On my first day at Virginia CLE I was asked an excellent question by one of our staff members: “What makes you want to take a job like this?”

While it was something I’d never asked myself, I knew the answer right away. Having practiced law for fifteen years, I knew the awesome responsibility of having a client on the other side of the desk — it was something I took very seriously. I knew the look — the look that said I was the most important person in a client’s life, or in the life of a loved one. And my look hopefully told them I’d do all I could to get them the best outcome possible, and that I felt confident in my ability to do so.

Whether it was defending a loved one accused of a crime; helping a divorcing parent get as much parenting time as possible; or helping a musician, a writer, actor, or a small business person navigate contracts that could change their lives, those moments made me realize that attorneys who cheat themselves out of meaningful continuing legal education actually cheat more than just themselves. For attorneys to do their job properly, and to sleep well at night (I know you know what I mean), it’s incumbent upon us to make sure we really know our stuff.

So as for my answer: I want to be an important part of Virginia CLE as we help attorneys gain the requisite skill, confidence, and professionalism so they never feel they are letting their client down … or letting themselves down.

I also want to help give our legal community what we need to enhance the administration of justice across the commonwealth, and I want to help lawyers sleep well at night.

You may know that Virginia CLE has been in existence since 1960 and continually strives to be the top quality provider of educational materials to help meet the continuing education needs of the Virginia legal community, and to help Virginia attorneys practice proficiently, competently, professionally, and ethically throughout their careers.

You may also know that we are the Virginia State Bar and Virginia Bar Association sponsored CLE provider in Virginia. We are a not-for-profit, receiving no state funds or dues. We strive to be financially self-sufficient by generating revenue to cover both operating expenses and long-term capital needs while offering the fairest prices possible to our customers.

But one thing about Virginia CLE many attorneys may not know is that we are a proud branch of the Virginia Law Foundation (VLF) tree. And that some of our finest faculty members and highly valued CLE committee members are CLE fellows.

In fact, in addition to its philanthropic endeavors, the VLF supports legal education at all levels and in many ways, including within the legal profession, through Virginia CLE, and in the community to consumers, educators, young adults, the elderly, visually handicapped, and others through educational videos, pamphlets, presentations, and workshops.

This broad commitment to education is one of the many things I find so appealing. Now in my current role as executive director of both organizations I hope to forge an even stronger bond between the VLF and VACLE.

As the strength of the VLF in so many ways rests on our collaboration with other organizations such as the VSB and the VBA, so does the strength of Virginia CLE. Now is clearly the time for us to strengthen ourselves from the inside out, to take stock of what we do, why we do it, and what we want to do into the future. It is also the time to use this strength to join in collaborations across all of Virginia’s legal service organizations to be sure we can and will fully support every attorney who sits behind a desk — and the client sitting across from them.

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