

Michael N. Herring Honored with the 2016 Harry L. Carrico Professionalism Award

The Virginia State Bar has awarded Richmond Commonwealth's Attorney Michael N. Herring with the 2016 Harry L. Carrico Professionalism Award. The award recognizes "an individual (judge, defense attorney, prosecutor, clerk or other citizen) who has made a singular and unique contribution to the improvement of the criminal justice system in the Commonwealth of Virginia."

Among those nominating Herring were lawyers James A. Bensfield and Jonathan Kossak of the Miller & Chevalier law firm. Bensfield and Kossak represented Michael Kenneth McAlister in a successful petition for a pardon from the governor in 2015, after McAlister served twenty-nine years in prison for a rape he didn't commit. Herring publicly supported that petition. "Mr. Herring did not need to make these statements (supporting McAlister) in such a public way," Bensfield and Kossak wrote. "He did it because he is a man of integrity, courage, and justice.... He is the sort of prosecutor we all hope exists — an advocate for justice — not only for the victims of crime, but for those who the system may, every so often, wrong."

Chief Justice Harry Carrico's daughter, retired Judge Lucretia A. Carrico, presented the award on February 5, 2016, during the 46th Annual Criminal Law Seminar in Williamsburg. The

award, presented by the VSB Criminal Law Section, is named for the former Virginia Supreme Court chief justice who promoted the ideals of professionalism during his forty-two years on the state's highest court.

Retired Richmond Circuit Court Judge Richard D. Taylor Jr. also wrote in support of Herring. "Mike Herring makes what he does professionally in and out of the court look almost easy," Taylor wrote. "Yet, we all know that it is not. It involves relentlessly tough and often gut-wrenching work. The integrity, scholarship and compassion that he has exhibited on a day-to-day basis for decades cannot and should not be taken for granted by us."

Herring received his undergraduate degree in economics in 1987 and his law degree in 1990 from the University of Virginia. He started his career as an associate at Hunton & Williams, later joining the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney in 1992, where he served as a senior felony trial attorney for violent crimes and narcotics offenses. He then returned to the private sector in 1996 at the law firm of LeClair Ryan where his practice focused on medical malpractice defense and criminal defense.

Prior to his 2006 election as commonwealth's attorney, he was a partner at the law firm of Bricker &



Judge Lucretia A. Carrico presented the award to Michael N. Herring.

Herring where he practiced criminal law and medical malpractice law. Herring served as the first African-American president of the Richmond Bar Association in 2005, is a past chair of the Criminal Law Section of the VSB and of the Third District Attorney Disciplinary Committee. He is an active member of various professional organizations, including the American College of Trial Lawyers. He also serves on several government, community, and non-profit boards.

Got an Ethics Question?

The VSB Ethics Hotline is a confidential consultation service for members of the Virginia State Bar. Non-lawyers may submit only unauthorized practice of law questions. Questions can be submitted to the hotline by calling (804) 775-0564 or by clicking on the blue "E-mail Your Ethics Question" box on the Ethics Questions and Opinions web page at www.vsb.org/site/regulation/ethics/.