

1977

## President's Page

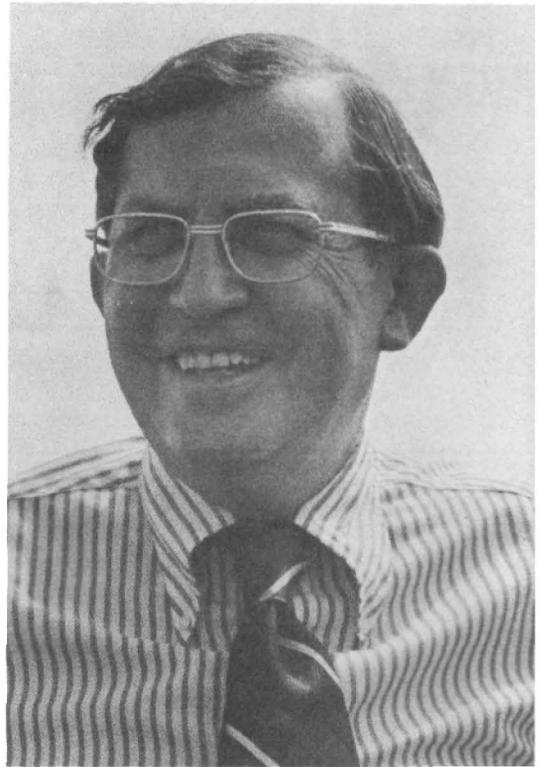
William B. Spong Jr.

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## President's Page



NOT so many years ago, retiring Presidents of the Virginia Bar Association were charged with delivering an oration on the first evening of the annual meeting, then held at either Hot Springs or White Sulphur. Those evoke fond memories. The occasions were not always well attended but the wisdom was recorded for the ages in the Association's annual report. The speakers, having labored for days in advance of the meeting, waxed eloquently—and long—on justice, injustice, legal philosophy, legal education and the United States Constitution. Laughter and applause were recorded parenthetically.

We no longer have the President's address. An outgoing President now reports (I assume in a businesslike manner) to the membership at the business session of the annual meeting. The audience is smaller than in the old days. Relatives and law partners no longer feel an obligation to attend; also, Saturday afternoon speakers are competing with the Wide World of Sports, the ACC Game of the Week, and the Williamsburg athletic facilities for those who prefer playing to watching.

And so on this page I will direct your attention to some of the matters I shall probably be reporting at our annual meeting. The Virginia Bar Association has,

I believe, had a good year. We are solvent and our membership is stable. Your Executive Committee continues to examine how to fulfill the lofty language of our purpose "of cultivating and advancing the science of jurisprudence, promoting reform in the law and in judicial procedure, facilitating the administration of justice in this state, and upholding and elevating the standard of honor, integrity, and courtesy in the legal profession." We particularly hope to play a more effective role in reform in the law and in judicial procedure, and to structure our committees to accomplish this.

I should like to list some of the highlights of our work this year.

1. We have the finest Young Lawyers Section in the nation. This year, with the financial support and encouragement of the Association, the Young Lawyers, as a Law Day project for 1976, produced a film on the Supreme Court. This film is shown regularly at the Court to thousands of visitors, has been shown on educational television throughout the nation, and is in demand for bar meetings everywhere.

2. The findings of the Peter Hart Survey on public attitudes in Virginia toward lawyers were reported to

our membership at Williamsburg this past January. Since then, the Association has shared the results of the survey with other legal organizations in Virginia, with the officers of the ABA and several State associations, and with members of the Judiciary. The findings of the survey have been studied by each of the Association's committees. In addition to this, the Executive Committee authorized the convening of a Lay Leaders' Conference at the Woodberry Forest School in June. The Conference underscored what the Hart Survey showed—that the public knows relatively little about the legal profession.

3. Elsewhere on these pages is a picture of the National Center for State Courts presently being constructed in Williamsburg. Our annual meeting at the Conference Center will be near where the Center is being built. Should you come to Williamsburg, I hope you will ride over and examine the progress of the construction.

Under Tom Monahan's leadership, the Association undertook responsibility for raising \$100,000 toward construction of the Center. It is the intention of the Association to pay a minimum of \$50,000 toward fulfillment of this pledge and to raise the balance from bar associations and individuals throughout the United States. The Richmond Bar Association, the Norfolk-Portsmouth Bar Association, The Fairfax Bar Association, the Portsmouth Bar Association, the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association and the Virginia Lawyers' Wives have made handsome contributions toward the Center. We have forwarded the Association's check

for \$25,000 representing the first of four payments to be made toward the construction. Gibson Harris has directed this effort and solicitations among our honorary and judicial members are being made. Hopefully, a new Marshall-Wythe School of Law will be built adjacent to the National Center. The same architect designed both buildings. The Center's directors chose Williamsburg with the understanding that there would be an adjacent law school with library and moot court facilities.

The National Center will be a great force for aiding the administration of Justice in the State Courts of America. The Association is proud of its role in helping to make the Center in Williamsburg a reality.

The Williamsburg meeting is almost upon us. A detailed program appears elsewhere in this issue. You will see that a full and balanced program will be presented, featuring a banquet address by Justin Stanley, President of the ABA. I hope you can be with us.

We have written this report in sadness. In the midst of its preparation, Judge Robert J. Rogers of Roanoke passed away. Had Bob not been chosen for the bench a few years back, he would have been President of the Association this year. Bob first served with the Executive Committee in 1965 as the representative of the Young Lawyers. He was Chairman of the Executive Committee in 1974, and chaired the effort that resulted in publication of *The Virginia Bar Association Journal*. Bob Rogers epitomized the best in our profession. He understood profoundly the responsibilities of lawyer to client, to the general public, and to himself to do his best. He did that to the very end.

