ONE THING EVERY FORMER
Virginia State Bar president will tell
you is that you shouldn’t blink during
your term — it’s over before you
know it.

Another is that it is exhausting. Adding
this job to your regular workload
dantal experience — it is different for
very president.

It seemed important to me to
reach out to Virginia’s law schools, to
forge ties with law school deans, and
to speak to students who are very
worried about their prospects. As I
write, I’ve visited seven of the eight
law schools (I hope to cross off num-
ber eight by June) and received warm
receptions. They have all asked for
remarks on “The Future of Law,”
though my crystal ball is very murky
at the moment. We should have con-
nections with these students, who rep-
resent students. Most of them will
practice law in Virginia. It’s a good
thing to make them feel connected to
the Virginia State Bar before they
begin their careers.

After giving hundreds of CLEs in
Virginia, I wasn’t too surprised when I
was deluged with e-mails and phone
calls asking me to continue the effort
to educate lawyers in Virginia, espe-
cially about legal technology. With the
help of the VSB staff, I beseeched my
friends on the ABA TECHSHOW fac-
ulty to come do a one day VSB
TECHSHOW in Virginia on an
expenses-only basis. Good sports and
friends that they are, they agreed. As I
write, the May 19 VSB TECHSHOW in
Richmond is in the future, but I know
it will be a great event. Being free, we
expect a full house.

In a time when so many people
prefer to learn via video, we have been
working to add short informational
videos to our website. We produced
and made available ten videos on The
Lawyer Referral Service, The Senior
Citizen’s Handbook, the So You’re 18
handbook, Fee Dispute resolution, the
Clients’ Protection Fund, Filing a
Complaint, Wills, Marriage, Divorce,
and Selecting and Working with a
Lawyer. We are planning ten more
videos — and all can be viewed with a
Spanish translation.

Our largest project is our
Enterprises Content and Records
Management (ECRM) system. While
that may not sound sexy, we will be the
first state bar in the country to have a
full blown ECRM. This system will
severely cut duplicate entries and
afford an efficient and fast way to find,
manage, and secure all of our data.

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of the ABA, with more than 6,000 responses. This is about 15 percent of our membership, which is a very good response rate. Though we are still analyzing the data as I write, you may be interested in some of the preliminary findings:

• 51 percent indicated they were private practitioners.
• 38 percent of private practitioners were in a solo practice alone and 8 percent were in a solo practice sharing office space with other lawyers.
• 40 percent of private practitioners were in firms with more than twenty attorneys.
• The service/benefit rated most high in importance was “Fosters a positive reputation for the legal profession,” with a rating of 4.23 on a 1-5 scale.
• The benefit with the highest satisfaction level was the VSB website at 3.91.
• 43 percent of firms/organizations utilize social media platforms.
• 28 percent are involved in a section, conference, or committee of the bar.
• 24 percent indicated the practice of law was “more rewarding as time passes.”

As you have seen, we have instituted a “From the Desk of the VSB President” e-mail communiqué to focus on specific issues, much as the VBA does in its “In a VBA Minute” communications. Hopefully, this will enable future VSB presidents to communicate directly with members (on a measured basis) in an era when most of us receive important communications digitally. Kudos to Kevin E. Martingayle for championing this innovation.

It is perhaps a good idea that the presidency of the VSB is limited to a single year because I would cheerfully map out a five-year timeline of new technology initiatives.

Along the way, a world of credit goes to Executive Director Karen Gould and her staff for finding a new home for the bar and actually getting us moved. As if that were not enough, with the loss of the Cavalier Hotel as a site for the annual meeting, staff and the Better Annual Meeting Committee have worked hard to reinvent our annual meeting. Thanks to all for their Herculean efforts. I know all the attendees will have a grand time.

At the annual meeting, I look forward to going into the warm sun and green grass of the past presidents’ pasture and turning the reins of the VSB over to my friend Kevin Martingayle. You’ll be in good hands; like me, Kevin is a bundle of energy, and I have no doubt he’ll have a heck of a last column to write a year from now.

Finally, I want to thank each and every member of the Virginia State Bar. Their constant encouragement and words of support have warmed my heart throughout the year. Thank you for allowing me to serve the profession I love so much. I wish them all Godspeed.

P.S. I was overwhelmed by the emotional response to my article on the VSB pilgrimage to the American Cemetery in Normandy. E-mails, phone calls, and notes poured in. Thank you all. I especially thank the man who dubbed himself my “Normandy buddy,” Bill Wilson, for writing a letter so touching that it left me wiping away tears. It was an honor to pay tribute to those courageous members of the “Greatest Generation” who came to Normandy never to leave it.

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VSB.org: A Member Benefit

VSB.org — the Virginia State Bar’s website — helps you with your membership obligations and your practice.

There you’ll find the Member Login, where you can:

• download your dues statement and pay your dues,
• certify Mandatory Continuing Legal Education,
• conduct research on Fastcase, and
• update your contact information with the bar.

At VSB.org, you also can link to:

• Latest News on VSB regulation, programs, and practice information;
• the Professional Guidelines that contain the Rules of Professional Conduct;
• Rule Changes, proposed and approved;
• the Ethics Hotline;
• Meetings and Events; and
• Search Resources for locating Virginia attorneys and checking their status with the state bar.

VSB.org will keep you current and connected.