

Richmond Civil Rights Lawyer Will Receive Award for Pro Bono Work

Clarence M. Dunnville Jr., a Richmond attorney whose civil rights work led him from protest demonstrations in the 1950s, to preserving the legacies of the movements' leaders and continuing courtroom battles on behalf of disenfranchised people in the twenty-first century, will be given the 2009 Lewis F. Powell Jr. Pro Bono Award by the Virginia State Bar.

The award is bestowed by the VSB's Committee on Access to Legal Services to recognize dedication to development and delivery of pro bono services that benefit poor and underserved persons in Virginia. The award was named for a late U.S. Supreme Court associate justice from Richmond.

Dunnville, 75, most recently has been involved as a court-appointed advocate in cases that support a constitutional right to counsel in civil cases.

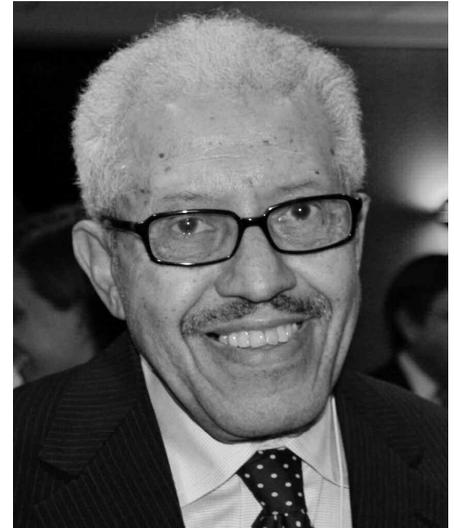
He has committed substantial time in recent years to preserving the legacy of civil rights attorney Oliver W. Hill and his colleagues in the legal battles of the 1950s and '60s. As a founding member of the Oliver White Hill Foundation, Dunnville led a project to purchase and restore Hill's boyhood home in Roanoke. He then formed a coalition to use the home to provide legal services to the poor, as part of a practicum by third-year students at the Washington and Lee University School of Law.

In a nomination letter, Mary Z. Natkin, the W&L assistant dean and professor who oversees the clinic, credited Dunnville's persistence for the development of the clinical program. "We committed to the idea, in large part because of Clarence's vision and dedication, and began designing a program to augment pro bono representation in Roanoke.

"He has been back to the city or on the phone too many times to count to appear before City Council in support of the program, to speak to the Roanoke Bar Association in support of the program, to check on the law fellow residing in the house or the law students working on matters, or for any matter that needs attention.

"It has been particularly inspiring to work with him on this project while he managed his own caseload in Richmond, mentored law students, and cared for his wife." Norine Dunnville, his wife of forty-two years, died in January.

In 2007, Dunnville was awarded the Segal-Tweed Founders Award by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, for displaying outstanding leadership and service in the cause of equal justice under law. Milestones in his life include participating in sit-ins and picketing to protest racial segregation; hearing Thurgood Marshall and Spottswood W. Robinson III argue *Brown v. Board of Education* before the U.S. Supreme Court; serving as a volun-



teer civil rights attorney in Jackson, Mississippi; and co-founding organizations to promote persons of color to management positions and on boards of directors.

"Mr. Dunnville has been a tireless advocate for our liberties throughout his long and storied career," Natkin wrote.

In February, VSB President Manuel A. Capsalis presented Dunnville with a special VSB President's Award in recognition of his many contributions to the legal landscape in Virginia.

Dunnville has a bachelor's degree from Morgan State University and a law degree from St. John's University.

The Powell Award will be presented during the VSB's Pro Bono and Access to Justice Conference on April 20, 2009, in Richmond.

University of Richmond Law Student Wins Virginia State Bar Pro Bono Award

Miriam Sincell, a student at the University of Richmond School of Law, has been selected to receive the Virginia State Bar's 2009 Oliver White Hill Law Student Pro Bono Award.

The award, named for a late Virginia civil rights litigator, recognizes a law student's commitment to uncom-

pensated or minimally compensated pro bono work and other public service. It is bestowed by the VSB Committee on Access to Legal Services.

Sincell's uncompensated pro bono hours while a law student have exceeded the award's one hundred-hour minimum, Professor Margaret Ivey Bacigal

wrote in a nomination letter. Sincell plans to pursue a career in public interest law after she graduates.



Law Student Award continued on page 49

She was one of the first volunteers with the Richmond Child Health Advocacy Program, which addresses legal needs of low-income children who are patients at the Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center.

She also has worked with the Richmond Housing Law Project, the law school's Street Law Program to educate high school students about their legal rights and responsibilities, the Christian Law Fellowship, and the community service committee of the Public Interest Law Association.

Tara Louise Casey, director of UR's Harry L. Carrico Center for Pro Bono Service, described Sincell as an ambassador of the legal profession and the law school to the Richmond community. Through the Street Law Project, for example, she recruited volunteer law students to teach disadvantaged youths about basic legal concepts and correct common misconceptions about the law.

Casey quoted Robert F. Kennedy's words, "The poor man looks upon the law as an enemy, not as a friend. For him the law is always taking something away." Sincell is a student who finds ways to use the law to give back, she wrote.

Sincell grew up in Oakland, Maryland, and received her undergraduate degree from Bucknell University.

The Hill Award will be presented during the VSB's Pro Bono and Access to Justice Conference on April 20, 2009, in Richmond. ■