

# Looking Back and Forward: YLC's Midyear Assessment

by Daniel L. Gray, 2007–08 Young Lawyers Conference President



I write this article at the midpoint of the 2007–08 bar year. Before we rush headlong towards the annual meeting, I want to tell you some of what the Virginia State Bar's Young Lawyers Conference has accomplished with the efforts of its board, committee chairs, circuit representatives, and volunteers.

Committee chairs Rasheeda N. Creighton and Yvette A. Ayala presented our Oliver Hill/Samuel Tucker Law Institute at the University of Richmond in July. They shepherded a record twenty-two high school students through the week-long camp, which includes law-related classes, lectures, and social activities. I have helped chaperone students during the institute for three years, and I'd estimate that Rasheeda and Yvette are probably just now recovered.

Alana N. Malick and Mollie C. Barton treated seven newly appointed judges to a marvelous night at the Bull and Bear Club in Richmond on October 16 during our annual Bench-Bar Celebration Dinner. Alana and Mollie organized this event, which was punctuated by a wonderful address from Senior Justice Elizabeth B. Lacy, who presented each honoree with an edition of *Virginia's Historic Courthouses*. Participants were struck by the warmth of the event, which recognized the sacrifices each honoree had made to be a member of the judiciary. Mollie has since gone on to chair the YLC's Commission on Women and Minorities in the Profession, which held a strategy session on participation of women and

minorities in the bar after they "age off" the Young Lawyers Conference.

Ken L. Alger, who revitalized the conference's Domestic Violence Safety Project, presented a series of continuing legal education programs on protective orders and handgun issues as they relate to domestic violence victims throughout the commonwealth. Ken brought the CLE to Roanoke in June and to Winchester in November. He will present it in Virginia Beach in June 2008.

Frances E. Scott again ran a flawless VSB Admission and Orientation Ceremony for almost two thousand bar admittees on October 29. Francie is a model of organization in a sea of chaos. Ryan A. Glasgow continues to inspire favorable commentary from bar staff and attendees at the First Day in Practice Seminar, which also served a record number of new admittees the day after the A&O Ceremony.

Under the leadership of committee chair Bryan M. Rhode, the YLC implemented its Wills for Heroes project in Chesterfield, where, in fall 2007, volunteers provided free wills and advance medical directives to local sheriffs, firefighters, and police officers. Keeping a steady eye on the program they helped implement were Carson H. Sullivan and Erin S. Whaley.

Lest you find these achievements extraordinary in this particular year, the American Bar Association awarded the conference first place in its annual comprehensive category (akin to "best

overall") for the 2006–07 bar year. We won over many better-funded, more populous states. The credit for this recognition goes to the leadership of Immediate Past President Maya M. Eckstein and to the hard work of YLC members last year.

## Mental Health Project

Many of you have certainly noticed the increased interest in the issue of mental health reform in recent months. Though born out of the tragedy in Blacksburg, renewed attention to the issue is heartening to those of us who have been active in mental health issues. The conference is developing a program to bring legal services to the mentally ill population of the commonwealth. We plan to have volunteer lawyers meeting with mentally ill clients at the Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute in Fairfax and the Region 10 Blue Ridge Clubhouse in Charlottesville. Volunteer lawyers will briefly advise and counsel walk-in clients and refer them to other volunteer lawyers in different areas of practice, who will, we hope, provide pro bono consultation.

If you are in or near these jurisdictions and wish to provide access to legal services to a population desperately in need, please contact me at [dgray@cgglawyers.com](mailto:dgray@cgglawyers.com); or, in Charlottesville, Nathan J.D. Veldhuis at [nathan.veldhuis@tremblaysmith.com](mailto:nathan.veldhuis@tremblaysmith.com).