Trayvon Martin

Your writer, Clarence Dunnaville (Virginia Lawyer, October 2013), believes that the Trayvon Martin case had important implications for our bar. And, he is correct.

If any homicide case can be called routine, the killing of Trayvon Martin was routine; an open and shut case of self-defense. But, the Florida justice system succumbed to pressure generated by the likes of Al Sharpton and his cohorts who always stand ready to exploit the misfortunes of others to advance their socio/political agenda. I hope that we never witness a perversion of justice such as that in Virginia.

Mr. Dunnaville’s criticism of the defense strategy is ill-founded as well. Surely, it is within the duty of a criminal defense team to question the conduct and character of a shooting victim without being charged with racism. Surely, too, it was their responsibility to challenge the incoherent, contradictory and unpersuasive testimony of Rachel Jeantel, Martin’s friend, without being accused of “disrespecting” her on account of her race.

And, yes, there were press statements which “fueled the flames of racial animosity.” But they were made by the busloads of agitators who came to Florida from all over the country.

Of course, we must take Mr. Dunnaville at his word that he and his family have suffered because they are African American. All I know is, as a member of our bar for forty-seven years, that racial discrimination has long since disappeared from our profession and from the largest part of civil society as a whole.

Thomas P. Dugan
Columbus, OH

A Note from the Editors: We Want Your Ideas

The December 2013 issue of Virginia Lawyer is an example of what our magazine has been and hopes to be. Like every issue, it includes a number of articles with a pre-arranged focus — in this case, law libraries and librarians — and several other features, including a special section celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Virginia Law Foundation. It also includes an unsolicited article by Judge Joseph A. Migliozzi Jr. discussing the value of mental health courts in Virginia, and another by James Juo about the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act and Aaron's Law. While we didn't ask for those articles, they were too good to pass up.

It's that too-good-to-pass-up quality that got those stories published in Virginia Lawyer. We know there are many other articles out there by and about the members of the Virginia State Bar that are just looking for a place to appear. We would like to open up our magazine to those articles.

However, we also know that the solicited articles are equally valuable. With that in mind, we intend to continue our practice of publishing theme issues, but because of space and money considerations, we may ask for fewer theme articles in future issues.

Upcoming theme issues are planned on family law, the Senior Lawyers Conference, trusts and estates, and construction law.

Look for those in 2014.

We want Virginia Lawyer to serve our members. We will continue to educate, inform, and even entertain our readers. We might publish debates among two or more of our members on an issue. We might print interesting profiles by and about our members. A lawyer might want to explore a controversial or evolving point of law. We might get an article from a lawyer just returned from doing pro bono work in another country. We might feature some of the services we offer at the VSB or some of the work done by our committees.

We want your ideas. If you have an idea for an interesting article on a law-related issue that is not tied too closely to the daily news — we are, after all, a periodical, not a daily — please let us know about it. Send a note to Editor Rodney A. Coggin at coggin@vsb.org or Assistant Editor Gordon Hickey at hickey@vsb.org.

Letters

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