

Senior Lawyers Conference

by John H. Tate Jr., Chair



Senior Lawyers Handbook and Green Lawyers Project

AS THE REPRESENTATIVE of the Virginia State Bar Senior Lawyer's Conference, I attended the VSB Executive Committee and Council meetings in Charlottesville on October 14–15, 2010. I had forgotten all the work that is placed on the council to represent the lawyers of Virginia. Being a part of that group again is a real pleasure, and the members can have confidence that their interests are seriously considered in the actions of the council.

As I was preparing my Senior Lawyers Conference report for the meetings, I realized that we may sometimes overlook our obligation to let the bar, and especially the members of the Senior Lawyers Conference, know about the goals the conference is attempting to promote. We must always encourage our conference members to participate in our programs, and to inform the bar as a whole of the work that is being done by the conference. This is not a responsibility just of the members who serve on the SLC Board of Governors, but also of senior lawyers in general.

The conference is proud of the work that went into the publication of the *Senior Lawyers Handbook*, revised and republished in 2009. This contains wonderful information and is one of the most downloaded publications of the VSB.

The conference is a real bargain. You automatically become a member when you reach age fifty-five, and there are no dues. The conference needs lawyers to distribute the *Senior Lawyers*

Handbook to seniors, other members of the bar, and the public who would benefit from it.

Based on judges' reception of the book in my circuit, I know your local judges are interested in this publication. I had copies available for the members of the council in October. I would like to take this opportunity to ask our 14,900 conference members and all members of the State Bar to secure copies for your clients and local judges, libraries, senior citizens' organizations, public assistance employees, and government offices.

Handbooks are available at a minimal charge. If you join the SLC in widening the distribution of the handbook, together we will make a difference in the lives of senior citizens in Virginia. You may place orders for single copies and bulk purchases by contacting Paulette J. Davidson at davidson@vsb.org or (804) 775-0521.

At our organizational meeting this year, I suggested a new project for the Senior Lawyers Conference: a program for Virginia Lawyers, young and old, to participate in a "green" initiative by planting trees across Virginia. The reaction from everyone I have approached has been positive. As of this writing, the program has not been given a name, but the idea is to have members of the bar join in a statewide effort to plant appropriate trees in their communities.

I made contact with Alan D. Albert, an attorney at LeClair Ryan, who worked on a similar project in Norfolk. Norfolk actually has a vibrant

project to replant trees in the city. We invited a speaker from the Virginia Department of Forestry to make a presentation at the next meeting of the SLC board.

Council member Roy F. Evans Jr., who, like me, is from Marion, went last month to the Sunbelt Ag Expo in Moultrie, Georgia. At this expo there was a display of tree planting, and they were touting my personal choice for this proposed project, a dawn redwood tree, rediscovered in China and found in fossils around the world.

Roy said they had an example of this tree at the expo, and recommended it for areas in Virginia with moist soil, because it is fast-growing and has the attributes of a sequoia over the long haul. This tree may exceed one hundred feet in height over its long lifespan.

There have been contacts with the Arbor Day Foundation, which has an ongoing tree-planting program. There are other organizations that may be interested in this initiative if it becomes a program of the Senior Lawyers. Your input is greatly appreciated, and your support is crucial. You may contact me at annieshults@gwyntate.com or Ms. Davidson to express your opinions about this proposal.