Conference of Local Bar Associations
by Nancy M. Reed, Chair

Conference Honors Bar Leaders

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING of the Conference of Local Bar Associations on June 17, 2011, the CLBA presented two local bar leaders, Andrea L. Bridgeman and Tracy Ann Houck, with the Local Bar Leader of the Year Award.

Andrea L. Bridgeman is a corporate lawyer whose active pro bono service has included making opportunities for other corporate counsel to represent low-income clients in Virginia without charge. Bridgeman is associate general counsel at Freddie Mac in McLean. She has worked within her company, with the Fairfax Bar Association and other local bars and legal aid societies, in continuing legal education classes, and through the Virginia State Bar to provide direct legal assistance to low-income clients and to make it possible for other corporate counsel to provide limited pro bono representations. She has served on the VSB Committee on Access to Legal Services since 2006 and is currently its chair.

In nominating her for the award, the Washington Metropolitan Area Corporate Counsel Association wrote, “Andrea has been involved in local bars at all levels, making sure that corporate counsel have a voice before these groups and play a visible role in bar activities.”

In Virginia, lawyers who hold bar-issued certificates as corporate counsel normally can represent only one client—the companies for whom they work. Bridgeman helped the Virginia State Bar and Supreme Court of Virginia develop rule changes that now allow these corporate counsel to provide uncompensated pro bono legal representations of other clients. Her work helped lift restrictions for supervision so that corporate counsel can have more flexibility in their pro bono service. Her efforts opened the possibility that the 882 corporate counsel certificate holders in Virginia can join the ranks of lawyers who provide legal services to persons who do not have the means to pay legal fees.

In endorsing Bridgeman’s nomination, James A. Ferguson, executive director of Legal Services of Northern Virginia, wrote, “Despite holding a prominent position in the legal department of a busy company, she has devoted an amazing amount of volunteer time to legal aid and pro bono work. … I believe that a real leader is somebody who ‘walks the walk’—somebody who, rather than just paying lip service to the importance of concepts like access to justice, devotes their time and talents to making sure that our low-income neighbors have meaningful access to high-quality legal assistance. Andrea Bridgeman has done just that.”

Bridgeman holds an undergraduate degree from Bryn Mawr College and a law degree from the University of Virginia.

Tracy Ann Houck is a lifelong Fredericksburg resident who reenergized the Fredericksburg Bar Association for the benefit of local attorneys and the community. Houck has a civil litigation practice with Parrish, Houck & Snead PLC in Fredericksburg. “In 2006, while President of the Fredericksburg Area Bar Association, she was the instrumental force in regaining the vitality, interest and membership of the Bar Association, and continues to be actively involved,” according to her nomination from the association.

Houck also is involved with the legal community statewide, through many groups. She cochairs the annual Solo and Small Firm Conference for the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association and served a three-year term on the faculty of the Virginia State Bar’s Mandatory Professionalism Course. She is a member of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Bar Association (for which she was president in 2000), the Virginia Association of Defense Attorneys, the Virginia Joint Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee, and Phi Delta Phi, a fraternity that promotes a high standard of legal ethics. She also is on the executive committee of Friends of the Rappahannock, which maintains and preserves the Rappahannock River and its tributaries.

Houck holds a bachelor’s degree from the College of William and Mary, a Publishing Institute degree from the University of Denver, and a law degree from the University of Richmond. She taught English in Tokyo for two years and was a copy editor, editor, and technical writer in New York for several years. After law school, she worked as a law editor for the Michie Company in Charlottesville.

“Throughout Tracy’s career, she has promoted the legal profession with total dedication, full commitment, integrity, and complete devotion. She continues to be a role model for women attorneys,” according to the nomination letter. “Tracy strives for professionalism and is a motivating influence to those around her.”

The CLBA Executive Committee is proud of Andrea and Tracy for their dedication to their local bars, the VSB, and their communities.

It has been a pleasure and a great privilege to serve as chair of the Conference of Local Bar Associations this year. My local bar, the Page County Bar Association, is very proud to have one of our members and a past Local Bar Leader of the Year and chair of the CLBA, George Warren Shanks, installed as president of the Virginia State Bar. As with many bar leaders, George began serving locally many years ago. It is amazing where service to your local bar can lead.