

Hello, Goodbye

Manuel A. Capsalis, 2004–2005 Chair, Conference of Local Bar Associations



As this column goes to print, I am completing my term as chair of the Conference of Local Bar Associations (CLBA), and beginning my tenure as immediate past-chair (in other words, forgotten, but not gone). In one of my last official acts, I am pleased to provide this inaugural column of the CLBA to *Virginia Lawyer* magazine. Soon, you will hear from my successor, Janet Palmer, about the vital work of the CLBA.

The CLBA has the responsibility of establishing and maintaining a mutually beneficial working relationship between the Virginia State Bar and 115 local and specialty bars in the commonwealth. As the connection between these bars and the VSB, the CLBA promotes lines of communication and receives input from the local and specialty bars to the VSB on issues affecting the legal profession. It disseminates information about law-related activities on the local and state levels. The CLBA is responsible for facilitating coordination and cooperation between the local and specialty bars and the VSB “in improving the practice of law in Virginia and in enhancing the public understanding and appreciation of law and the legal profession,” according to its mission statement.

A lot of hard-working, dedicated lawyers in Virginia honorably serve the legal profession and their communities. This was ably proven on March 7, 2005, in Richmond, and again on March 18, in Abingdon, when the CLBA presented the twentieth annual Bar Leaders Institute (BLI), offering a full day of training and networking for bar leaders throughout the state. Thanks (as always) to the tireless efforts of our leaders, Barbara Allen and Paulette Davidson, the BLIs showcased many vital activities of Virginia’s local and specialty bars. The diversity and outreach of the activities of these bars is mind-boggling. Bars of all sizes and resources routinely undertake programs such as blood drives, gathering and distributing food for those in need and providing mentoring programs for students from elementary through law schools. Fundraisers are offered for charitable causes. Scholarships, as well as youth courts and summer law camps are established throughout the state by many of these bars. Assistance with wills, free of charge, is offered by many bars for first responders, as are voter registration drives, educational pamphlets and videos to assist the

public to better understand the legal system. At the BLIs, we were also instructed in some of the many things offered by local and specialty bars to further understanding, professionalism and collegiality within the profession, as well as with the judiciary and elected officials, including bench-bar conferences, continuing legal education, and public forums for political and other important issues affecting communities. I invite you to attend a BLI to better learn about these many activities, and perhaps to help you implement a worthy program in your area.

The BLI in Abingdon was special. Presented in coordination with the Supreme Court of Virginia’s Solo and Small-Firm Practitioner Forum, it offered an opportunity for bench and bar to gather for a full day of training, education and comradery. It was a singular honor for me to be a part of such an important event. Of particular note were the tireless efforts of Justice Cynthia D. Kinser and Chief Justice Leroy R. Hassell Sr. in making this event successful. More than any other endeavor I have undertaken in my time working on the local or state bar levels, the BLIs this year proved the dedication and commitment of so many in our profession to the greater good of our communities. I came away from each BLI fully invigorated and privileged to be a part of the practice of law in Virginia.

Building on the success of Abingdon, the CLBA is proud to team with the Supreme Court of Virginia to take the BLI and the Solo and Small-Firm Practitioner Forum to other venues. On September 21, 2005, there will be a full-day forum in Harrisonburg. Another will soon follow in Fredricksburg. The CLBA also looks forward to presenting the twenty-first annual BLIs in March 2006, in Richmond and Abingdon. I hope many of you will be a part of these important events.

This bar year proved to be a banner year for *So You’re 18*, the seminal publication of the CLBA. This handbook on legal rights and responsibilities is printed in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. This year we distributed over ten thousand copies throughout the state, and many others were downloaded from the VSB Web site. Particularly gratifying was the varied list of

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CLBA Awards Given at Annual Meeting

The following bar associations received recognition from the Virginia State Bar's Conference of Local Bar Associations (CLBA) at the bar's annual meeting in Virginia Beach on June 17, 2005. The awards recognize excellence and high achievement in projects that serve the bench, the bar and the citizens of Virginia.

Awards of Merit

Alexandria Bar Association—Beat the Odds scholarship/grant program

Bar Association of the City of Richmond—Pro Se Education Project: Landlord-Tenant pamphlet

Campbell County Bar Association—"Virginia's Foster Care Process and You" video project

Fairfax Bar Association (2)—General District Court Comparative Jurisdiction Seminar (in cooperation with the Alexandria, Arlington County and Prince William County bar associations) and Lawyer Referral & Information Service Criminal Law Subject Matter Panel

Henrico County Bar Association—Partners in Education project

Metro Richmond Women's Bar Association—Partnership with Thomas Jefferson High School

Norfolk & Portsmouth Bar Association (2)—Fourteenth Annual Legal Food Frenzy and a project to revitalize its Young Lawyers Section

Roanoke Bar Association (2)—Wills for Heroes and Youth Court programs

Certificates of Achievement

Arlington County Bar Association—Free B. Friday (Free Breakfast Friday) project

Bar Association of the City of Richmond—John Marshall High School partnership program

Fairfax Bar Association (2)—Judicial Feedback Program and All Fairfax Reads program

Henrico County Bar Association—Pro Bono Protective Order project

Metro Richmond Women's Bar Association—Mentorship Program and Annual Pro Bono Luncheon

Northern Virginia Chapter of the Virginia Women Attorneys Association—Annual Legislative Reception

Prince William County Bar Association—Lawyer Referral Service

Roanoke Bar Association—Practice of Law in Southwest Virginia orientation program

Roanoke Chapter of the Virginia Women Attorneys Association—Quarterly Continuing Education Lunch Program

Virginia Beach Bar Association (2)—Past Presidents Council and Dialogue on Freedom project

Virginia Women Attorneys Association—The Future of Marriage in Virginia panel program

recipients, including courts, counselors, social service departments, schools, bar associations, lawyers, law firms, police departments and parole offices. Beginning this fall, *So You're 18* will be updated and available for distribution at the start of each new school year. We are anticipating a substantial distribution and are happy to oblige all who ask. If you or your bar association wish to obtain any copies, please let me know.

This year also marked the inaugural year in which the CLBA assumed responsibility for *Legally Informed*, a VSB publication that details the many public service and pro bono activities offered by local and specialty bars in Virginia. This publication is an indispensable source of information, and is available in an updated edition. If you are interested, please let me know.

At the VSB Annual Meeting this June in Virginia Beach, the CLBA annual meeting included the Awards of Merit competition, recog-

nizing outstanding projects and programs of local and specialty bar associations. The CLBA also presented the tenth annual Local Bar Leader of the Year Award, recognizing extraordinary dedication and service to the bench, bar and the public. It is truly impressive the array of projects and programs recognized, and the meeting was a great opportunity to gather with the best of the best in our profession.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served as chair of the Conference of Local Bar Associations. I look forward to continuing to serve next year under the leadership of Janet Palmer, and in the years ahead as a graying past-chair. There are many challenges ahead for our profession. I am confident that the CLBA will continue to provide an invaluable service in meeting those challenges. ☺