year’s seminar, led by Virginia Court of Appeals Judge Walter S. Felton Jr., drew 450 lawyers.

The 2006 program, headed by Richmond attorney Steven D. Benjamin, includes the following speakers:

- Jeffrey P. Robinson, Esquire, of Schroeter Goldmark & Bender in Seattle. He is a former public defender for Seattle and King County, Washington, and the U.S. District Court in the Western District of Washington. He will talk about the importance, impact and effective presentation of opening statements.
- Richard Ofshe, Ph.D., a professor emeritus of sociology at the University of California at Berkeley and a national expert on the subject of false confessions.
- Paul C. Nugent, Esquire, of Foreman DeGuerin Nugent in Houston, an experienced criminal defense lawyer. His topic is “Creative Solutions for Impossible Cases.”
- Vanita Gupta, whose first case as a young attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund was a challenge to a bogus drug sting that targeted black residents of Tulia, Texas. She will be the luncheon speaker.
- William C. Thompson, Ph.D., a professor in the Department of Criminology,

Law and Society at the University of California at Irvine. An expert in DNA testing, he helped discredit the work of the Virginia Division of Forensic Science in the case of Earl Washington Jr. He will talk about detecting laboratory error.

- Ruben C. Gur, Ph.D., a psychologist and director of the Brain Behavior Laboratory at the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center in Philadelphia. He is a national expert on schizophrenia and was part of the defense team for convicted Unabomber Theodore J. Kaczynski. His topic is judgment and impulse control in young adults.
- Barbara E. Bergman, Esquire, president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and a professor of law at the University of New Mexico. A former public defender in Washington, D.C. and associate counsel to President Jimmy Carter, she served on the defense team for Terry Nichols in the Oklahoma City bombing case. She will give a U.S. Supreme Court update, including the latest developments in *Washington v. Crawford*.

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## Legal Services of Northern Virginia to Sponsor Two CLE Programs in Fairfax

Two continuing legal education programs will be sponsored this spring by Legal Services of Northern Virginia at Fairfax Judicial Center. The classes—free to lawyers who agree to volunteer for a limited number of legal aid cases—are:

- **Equitable Distribution of International Organization Retirement Benefits**—March 22. Taught by Linda J. Ravdin and Vicki Viramontes-LaFree.
- **Employee Retirement Income Security Act Qualified Domestic Relations Orders: The Law, Current**

**Developments and Present Pitfalls**—April 25. Taught by Janine H. Bosley.

Both programs will be held in the judicial center’s cafeteria from 4 to 6:30 p.m. For more information, e-mail Q. Russell Hatchl, pro bono coordinator for LSNV, at [rhatchl@lsnv.org](mailto:rhatchl@lsnv.org).