



# THE RICHMOND BAR

Volume 32, Number 08

*A newsletter for members of The Bar Association of the City of Richmond*

## Report of the Nominating Committee

R. Braxton Hill, IV, Chair of the Nominating Committee, has reported to the President the following list of nominees recommended by the Committee for the respective positions to be filled at the Association's Annual Meeting on April 17, 2024:

President-Elect: Jennifer J. West

Vice President: W. Benjamin Pace

Secretary-Treasurer: John A. Merrick

At-Large Board of Directors:

Taylor D. Brewer, Andy P. Sherrod, Joanna L. Suyes

Veronica Brown-Moseley & Michael A. Montgomery for the 2024-2025 bar year.

Deanna H. Hathaway, the current President-Elect, succeeds automatically to the office of President for the next Bar year.

## Janice Craft Reports on The University of Richmond School of Law's Professional Identity Formation Program

Professor Janice Craft, Director of Professional Identity Formation (PIF) and Associate Professor of Law at The University of Richmond, reported to the RBA Board of Directors last month on UR's PIF program.

The University of Richmond School of Law is at the forefront of integrating professional identity formation into its curriculum, recognizing that the development of a lawyer's professional identity is not merely an add-on but essential to long-term success in legal practice. To find satisfaction and meaning in legal practice requires more than analytical acumen and technical skill, attorneys must also cultivate a robust professional identity that incorporates personal and professional values, ethical principles, and a deep appreciation of our role within the legal system.

*continued on page 8*

## Chesterfield Judges Comment on Court Activities

In its continued effort to promote the administration of justice in the Richmond area and to facilitate cooperation between the bench and the bar, the Administration of Justice Committee recently concluded its annual interviews with the **Honorable Judges for the County Chesterfield**. As in years past, the Judges were gracious with their time and spoke with candor to Committee members regarding technology, professionalism and court personnel.

*Continued on page 5*

## Notice of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of The Bar Association of the City of Richmond will be held on Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. at the Willow Oaks Country Club. The meeting precedes the Bar's Spring Cocktail party, which begins at 6:00 p.m.



### NEXT RBA EVENTS

**SPRING COCKTAIL PARTY**

APRIL 17 | WILLOW OAKS | 6:00PM

**LAW DAY LUNCHEON**

MAY 1 | LEWIS GINTER | 12:30PM

# PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: Remarks from RBA President

Julie M. Cillo

April is National Volunteer Month: a time to honor and celebrate the volunteers in our legal community. This column cannot do justice to the “thank you” owed to our volunteers but here goes.

Thank you to the entire RBA Board, including the Executive Committee, twelve (12) at large members, and Section Chairs, who volunteer tireless hours to promoting the collegiality of lawyers and the bench in numerous ways. They balance busy practices with the work of the Bar to make sure that we are advancing the Bar’s objectives.

A giant shout out to our Committee and Section leadership who are steadfast volunteers to support and advance the overall mission and objectives of the Bar and also make sure that the special aspects of those groups are being served. They, too, juggle all the balls of being a lawyer and a volunteer and do it without seeking recognition but because they believe in what we want to accomplish for our membership.



And, much gratitude to all of you, who engage in our service projects, who do pro bono work, who serve on committees and participate in section events, and who volunteer in many other ways in the communities in which you live. Your commitment to go above and beyond to serve beyond your legal practice is commendable and appreciated!

As my term as President begins to wind down, it has been wonderful to work with such dedicated attorneys who give so much of themselves. I am re-energized after each meeting, event, and conversation and remain continually grateful of being able to practice in a legal environment that does so much for so many.

-Julie M. Cillo



**Beginning with this issue, the RBA has “split up” the April/May newsletter into two separate publications.**

**The addition of the May newsletter will allow the RBA to bring you timely information regarding end-of-bar-year activities and meetings.**

## RBA SPOTLIGHT



**BRIANA M. JACKSON**

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MEMBER SINCE XXXX

**Favorite RVA Restaurant**

Stella's

**Current Netflix Binge**

Bridgerton



**Favorite Hobby**

I love staying active! So, I spend time going on runs or taking classes at OrangeTheory. I also enjoy spending time with friends and family!

**Favorite Vacation Spot**

Anywhere by the beach!  
I recently went to Punta Cana in the DR and it was beautiful!

# Share the News .....

If you've recently landed a new job or promotion, share the good news with the Richmond Bar. Include your full name, your company's name and location, your new title and your areas of concentration in your letter, press release, fax or e-mail. Announcements can be e-mailed to [aholland@richmondbar.org](mailto:aholland@richmondbar.org) or mailed to Annie Holland, at P.O. Box 1213, Richmond, VA 23218

Hirschler is pleased to announce the start of 2024 with growth in both its partnership and associate ranks in Richmond. *Brittany B. Falabella* has been promoted into partnership effective January 1, and the firm has added associates *Kollin Bender* and *Connor Bleakley* to its roster.

*Connie Clay* is happy to announce the opening of Clay Law, PLLC. Connie will assist clients in family law, conservatorships, guardianships, and child dependency matters. Connie is available to assist clients throughout Central Virginia, and she is available to assist attorneys with overflow work. Contact Connie at [Hello@ClayLawVA.com](mailto:Hello@ClayLawVA.com).



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Annie M. Holland, *Executive Director*  
Sharon R. Potter, *Membership Director*

The views expressed in The Richmond Bar do not represent the policy or carry the endorsement of the Association unless specifically noted.

# The McCammon Group

is pleased to announce our newest Neutral



## Hon. John R. Doyle, III (Ret.)

*Retired Judge, 4th Judicial Circuit Court of Virginia, City of Norfolk*

The Honorable John “Jack” R. Doyle, III recently retired after fifteen years of distinguished service on the bench of the 4th Judicial Circuit Court of Virginia (Norfolk). Prior to his judicial career, Judge Doyle served two consecutive terms as Norfolk’s Commonwealth’s Attorney and enjoyed a private practice focusing on civil litigation. Among his many credentials, he served on the Norfolk Electoral Board and is a Past Vice Chair of the Virginia Association of Commonwealth’s Attorneys and the Criminal Law Section of the Virginia State Bar. Judge Doyle now brings this record of dedication and accomplishment to The McCammon Group to serve the mediation, arbitration, judge pro tempore, and special master needs of lawyers and litigants throughout the Commonwealth.



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# CHESTERFIELD JUDGES COMMENT ON COURT ACTIVITIES

*continued from page 1*

## **The Honorable David E. Johnson**

*Chesterfield Circuit Court*

Judge Johnson reports that the Chesterfield County Circuit Court does not have a backlog of cases and attorneys are doing a good job of promptly setting cases for trial, adhering to trial dates, and doing their part to keep the docket moving efficiently. Because the Court has six judges but only five courtrooms at Courthouse Road building, the Court also utilizes the old courthouse – known as the “1917 Courthouse” – located at 10011 Iron Bridge Road Chesterfield, VA 23832. Only civil cases are heard at the 1917 Courthouse.

Last month Amanda Pohl, the new Clerk of the Circuit Court, began her term. The Court encourages regular practitioners in Chesterfield to welcome our new clerk.

Judge Johnson reports that he and the other judges of the Chesterfield Circuit Court are observing behavior and practices from some members of the bar that vary from the professionalism that traditionally has been the hallmark of Virginia lawyers. The Court draws the attention of members of the bar to the following Principles of Professionalism for Virginia Lawyers adopted by the Virginia Bar Association:

1. [An attorney should] Treat all judges and court personnel with respect and courtesy.
2. Be punctual in attending all court appearances ...
3. Avoid any conduct that offends the dignity or decorum of any courts ... such as inappropriate displays of emotion or unbecoming language directed at the courts or any other participants.

The Court regrets that it has observed a steady and significant decline in the professionalism exhibited by an increasing number – though still a minority – of attorneys. The Court notes that many attorneys are consistently late for court – without having advised in advance any reason for an untimely arrival. Many attorneys are woefully ill-prepared and unable to answer the simplest questions about their cases or reasons for appearing in court.

Many attorneys appear unaware of the most basic elements of courtroom decorum; specifically, how to properly address the court, when to stand, how to ask questions of witnesses, how to make objections. Many attorneys engage in conversations in the courtroom or demonstrably utilize electronic devices while awaiting their case. Most attorneys wishing to use the video facilities in the courtroom fail to test their displays in advance.

The judges have tried in a number of ways upon witnessing instances of such conduct to discreetly pass a word on to specific attorneys. None of the judges in this circuit wish to place any attorneys in embarrassing positions in front of their clients and colleagues. These discreet approaches have not worked. Nor, unfortunately, have the few instances in which judges in this circuit have commented in open court to offending attorneys.

Therefore, the Court wishes to take the opportunity of this publication to earnestly urge the cooperation of all the members of the bar who regularly appear in Chesterfield and Colonial Heights circuit courts in restoring and maintaining decorum and professionalism. The Court encourages more experienced attorneys to offer advice on these issues to newer members of the bar.

Attorneys are encouraged to contact the Court’s law clerks or secretaries with any procedural questions. The Court believes these issues can be readily and thoroughly addressed if all members of the bar embrace aspirational values of civility, courtesy, public service, and professionalism.



## **The Honorable James J. O’Connell**

*Chesterfield General District Court*

Judge O’Connell, presiding over Chesterfield County General District Court, reflected on the past year and offered his insights from the bench.

## Remarks from Hon. James J. O'Connell, continued'

Judge O'Connell noted significant shifts in the approach to first offender cases for petit larceny. The abatement of marijuana possession cases under Virginia's permissive adult personal possession regime has placed petit larceny in the forefront of the courtroom, prompting adaptations in the court's procedures and focus. Many such cases are now resolved through the first offender program involving community service and shoplifter prevention classes, a change proving effective in the justice system.

Moreover, the diversity of the population in Chesterfield County has brought attention to the need for language services. In response, the court has taken proactive measures by hiring two full-time Spanish interpreters, recognizing the importance of effective communication in ensuring fair representation.

Delving into the unique dynamics of General District Court, Judge O'Connell underscored its high-volume nature. The Judge discussed challenges faced by the Public Defender's Office, emphasizing the impact of understaffing on its workload. In working with Public Defender My'chael Jefferson-Reese to overcome these hurdles and ensure continued quality legal representation for indigent clients, the court has adopted a hybrid system until the Public Defender's Office can be fully staffed, in which the Public Defender's Office accepts court appointments on indigent cases on Tuesdays and Thursdays and Court Appointed Panel attorneys are used on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Drawing on his background as a defense attorney, prosecutor, and now judge, Judge O'Connell pointed out a concerning trend among newer attorneys: a lack of pre-court communication with the opposing side. He advocated for a more streamlined process, emphasizing the importance of maintaining an open dialogue and resolving issues before court sessions to enhance efficiency.

Judge O'Connell drew attention to a change in the bond hearing process which is working well. Previously, the Commonwealth's Attorney Office scheduled such hearings. Now, scheduling is handled by the court itself.

Bond hearing notice must be emailed to the court's office by noon the day before any requests to be set for the next day.

Turning to legislative and procedural changes, Judge O'Connell highlighted the positive impact of Va. Code Sec. 19.2-298.01, a new process streamlining plea agreement orders. In a bid to further improve efficiency, Judge O'Connell encouraged attorneys to promptly submit settlement orders for civil cases within 30 days after notice that the case has settled. Waiting for these orders beyond 30 days, he noted, can hinder the court's operations.

Judge O'Connell praised the work of the court's mental health liaison, Luther Archer. This resource has proven invaluable in addressing mental health concerns, facilitating assessments for sanity and competency purposes, and supporting affected individuals throughout the legal process.

Concluding on a note of gratitude, Judge O'Connell extended recognition to the court clerks. These individuals play a pivotal role in managing the immense volume of cases and paperwork while demonstrating professionalism and dedication as the unsung heroes of the court process.



### **The Honorable Travis R. Williams**

*Chesterfield Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court*

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, Judge Williams shared that there is a "new normal" that has resulted in more efficient processes and docket management. For example, instead of continuing a matter because a party is deployed, the party can appear via WebEx or Zoom, and the matter can be resolved sooner. Related to judicial efficiency, Judge Williams values and appreciates attorneys making good faith efforts to negotiate settlements and enter stipulations on issues where the parties can reach agreement. Narrowing the areas of disagreement allows the court to focus on the disputed issues and promotes efficient use of the court's time.

## Comments from Hon. Travis R.

### Williams, continued

Judge Williams describes the current relationship between the bench and the bar as overall good. He expressed that he wishes the bar would be more understanding of the difficulties that judges encounter when dealing with pro se litigants, especially when one party is represented, and the other party is pro se. In the interest of access to, and administration of justice, judges must accommodate and allow more latitude when dealing with pro se litigants.

Based on his observations, Judge Williams expressed that civility amongst attorneys has gone downhill. He would caution attorneys to balance advocacy of their clients' best interests with professionalism and courtesy. Having good relationships with colleagues that you will work with on a regular basis is essential to a successful career.

Judge Williams' advice to attorneys new to practice in the Chesterfield County Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court is to get involved in the Chesterfield Bar. Judge Williams emphasized that bar membership is still very important. It allows new attorneys and experienced attorneys to meet and get to know each other outside of adversarial proceedings. This leads to them being able to work together better when they are opposing counsel. In closing, Judge Williams remarked that the bench also needs to hear from the bar as to how judges can support practitioners.



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## UPCOMING ETHICS CLE SEMINARS

MARCH 27, 2024

4:00-6:00PM

VIA ZOOM

seminars will be held back-to-back

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## **VJLAP offers support groups for legal professionals**

The Virginia Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program (VJLAP) provides confidential, non-disciplinary assistance to lawyers, judges, law students, legal professionals, and their family members who are experiencing impairment as a result of substance abuse and/or mental health conditions. Assistance is designed to:

- *Promote recovery*
- *Protect the working professional*
- *Prevent disciplinary problems*
- *Strengthen the profession*
- *Support their families and professional associates*

VJLAP educates on individuals on the impacts of chemical dependency and mental health disorders. Early treatment is key for successful recovery. For assistance call the VJLAP 24-Hour Confidential Help Line at 1-877-545-4682.

## **Professional Identity Formation: Supporting the Whole Lawyer**

*continued from page 1*

Richmond Law's innovative program focuses on enhancing law students' self-awareness, capacity for self-reflection, and commitment to self-directed learning. The PIF curriculum emphasizes the importance of aligning personal values with professional responsibilities, and highlights the relationship between lawyer well-being and competent legal practice. The curricular emphasis on supporting "the whole lawyer" ensures that Richmond Law students graduate with not only superior legal skills, but a clear sense of purpose, direction, and commitment to service in the public interest.

The benefits of Richmond Law's focus on PIF extend far beyond individual law students and attorneys. Legal employers are beginning to see the value in hiring graduates who bring not only legal expertise but also a well-defined professional identity to the workplace. Such lawyers are better equipped to navigate the stressors of legal practice, exercise sound professional judgment, and make positive and lasting contributions to their organizations. Moreover, the emphasis on PIF is reshaping the legal profession itself. Lawyers who engage in ongoing self-reflection and align their practice with their core values are likely to experience greater job satisfaction, lower rates of burnout, and higher levels of well-being. These benefits have a ripple effect, enhancing client service, fostering ethical practice, and contributing to increased public trust in attorneys and the legal profession as a whole.

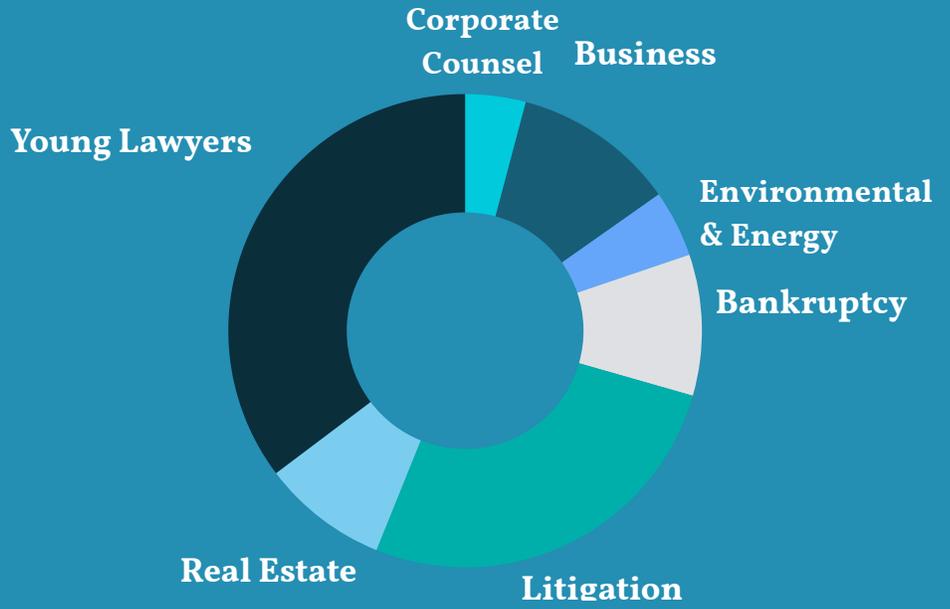
Richmond Law's commitment to PIF is not just an educational innovation; it is a necessary evolution in the training of lawyers. By embedding PIF into the fabric of legal education, Richmond Law is setting a new standard for legal excellence—one that ensures lawyers are not only adept at navigating legal complexities but also grounded in a sense of purpose, ethics, and service.

Supportive mentorship is critical to positive professional identity formation and we invite you to join us in cultivating a new generation of lawyers. To learn more, please contact PIF Director Janice Craft at (804) 662-3176 or [jcraft@richmond.edu](mailto:jcraft@richmond.edu).

# THE RICHMOND BAR: BY THE NUMBERS\*

**Total Members**  
1,399

**Law Students**  
27



\*as of 3/1/2024

## NEW MEMBERS



Greg Bean

Megan Kent

Spencer Patterson

Claire Pitzer

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## APRIL

1st - Executive Committee Meeting | 12:30 | Zoom  
 4th - Board meeting | 12:30 | Hunton Andrews Kurth  
 17th - Annual Meeting | 5:30 | Willow Oaks CC  
 17th - Spring Cocktail Party | 6:00 | Willow Oaks CC  
 29th - Executive Committee Meeting | 12:30 | Zoom

## MAY

1st - Law Day Luncheon | 12:30 | Lewis Ginter  
 2nd - Board meeting | 12:30 | Hunton Andrews Kurth  
 7th - CLE committee meeting | 12:30 | Zoom

### DATABASE UPGRADE COMING JUNE 1, 2024!

The RBA staff are working hard to implement an entirely new online database to be launched at the start of the 2024-2025 bar year (by June 1).

### The RBA Website is a Useful Resource



Did you know that you can renew your dues and register for events online using your Visa or MasterCard? The Bar's website, [www.richmondbar.org](http://www.richmondbar.org), is also an easy way to locate information on awards, events, Sections, Committees and local court procedures and news. Manage your own membership information using the Bar's on-line Pictorial Directory. You can also use the Directory to search for members' contact information, undergraduate and law school affiliations and areas of practice listings, as well as photos if they have been provided.

For a complete list and detailed information regarding RBA events, please visit our website at [richmondbar.org](http://richmondbar.org)

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