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# Section on the Education of Lawyers Remains Committed to Improving Legal Training

by A. Benjamin Spencer

I am very pleased to welcome you to this issue of *Virginia Lawyer* dedicated to the recent 20th Anniversary Conclave on the Education of Lawyers in Virginia.

The Section on the Education of Lawyers in Virginia was the product of the first such conclave twenty years ago. Since then its members have been dedicated to thinking about ways to improve the legal training of aspiring and practicing lawyers in the commonwealth. With the 20th anniversary conclave, we have taken that commitment to a new level, dedicating two days of discussion among the bench, bar, and the academy to formulate concrete ways that we can enhance legal education to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The material you will find in these pages reflects a summary of our discussion as well as some of the ideas that have emerged from the conclave. It is our hope that going forward the section will be able to spearhead efforts to make many of these ideas a reality, improving the training of lawyers throughout their careers.

It is also our hope that the broader legal community will partner with us in this effort, as it will take a unified commitment and hard work from everyone to make the changes necessary to modernize Virginia's legal education. I am confident that members of the legal profession in the commonwealth will rise to that challenge to make Virginia one of the guiding lights in the ongoing discussion surrounding legal education reform.

Our section is the first of its kind in the country. We provide a vehicle for exchanging

ideas about legal education while we continue to foster cooperation among our eight law schools, the bench, and the bar. The section publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Education & Practice*, conducts a Professionalism for Law Students course annually in each of the Virginia law schools, and has cosponsored innovative CLE programs in collaboration with the Virginia law schools. For more information on the section, go to <http://www.vsb.org/site/sections/educationoflawyers>. To read transcripts of the conclave, go to <http://www.vsb.org/site/members/20th-anniversary-conclave>.



**A. Benjamin Spencer**, chair of the VSB Section on the Education of Lawyers, is a professor of law at Washington and Lee University. He recently was appointed director of the Frances Lewis Law Center, the independently funded faculty research and support arm of W&L Law. As director, he oversees the center's agenda, which includes sponsoring symposia, enhancing the intellectual life at the school of law, and providing support to faculty in their scholarly endeavors. He has authored two books in the area of civil procedure, *Acing Civil Procedure* and *Civil Procedure: A Contemporary Approach*. Prior to joining the Washington and Lee faculty, Professor Spencer was an associate professor of law at the University of Richmond School of Law. He also formerly worked as an associate in the law firm of Shearman & Sterling and as a law clerk to Judge Judith W. Rogers of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

*The Twentieth Anniversary Conclave on the Education of Lawyers in Virginia was financially assisted by the Virginia Law Foundation.*