

New Projects Aim to Increase Diversity, Provide Pro Bono Assistance

by Maya M. Eckstein, 2006–2007 Young Lawyers Conference President



The Young Lawyers Conference has a wonderful and extensive history of doing “good works” for the community. The YLC will continue or expand the following projects:

- The YLC has championed the rights of domestic violence victims, offering safety and legal information and training lawyers how to provide pro bono help to victims. The YLC has distributed more than two hundred thousand safety and legal brochures and has provided free continuing legal education programs to pro bono attorneys. This year, the YLC will distribute one hundred thousand safety and legal brochures and will conduct additional free CLEs.
- The YLC has provided free legal services to true American heroes—first responders—through its Wills for Heroes program. We provided wills, advance medical directives and powers of attorney to four hundred police officers, sheriffs and firefighters across the commonwealth. This year, the YLC will provide these pro bono services to first responders in Charlottesville, Richmond and elsewhere in Virginia.
- The YLC has helped advance the status of women and minorities by celebrating their elevation to the bench through its annual Celebration

of Women and Minorities Bench/Bar Dinner. The YLC encouraged college students to consider law school and the legal profession by sponsoring the Minority Pre-Law Conference, and it held the Oliver Hill/Samuel Tucker Law Institute, a free, one-week overnight camp for at-risk high school students. We will expand the Minority Pre-Law Conference by offering it in both Northern Virginia and Southwest Virginia.

- The YLC partnered with the State Board of Elections to distribute “Know Your Rights and Responsibilities” pamphlets. We will continue doing so before the November elections.

The YLC will implement the Choose Law program of the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division.

This year, the YLC will distribute a *Juvenile Rights Handbook*, developed in a partnership with the JustChildren program of the Legal Aid Justice Center. The handbook will provide those

under the age of 18, as well as their parents, information regarding their rights and responsibilities in schools, with the police and in the courts.

Last year, for the first time, the YLC offered a free CLE in conjunction with the National Center for Refugee & Immigrant Children for the provision of pro bono representation in asylum cases. This year, we are working with Virginia’s Juvenile and Domestic Relations judges to advance implementation of federal laws that allow them to grant special immigrant status to children.

The YLC will implement the Choose Law program of the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. The program seeks to educate high school and junior high school students about lawyers and the legal profession and to encourage students of color to consider a legal career. We hope to increase diversity in the legal profession by assisting and encouraging young individuals of color to become attorneys.

We are excited about the year ahead and hope that you are, too. ☺