

THE  
**RICHMOND**  
**LAWYER**



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE RICHMOND BAR ASSOCIATION  
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MAR

20  
26

**FINDING YOUR CONFIDENCE  
AS A WOMAN IN LAW:  
WHAT? LIKE IT'S HARD?**  
*Sharon M. Carr*

RBA Administration  
of Justice Committee  
receives comments  
from Henrico and  
Hanover Courts

**THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF  
THE CITY OF RICHMOND**

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THE  
**RICHMOND**  
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**EDITORIAL POLICY**

*The Richmond Lawyer*, published by the Richmond Bar Association (RBA), holds the primary goal of keeping RBA members informed about the latest happenings, events, and developments within the organization. *The Richmond Lawyer's* mission is to provide timely and relevant information that supports the professional and personal growth of our members.

*The Richmond Lawyer* welcomes submissions of articles concerning legal topics of interest to Richmond legal professionals. Criteria for publication include the article's quality, its substantive value, its interest to Richmond lawyers, and the originality of its subject matter. Submissions that relate to cases pending before any court or agency will not be accepted.

*The Richmond Lawyer* maintains editorial independence to ensure unbiased reporting and to avoid conflicts of interest, with editorial decisions made without undue influence from external parties or RBA leadership. It is important to note that opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily represent the explicit opinions of the RBA. The Richmond Bar does not provide legal advice. The Richmond Bar staff does not perform independent research on submitted articles.

Any errors will be corrected promptly and transparently, with corrections clearly marked and published in the subsequent issue. The publication is committed to protecting the privacy of its members, ensuring personal information is not shared without consent and used solely for publication purposes.

By adhering to this editorial policy, *The Richmond Lawyer* aims to provide a high-quality, informative, and engaging publication that serves the needs of the Richmond Bar Association community.

Readers are encouraged to provide feedback and contribute to the publication, with feedback directed to [aholland@richmondbar.org](mailto:aholland@richmondbar.org). *The Richmond Lawyer* accepts advertisements relevant to the legal profession, with all advertisements adhering to our ethical standards and subject to approval and payment.

Full Editorial Policy & Calendar available upon request

Articles for submission, feedback, and other communications regarding *The Richmond Lawyer* should be sent to Annie M. Holland, Executive Director via email at [aholland@richmondbar.org](mailto:aholland@richmondbar.org) or by mail sent to P.O. Box 1213, Richmond, Virginia, 23218.



# The Richmond Bar Association

## Join Now. Pay Later.

Join for **free** during our  
**Membership Grace Period, March 1–May 31.**

Attorneys receive *full* member benefits immediately, including member-exclusive pricing for our largest cocktail party of the year and other signature programs, without paying dues until June 1.

### Member Benefits

- ✓ Nine Specialized Practice Area Sections to Join
- ✓ Free Ethics CLE
- ✓ Connect with the Judiciary Through Committees & “Lunch with a Judge” Programs
- ✓ Free Webinars and Exclusive Pricing
- ✓ Access to the Mentorship Program & *The Richmond Lawyer*
- ✓ Leadership Opportunities at Every Career Stage



*The RBA makes it more fun to be a lawyer. I've made lasting friendships with lawyers outside my firm who I look forward to seeing at RBA events, or even just when I walk to lunch downtown and see folks on the street.*

-Reilly C. Moore



*“Because my practice often takes me all over the Commonwealth, my Richmond Bar Association membership is cherished since it allows me to stay in touch with colleagues and the issues that important right here at home.”*

-Terrence L. Graves



*To the newer members of the bar, I strongly encourage you to become active members in the RBA. Through the RBA you will have the opportunity to find and build a network with mentors willing to share their hard earned wisdom as well as peers who face some of the same challenges that you may face as you build your legal career. Your investment in the RBA will pay dividends throughout your career and strengthen our legal community as a whole.*

-Honorable Phillip L. Hairston (Ret.)



*RBA members show up for one another and pay it forward. For law students looking to become connected, retirees looking to stay connected, and everyone in the middle, the RBA is a repository of wisdom and support. We leverage our varied ages, experiences, and perspectives, into valuable opportunities for mentorship at every stage of the profession.*

-Taylor D. Brewer



Join during the Grace Period at  
[www.richmondbar.org/join](http://www.richmondbar.org/join)

[spotter@richmondbar.org](mailto:spotter@richmondbar.org)

[www.richmondbar.org](http://www.richmondbar.org)

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# RBA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## MARCH

- 2<sup>nd</sup> | Executive Committee Meeting | 12:30 PM | Zoom
- 6<sup>th</sup> | Board of Directors Meeting | 12:30 PM | Hunton Andrews Kurth
- 9<sup>th</sup> | Pro Bono Committee Meeting | 12:30 PM | Zoom
- 11<sup>th</sup> | Environmental & Energy Section Social | 5:30 PM | Hotel Greene
- 17<sup>th</sup> | Real Estate Section CLE & Social | 4:00 PM | Whiteford
- 19<sup>th</sup> | Programs Committee Meeting | 12:30 PM | Zoom
- 23<sup>rd</sup> | Finance Committee Meeting | 2:00 PM | Zoom
- 24<sup>th</sup> | Pro Bono Court Watch Day | 8:00 AM | Richmond Courthouse
- 25<sup>th</sup> | Business Law Section Social | 5:00 PM | The Park RVA
- 30<sup>th</sup> | Executive Committee Meeting | 12:30 PM | Zoom

## APRIL

- 2<sup>nd</sup> | Board of Directors Meeting | 12:30 PM | Hunton Andrews Kurth
- 7<sup>th</sup> | Bankruptcy Section Judges Roundtable | 4:00 PM | Hunton Andrews Kurth
- 15<sup>th</sup> | RBA Spring Cocktail Party & Annual Meeting | 5:30 PM | Lewis Ginter
- 23<sup>rd</sup> | Membership Committee Meeting | 12:30 PM | Zoom
- 28<sup>th</sup> | Communications Committee Meeting | 12:30 PM | Zoom

## MAY

- 1<sup>st</sup> | Law Day Luncheon | 12:30 PM | Richmond Marriott
- 3<sup>rd</sup> | Executive Committee Meeting | 12:30 PM | Zoom
- 7<sup>th</sup> | Board of Directors Meeting | 12:30 PM | Hunton Andrews Kurth
- 11<sup>th</sup> | Pro Bono Committee Meeting | 12:30 PM | Zoom
- 13<sup>th</sup> | Business Law Section Annual Meeting | 6:00 PM | Shagbark
- 19<sup>th</sup> | Bankruptcy Section Annual Meeting | 4:00 PM | McGuireWoods
- 20<sup>th</sup> | Sponsors Committee Meeting | 12:30 PM | Zoom
- 21<sup>st</sup> | Programs Committee Meeting | 12:30 PM | Zoom
- 25<sup>th</sup> | RBA Office Closed

# IN 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 email. 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.



Virginia Business has selected Peter Askin, Partner with ThompsonMcMullan, P.C. as a Forty Under 40 award recipient.

## The Richmond Bar Association 2026 Mentoring Program Information and Launch Party!



Special thanks to the Young Lawyers, Corporate Counsel, and Senior Lawyer Sections for their collaboration on this fantastic event.

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## THE RBA PURPOSE

The purposes of the Bar Association of the City of Richmond are to:

- cultivate and advance the cause of jurisprudence;
- to facilitate and improve the administration of justice;
- to promote the delivery of legal services to the entire community;
- to promote an increased understanding by the public of the legal system and respect for the law;
- to inculcate and enhance the highest standards of ethical conduct, integrity, dignity and honor;
- to continue the legal education of its members; and
- to encourage courtesy among all members of the legal profession, including Bench and Bar.

# OPENING STATEMENTS

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jennifer J. West



The legal profession has changed significantly over the past several decades, and women have played a central role in shaping that evolution. From courtrooms and boardrooms to bar leadership and public service, women continue to influence how the law is practiced, how institutions lead, and how the profession defines success.

The Richmond Bar Association's own history reflects both meaningful progress and the responsibility that comes with it. Women have served as presidents, committee chairs, section leaders, mentors, judges, and advocates within this Association, helping to guide it through periods of growth and change. Their leadership has strengthened the RBA not only through formal titles, but through sustained service, collaboration, and commitment to the broader legal community.

At the same time, this issue invites us to be honest about the work that remains. Representation in leadership is not a box to be checked, but an ongoing effort that requires attention, intention, and support at every stage of the profession. Creating space for women to lead- early in their careers, mid-career, and beyond- benefits not only individual attorneys, but the health and future of the profession as a whole.

This Women in Law issue highlights the many ways women contribute to the Richmond legal community, across practice areas, career paths, and leadership roles. It also serves as a reminder that strong institutions are built when leadership reflects the diversity of experiences and perspectives within their membership.

The Richmond legal community is particularly lucky to have so many women in positions of influence and leadership. We are also fortunate to have a network of women who lift up and support one another to make sure that women feel valued and appreciated at all stages of our career. There are many women in my life who have been valuable mentors, colleagues and friends. I met many of those women through various networking and volunteer opportunities with the RBA. Those amazing women have inspired me in ways I cannot begin to explain. I also strive to pay it forward by continuing to support and encourage young women in pursuit of whatever career path they may choose.

“

**The Richmond legal community is particularly lucky to have so many women in positions of influence and leadership.**

”

The newly reinvigorated RBA mentorship program is an excellent way for women to connect and engage in supporting one another and I look forward to seeing the difference our members can make in the lives of all young lawyers.

The Richmond Bar Association remains committed to fostering an inclusive professional community where leadership is defined by service, preparation, and integrity. As we look ahead, the RBA will continue working to ensure that opportunity, mentorship, and visibility remain accessible to all who are willing to step forward and serve.

- Jennifer J. West

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Annie M. Holland

I stand on the shoulders of giants in my role as Executive Director of the Richmond Bar Association. I have the privilege of working alongside Sharon Potter, whose depth of institutional knowledge cannot be replicated, and I follow in the footsteps of Lee Martin, the RBA's longest-tenured Executive Director and someone whose impact on this organization, and on the Richmond legal community, is immeasurable. Their leadership set a high bar, and I am keenly aware of the responsibility that comes with stepping into a role shaped by such excellence.

Stepping into this position as a young woman in leadership, however, was not without its familiar moments. As with previous leadership roles, I was no stranger to the polite head tilts, the double takes, and the well-meaning but unmistakable "are you sure you're qualified?" looks that often follow when I enter a room or introduce myself for the first time.

Over the years, I've heard variations of "you're the Executive Assistant?" and "oh, are you an intern at the bar?" more times than I can count. Both are respectable job titles. Neither is mine.

These moments are rarely malicious. In fact, they're usually delivered with genuine friendliness. But they are a reminder of something many women in leadership experience regularly: the quiet assumption that leadership must belong to someone else. Someone older. Someone louder. Someone who looks the part a little more traditionally.

What I've come to understand is that these moments are not obstacles to overcome so much as reminders of how leadership continues to evolve. The Richmond Bar Association has a long and meaningful history of women shaping its direction, and I benefit daily from that legacy.

Notably, I have only ever served under female RBA Presidents – Julie M. Cillo, Deanna H. Hathaway, and Jennifer J. West. They represent three of the eight women who have served as President in the RBA's long history, a fact that reflects both progress and the work still ahead. Each brought a distinct leadership style, a deep respect for collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to strengthening both their profession and the Association. That experience has shaped my own approach to leadership far more than any job title ever could (no pressure, incoming President Ben Pace). It has also reinforced something I believe strongly. Effective leadership does not look one way, sound one way, or follow a single path. At its best, it is thoughtful, prepared, and deeply invested in the people it serves.

This Women in Law issue is not about proving that women belong in leadership roles. That question has already been answered. It is about recognizing the impact women continue to have at every level of the profession and within the Association. It is about acknowledging the progress that has been made while remaining focused on the work still ahead, and it is about ensuring that the next generation of women lawyers, judges, and leaders alike, see examples of leadership that feel attainable and authentic.

I am glad to be part of an organization where women have long helped lead the way, and where leadership is defined not by assumption, but by action. The RBA's history of women leaders is not simply a footnote, but rather a throughline that continues to shape the future of the RBA.



- Annie M. Holland

# Women of the Richmond Bar Association

A detailed look at the demographics of female attorneys within our community

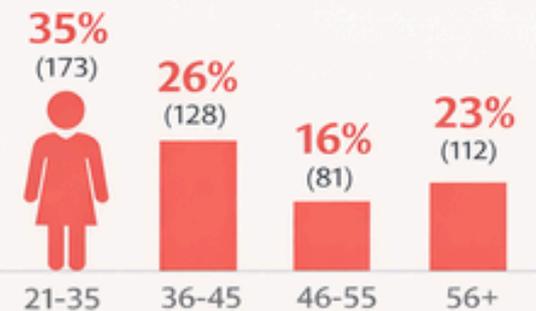
## 494 Women Attorneys

### 36% of RBA Membership

(Out of 1,386 total members) as of February 2026

Women attorneys represent *more than one-third* of the Richmond Bar Association's total membership.

#### Age Distribution



#### Women Attorneys at the RBA

- Average age: - 43
- Top employer type: Law Firms - 54%
- Over one-third (34%) were licensed in the last 10 years
- 10% hold a government or public service role:

#### Current Employment



#### Years Licensed



Women attorneys in the RBA are shaping the local legal community through leadership, mentorship, and advocacy; making up over one-third of our vibrant and dynamic membership.



# ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE COMMITTEE RECEIVES COMMENTS FROM **HENRICO AND HANOVER COURTS**

## **The Honorable Randall G. Johnson, Jr.**

*Henrico Circuit Court*

Within the past year, Henrico County Circuit Court saw the retirement of the Honorable L.A. Harris, Jr., and the elevation of the Honorable Linda Y. Lambert to the Circuit Court bench. The Court and the Bar thank Judge Harris for thirty-seven years of dedicated service, and congratulate Judge Lambert on her elevation to the bench. Judge Harris will return to the bench to serve as a substitute judge in his retirement.

Each year, the number of jury trials being set has increased, although many cases resolve prior to trial. With this in mind, attorneys are encouraged to remain mindful that docket time is precious, and should carefully consider what time will be needed for any given trial or hearing. When done effectively, this involves communicating with opposing counsel to determine how much evidence each side will present, and how long that will take. As always, if attorneys have multiple cases on a given day, they are encouraged to inform the Court so that proper accommodations can be made.

The Court has seen an increase in requests for video hearings over the past six years. As a general matter, in-person testimony is always preferred. Before requesting that a witness appearance be made by video, lawyers should (1) determine whether all parties are in agreement; and (2) review the statutes and court rules governing video appearances. Please remain mindful that appearances by video are not granted as a matter of course; they must be requested in advance, and the proper requirements must be met before such a request is considered.

## **Resources**

Attorneys are encouraged to make use of courtroom technology when preparing and presenting their cases. Each courtroom is equipped with HDMI capability and ELMO document cameras (similar to overhead projectors) which attorneys may use to effectively publish documents, photographs, and other evidence to the finder of fact. To avoid fumbling with technical difficulties in front of a jury, attorneys are encouraged to contact the Court before trial to practice using courtroom technology before their case begins. Practice makes perfect.

## **Professional Advice**

**Judge Johnson complimented both the Criminal and Civil Bar, noting that he is always impressed with the professionalism exhibited by attorneys in Henrico and the Greater Richmond Metropolitan Area.**

Judge Johnson encouraged lawyers to strive for efficiency and effective time management whenever possible. This involves preparing witnesses and clients for trial (let them know the time and location, inform them that they will not be able to bring their cell phone into the courtroom, etc.), anticipating whether a court reporter will be needed in civil matters, knowing and understanding objections, and being able to effectively explain the basis for any given objection. Attorneys are also encouraged to carefully assess whether a court interpreter may be necessary, particularly for clients and witnesses who speak English as a second language. Often times, ESL speakers may speak and comprehend ordinary topics with great ease, but struggle with comprehension of the nuanced technical knowledge required for detailed testimony.

In these cases, it is always valuable to verify a client or witness fully understands every aspect of their testimony and the questions that may be asked of them.

Judge Johnson encouraged Henrico lawyers to continue adhering to the professionalism and candor for which they are known. No matter the stakes at play, “No case is worth your license.” Younger attorneys are encouraged to connect with and learn from more seasoned attorneys in the bar. Finally, continue to be active in bar associations at every level.

The Richmond Bar Association thanks Judge Johnson for providing this feedback and guidance to the Bar, and for his service to the County and the Commonwealth.



**The Honorable B. Craig Dunkum**

*Henrico General District Court*

In October 2025, RBA Administration of Justice Committee members Nadeem Bohsali and David Galeski met with the Honorable Bryan Craig Dunkum, Chief Judge of the Henrico County General District Court, for a conversation to discuss issues relevant to the judiciary and the Bar at large. Below are some of the topics that were discussed.

**Collegiality Amongst the Attorneys**

Judge Dunkum noted that **attorneys in the greater Richmond area stand out not only for their excellent legal work, but for their genuine effort to live true to serving as “counselors and attorneys at law.”** The attorneys in his Court routinely display unparalleled civility and decorum and are often able to secure favorable outcomes for their clients without the necessity of court intervention.

**Mental Health and Veteran’s Dockets**

The Henrico County General District Court is fortunate to have two specialty dockets: a Mental Health Docket and a recently instituted Veterans’ Docket.

Both Dockets have been great assets for the judiciary to divert individuals who may face criminal charges, but have unique issues making alternatives to the traditional criminal process appealing. These specialty dockets provide litigants with excellent resources, such as referrals for mental healthcare providers and mentors who can guide them through the legal system.

**Communication**

Judge Dunkum reminded attorneys and litigants to keep the court informed of the status of their cases—especially when matters settle or when continuances are sought. Additionally, please do not forget that as a matter of courtesy to let all witnesses know if a matter is continued or settled.

On occasion in civil cases, attorneys reach an agreement to settle a case, and the only item left to complete is the formality of endorsing a Dismissal Order. In this situation, it is greatly appreciated when the attorneys contact the court to advise of this status. This allows the Court to set the matter out for a later date pending endorsement of the Order, which in turn frees up time on the docket to allow other litigants to be served appropriately.

**Keeping the Court Informed**

If you must be pulled away from a courtroom due to another conflicting hearing or otherwise, please let courtroom personnel know where you are and request that your case be held until your return. The Court is aware that many attorneys are managing various commitments in other courtrooms, some of which may overlap. In order to ensure that everyone receives proper attention, please keep the Court informed as to your whereabouts.

**Continuances**

As a general matter in civil cases, continuances are liberally granted by the court.

- For the first continuance, attorneys may simply contact the court and speak with the clerk to request a new date, so long as that date is agreed upon by counsel.

- For a second continuance, attorneys should contact the clerk to request a continuance, but will need to be approved by the presiding judge.
- For a third continuance, attorneys will need to set a hearing with both parties present to address whether the request for a continuance should be granted.

When requesting a continuance in any matter, it is always a good idea to obtain available dates from the Clerk’s office and cross reference those dates with opposing counsel before submitting a request for a continuance to Judges’ Chambers. Once the availability of all parties has been confirmed, it is a great help to the Court when attorneys provide three or more potential dates that have already been cleared with all parties and witnesses.

### Interesting Trends

The number of reckless driving speeding tickets in Henrico has increased to an alarming degree. Speeding tickets have been issued for individuals charged with driving at 100, 150, and even 200 miles per hour at a frequency not previously seen.

### Advice for Younger Attorneys

Younger attorneys are encouraged to place their names on the Court Appointed Attorney List. Henrico County is grateful to have a deep bench of talented attorneys who volunteer to serve on the court appointed list, which provides indigent defendants an unparalleled opportunity to receive high-caliber legal representation, and provides mentorship opportunities for younger attorneys.

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### The Honorable Marissa D. Mitchell

*Henrico Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court*

Judge Mitchell is extremely grateful for the attorneys who serve as court-appointed guardians ad litem and counsel in the Henrico J&DR Court. Given the court’s substantial caseload, however, many attorneys currently on the court-appointed list are stretched thin. Judge Mitchell strongly encourages attorneys interested in this important work to contact the judges’ secretary, Charlotte Miller, to submit a resume and express their interest in being added to the list.

Judge Mitchell also recommended that newer attorneys introduce themselves to the judges to convey their interest in serving on the court-appointed list. Court-appointed attorneys play a vital role in the administration of justice before the court, and the judges want to ensure they are familiar with and comfortable appointing attorneys who serve in this capacity.

“In my career as both a practicing attorney and a Judge, the RBA has provided me the opportunity to network and socialize with lawyers and Judge’s I would not otherwise have contact with. This has led me to get to know lawyers who mentored me and helped me achieve my career goals. Every young lawyer should know that members of the bench are not unapproachable, and I encourage young attorneys to get involved with bar associations to get real world advice from those who have been there before.”

**-Hon. Stephen A. Mutnick**  
*Henrico Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court*

## MEET ME at the RICHMOND BAR



### MOCKTAIL OF THE MONTH

#### *Shimmering Shamrock*



- ½ cup green apple juice
- ½ cup lemonade
- ½ cup lemon-lime soda or sparkling water
- 1 tbsp simple syrup
- Edible glitter (green or gold)

- 1 Combine green apple juice, lemonade, and simple syrup in a shaker with ice. Shake well.
- 2 Strain over fresh ice into a clear glass.
- 3 Top with lemon-lime soda or sparkling water.
- 4 Stir in a pinch of edible glitter until the drink shimmers.

Attorneys may stop by in between cases or contact the judges' secretary to schedule a meeting with a particular judge.

Attorneys who are already on the guardian ad litem and court-appointed list should note that the court reviews these lists every six months for continued reappointments. Accordingly, attorneys should periodically update the court to confirm that they are still interested in receiving appointments.

Judge Mitchell encourages newer attorneys to the court and to juvenile and domestic relations practice to shadow more experienced attorneys on their cases so that they can become acclimated to court procedures before appearing independently. Many attorneys on the court-appointed list are willing to mentor newer attorneys, providing practical insight into court procedures and expectations.

When new attorneys arrive at the court, they should introduce themselves to the deputies and inform them of the cases for which they are present. This will help their cases get called quicker. Attorneys should be fully prepared when their case is called, having reviewed everything and met with their clients ahead of time so that they are prepared to go forward. Generally, attorneys should not be meeting their client for the first time on the day of trial or hearing.

Attorneys should also consider filing motions in advance of the trial or hearing dates. If there are significant issues that will require additional time to research or argue, attorneys should let the judge know ahead of time so that everyone is prepared to go forward on the trial or hearing date. By the same token, if an attorney is going to be late, they should promptly call or text (804) 513-4384 to notify the court.

Time management remains a priority, especially in custody and visitation matters. Judge Mitchell urges counsel to streamline their cases as much as possible to ensure cases do not go over the time allotted by the pretrial order. All Henrico J&DR judges utilize a standard pretrial order for all courtrooms. Attorneys should be familiar with its requirements and deadlines.

To further improve efficiency, Henrico J&DR has shortened the criminal docket blocked times to one hour, with cases scheduled for 9 a.m., 10 a.m., or 11 a.m. The court hopes this adjustment will reduce scheduling conflicts for attorneys and reduce the wait times.

Judge Mitchell also highlighted a recent initiative led by Judges Deglau and Mutnick: a pilot domestic violence compliance docket aimed at strengthening oversight and successful outcomes for defendants and victims alike. During their respective duty weeks, the judge will conduct compliance reviews at 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. on Friday to proactively ensure that defendants are adhering to the court-ordered services and conditions. This initiative is designed to enhance accountability, promote victim safety, and address potential issues before they escalate. In addition, the Victim Witness Office reaches out to victims who may wish to be present at the review hearings, ensuring they are informed, supported, and given a meaningful opportunity to be heard.

Judge Mitchell encourages attorneys to seek out pro bono opportunities in Henrico J&DR cases, particularly those involving protective orders. She suggested that the Richmond Bar Association might consider forming a pro bono program to assist with these opportunities.

Finally, Judge Mitchell expressed pride in the ongoing work of the Henrico J&DR Families First Committee. Through this committee, various local and regional stakeholders come together with the judges and court personnel on a quarterly basis to evaluate and improve services for families. They group reviews existing and potential programs and explores improvements to court processes and procedures to ensure accessibility and meaningful support for youth and families. The committee is also preparing its biennial continuing legal education program for attorneys on the court-appointed list, which will be offered later this year.

**[Keep Reading for Comments from Hanover Judges](#)**

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## The Honorable Victoria A. B. Willis

*Hanover Circuit Court*

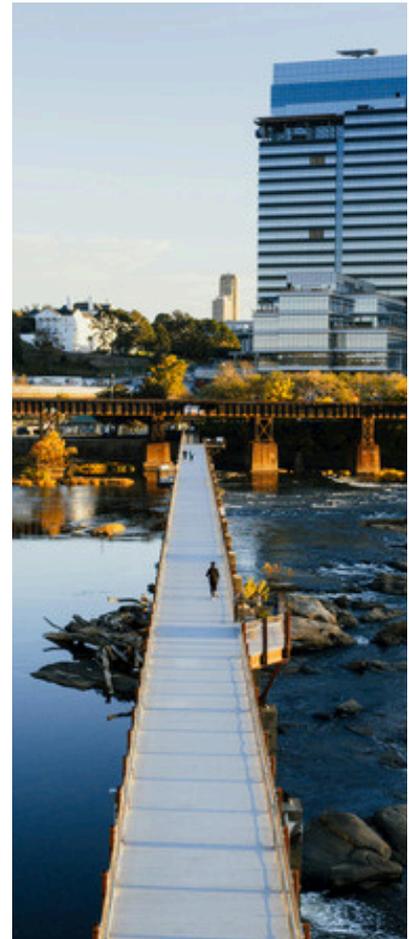
Judge Willis reports that the Hanover County Circuit Court has a consistently full docket of both civil and criminal cases. Currently, Judge Willis and Judge J. Overton Harris are the only two presiding judges in Hanover County, but two additional judges will be added to the Circuit by April 1, 2026 which will provide Hanover with an additional judge two days per week. Even with only two presiding judges, Judge Willis is confident that most civil trials and hearings can be scheduled within a reasonable amount of time.

To schedule a trial or hearing in Hanover Circuit Court, counsel can either prepare and file a Term Day Praecipe or contact either Jamie Warfield or Kayleigh Turner in the Clerk's Office by email ([jwarfield@vacourts.gov](mailto:jwarfield@vacourts.gov) or [kturner@vacourts.gov](mailto:kturner@vacourts.gov)). Judge Willis also encourages all attorneys to use the Clerks' Office webpage for information on other filing and scheduling procedures, court closures, standing orders, and other important court business. Similar to many other jurisdictions, Hanover County Circuit Court recently implemented e-filing through the Virginia Judiciary eFiling System (VJEFS). All filings can also be accessed using the Officer of the Court Remote Access ("OCRA").

Judge Willis indicates that **members of the Richmond Bar are always very cordial and professional. She rarely sees a lack of decorum or candor in the courtroom or a lack of respect or professionalism between attorneys.** Unlike many other venues, Hanover Circuit Court does not have a policy prohibiting members of the public from bringing electronic devices into the courtroom. However, she continues to implore counsel and their clients to be respectful of their use of electronic devices during court proceedings and to read the court's standing order addressing the appropriate use of electronic devices in the court room. Judge Willis also cautions members of the bar about the use of Artificial Intelligence and anticipates that Hanover may have to enter a standing order regarding the use of AI in the event it is necessitated due to issues in pleadings and briefs.

Adequate preparation and respect for the court's time are important to all judges in managing dockets and providing available time slots. She provided a few concrete examples of how counsel can achieve these goals. First, in the event of a jury trial, Judge Willis would recommend that counsel prepare jury instructions well in advance of trial and make all efforts to cooperate with opposing counsel to agree upon jury instructions before trial. Secondly, she suggests counsel come to court with orders prepared for motions, and to make every effort to ensure that order is in keeping with the relief sought. Third, in the event of a discovery dispute, it is recommended that counsel focus their attention on each particular discovery omission in any briefing or hearing, which will enable the the court to address each specific item in a routine fashion.

Judge Willis enjoys seeing younger members of the bar in court. She encourages younger attorneys to be confident in the court room, and to introduce yourself loudly and clearly when bringing business before the court. She notes that this is a significant marketing opportunity for younger attorneys. She also encourages younger attorneys to observe as many court proceedings early in their careers, to learn methods that are successful and professional, and those that are not.



**The Honorable Hugh S. Campbell**  
*Hanover General District Court*

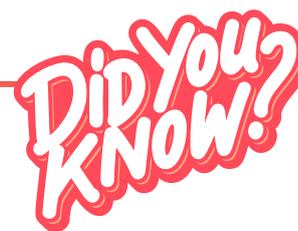
The Hanover General District Court is seeing many changes and new developments. Judge Caddell has recently left the court due to his appointment to sit on the 15<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, resident in Stafford County. Judge Angela O'Connor has been shifted from Stafford to sit along with Judge Campbell in Hanover General District Court.

The court is now expanding its docket availability for civil cases. Civil first returns dockets and trials have been scheduled and will continue to be held every Monday in both courts. In addition, one court has scheduled a smaller 8:30 a.m. first return docket, with afternoon civil trials, on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month, with criminal and traffic dockets in between. Going forward, nothing will change on Mondays, but the Tuesday civil court plans to devote one of the three Tuesdays a month to an entirely civil docket with the other two Tuesdays remaining unchanged. Judge Campbell indicated that the court had not yet seen any increase in case load attributable to the recent, substantial increase in the court's jurisdictional limit, but should that happen, the court hopes that the additional devotion of docket time to civil matters will be sufficient if that should happen going forward.

Judge Campbell indicated that the court is seeing a substantial increase in requests for appearances by remote means. In such situations, counsel should file a motion seeking permission, as an initial matter, so as to give opposing counsel full notice and an opportunity to object. When remote testimony is agreed or otherwise approved, counsel should bring their own video equipment to court with them, as the court has no IT personnel available to aid in such matters. The court can, however, receive testimony by telephone, whenever that is deemed sufficient. Remote appearances are almost never approved when parties appear pro se, however.

The court's videoconferencing capabilities are used principally for arraignments in criminal matters, though also for perfunctory matters, especially when such remote arrangements will result in sparing sheriffs substantial transport impositions. The court's video playing capabilities are, however, in ever-increasing use, due to the prevalence of police body camera footage.

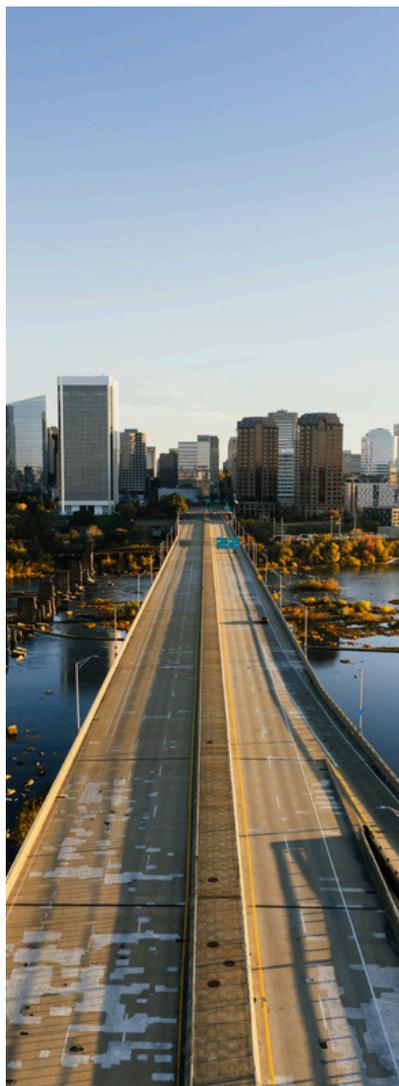
Another concern of the court is with the growing need for foreign language interpreters. The court is requesting that in all cases counsel notify the clerk's office early on if the assistance of a certified interpreter(s) will be required for any party or witness. The court is currently transitioning to utilizing interpreters provided and certified by the Department of Judicial Services.



*The Richmond Bar Association staff is a small but mighty team of two women: Annie Holland, Executive Director, and Sharon Potter, Membership Director.*

My advice to new attorneys would be to remember this is a profession, not just a job, and it should never be personal with regards to opposing counsel. Too many lawyers today fail to treat their counterparts with appropriate respect. When I tried murder cases, I would go toe-to-toe with opposing counsel in Court and then, we would wait for the verdict together in my office. I would also advise them to look for mentors in the legal community to learn nuances necessary for a long-standing career. This is where the RBA helped me and can help them. Lastly, Professionalism is the cornerstone of what we do. Therefore, always be prepared for any case you try. While it may be one of many to you, to the parties, it is the most important one.

**-Hon. Margaret W. Delgau**  
 Henrico Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court



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**The Honorable Lisa A. Seward**

*Hanover Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court*

Judge Lisa A. Seward took over her role as the Presiding Judge of the Hanover Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court in June of 2024 after a rewarding career in the Hanover County Attorney's Office. She has found the processes that were already in place prior to taking the bench are working well and expressed no desire to make any significant changes to the established status quo. She extended special praise for the attorneys who regularly appear in her court and has found the vast majority of counsel are punctual and prepared. **Judge Seward is impressed with the local bar and commends them for their professionalism.**

As a reminder, Judge Seward appreciates clear communication from attorneys practicing in her court. If an attorney is going to be late, it is always advisable to call the clerk's office in advance to let them know of the delay. Many attorneys practice in several jurisdictions in the Richmond area, and it is helpful to schedule hearings with ample travel time between courthouses. With regard to continuances, a standard pre-printed form may be filled out to make such a request, and she reminds litigants to alert the clerk as soon as possible if a continuance is needed. Not only is this a courtesy to the other attorneys practicing in her court, but it also ensures that court time is used effectively and efficiently. This same courtesy applies to when cases are settled or resolved without the necessity of court intervention.

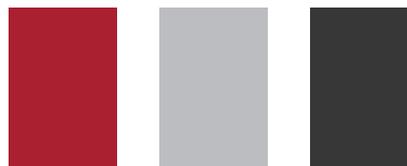
Custody and visitation hearings can vary in length, and so Judge Seward usually holds a pretrial conference to determine the length of such matters—in either 1 hour, 2 hour, or 3 hour time slots. To this end, after a hearing is set, it is always advisable to thoroughly prepare clients prior to arriving at the courthouse so that everyone's time is used effectively.

Finally, Judge Seward's advice for newer lawyers is to watch more experienced attorneys as much as possible. There are many chances to observe the seasoned lawyers who regularly practice in her court.

I would encourage young attorneys to attend the events that the RBA hosts, and to make those connections offered through these events. Looking back at my years as a younger attorney I can say that the mentorship I was provided by the more experienced attorneys I worked with, and those that I was lucky enough to practice alongside, was perhaps the greatest gift I was given. Do not be afraid to ask for advice and always be open to any advice that is given.

**-Hon. Lauren A. Caudill**  
Henrico General District Court

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The Honorable Lee A. Harris, Jr., the longest-serving judge in the Commonwealth of Virginia, recently retired after 35 years of distinguished judicial service on the bench of the Henrico County Circuit Court, including three terms as Chief Judge. His judicial career began as a Judge of the General District Court in Henrico County, where he served for two years. Early in his legal career, Judge Harris served as an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney for Henrico County and later as the Commonwealth's Attorney in that office. He also enjoyed a private law practice in Richmond, litigating a wide range of civil, criminal, and family law cases. Judge Harris 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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# PRO BONO BULLETIN

The Central Virginia legal community's guide to Pro Bono opportunities throughout the area.

*This bulletin is made possible by the RBA Pro Bono Committee & the following Pro Bono Partners:*

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## Virginia Free Legal Answers - American Bar Association

**Who:** Attorneys **When:** Any time **Where:** Virtual

ABA Free Legal Answers is a project of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service. The purpose of the website is to increase access to advice and information about non-criminal legal matters for those who cannot afford it. Attorneys eligible under certain criteria will be authorized to use the system and to respond to user's requests. You will only answer questions you choose to answer.

## The Triage Project - Central VA Legal Aid Society & Greater Richmond Bar Foundation

**Who:** Attorneys **When:** Varies **Where:** Case dependent

This innovative Private Bar led pro bono project identifies "Triage Champions" in critical substantive law areas where CVLAS lacked the resources to provide full representation. These Triage Champions recruit and train like-minded pro bono volunteers to join their virtual law firms in their respective practice areas. Cases are managed on JusticeServer – a volunteer portal.

If you would like to volunteer for one of our Triage practice areas, please contact Lisa Bennett, CVLAS Triage Coordinator, at [lisa@cvlas.org](mailto:lisa@cvlas.org) or Vera Thoms at [admin@grbf.org](mailto:admin@grbf.org).

## Community Tax Law Project

**Who:** Attorneys, Accountants, Enrolled Agents **When:** Ongoing **Where:** Virtual

CTLP handles approximately 800 represented and brief advice cases each year. We have a critical need for volunteers to assist with our very large caseload. If you are interested in becoming a member of CTLP's Pro Bono Panel, please take a moment to complete the attached Pro Bono Survey for [attorneys](#) or [accountants and enrolled agents](#). For more information, please call (804) 358-5855 or email [info@ctlp.org](mailto:info@ctlp.org).

## CancerLINC

**Who:** Attorneys **When:** Varies **Where:** Varies

CancerLINC is a local non-profit that LINC's cancer patients and their families to legal resources to solve the non-medical obstacles that arise with a cancer diagnosis. Common legal issues include: wills, trusts, uncontested guardianship & custody, public benefits denials, employment, housing & landlord/tenant issues, and bankruptcy.

## Pro Bono Housing Unit - Legal Aid Justice Center

**Who:** Attorneys **When:** Varies **Where:** Virtual

As a volunteer for the LAJC Pro Bono Housing Unit, you will provide remote legal advice to low-income Richmond tenants at risk of eviction. LAJC provides trainings, sample pleadings, and manuals for volunteers. For more information, email Lauren King, Esq. at [laurenking@justice4all.org](mailto:laurenking@justice4all.org).

## Looking for more Pro Bono opportunities? Check out JusticeServer.org.

JusticeServer is a tool that enables attorneys to easily volunteer their time for pro bono cases from one or more legal services providers. And more importantly, it allows them to connect with clients in need of their legal expertise where they can have the greatest impact.

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# FINDING YOUR CONFIDENCE AS A WOMAN IN LAW: WHAT? LIKE IT'S HARD?

*By: Sharon M. Carr*

In March 2025, I sat at a table in The Woman's Club at Bolling Haxall House in Richmond, Virginia attending the first-ever Women and the Law Institute continuing legal education live seminar. The women lawyers who surrounded me at the table were accomplished and their professional experience ran the gamut – from twenty-four years as an attorney in the Tidewater area to a newly minted attorney who had landed her first job at a small firm in Northern Virginia.



Each speaker generously shared her journey as a woman in the law: the stereotypes she dispelled, the doors she wedged open with a high heel, the glass ceilings she shattered, the confidence she grew into, and the unintended mentorship she provided along the way. By the end of the eight-hour day, my cup was full. The collective support offered in that room left an impression that has remained with me nearly a year later.

Through this article, I hope to share a portion of the wisdom and empowerment that seminar gave me. I sought insight from three women in law, asking each to reflect on a challenge she faced and overcame. By revealing a more vulnerable side of these legal powerhouses, my hope is to show that success, balance, passion, and

confidence are attainable on your own terms.

**Virginia B. Theisen, Senior Assistant Attorney General II, Criminal Appeals Section, Office of the Attorney General; Fellow in the American Academy of Appellate Lawyers**

The legal profession has changed tremendously since I began practicing in 1984. What has not changed, but continues to be a challenge, is the temptation to be pulled into working so many hours that we neglect other important parts of our lives. As we begin our careers, we are “learning the ropes,” and want to be taken seriously. As responsibilities increase, so do the demands, until work can become all-consuming.

*“Trust the path meant for you, even when progress is hard to see. You are making a difference and paving the way for others.”*

*-Judge Doris M. Causey*



**Sharon M. Carr**

*Richmond City Attorney's Office*

Sharon Carr is a Senior Assistant City Attorney in the Civil Litigation Division of the Richmond City Attorney's Office, where she primarily represents the City's police department. In this role, Sharon litigates state and federal suits; advises the department to ensure its operations and policies comply with federal, state and local laws; and handles collective bargaining contract disputes, prohibited practice claims and disciplinary grievances, among a host of other responsibilities. Sharon received her J.D. from the Marshall-Wythe School of Law at the College of William & Mary and B.A. from George Mason University in Government and International Politics.

Chief Justice Goodwyn encourages newly admitted attorneys to take care of their health and make time for family and friends. I was a bit of a late bloomer to the concept, but being a mom got me started. I learned that I could leave work in the afternoon from time to time to attend my son’s high school tennis matches and still complete my work. Now, all these years later, I value my time with my fellow altos in the church choir. These friends have no opinions on standards of review or procedural default, some of the staples of my legal life. Time in choir is a clean break from work.

To maintain passion for work, and minimize burnout, I encourage young attorneys not to be late bloomers — make time for non-work activities. Long ago, I stopped wishing colleagues “good luck,” and instead, borrowing from the French, wish them “good courage.” We all need courage for the long haul in our profession, and a little time away from it as well.

**Judge Stacy Lee, Henrico Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court**

As a newly licensed attorney, I was fortunate to work with a male attorney who took a chance on someone with plenty of heart but no experience. I often traveled with him to court to observe, train, and learn procedure. At nearly every turn, I was asked whether I was his secretary, paralegal, or stenographer. Though taken aback—especially since I was always in a suit with a legal bag in tow—I quickly learned that being a young, African-American woman lawyer was still not “the norm.” I was determined to help change that perception.

Later, as an assistant public defender, I encountered similar obstacles. Clients questioned my age, experience, and credentials, and I was keenly aware of the doubts left unspoken. I knew my work—not my words—would settle them. I conducted thorough initial interviews, listened carefully, answered questions, and outlined all possible outcomes. I always reminded clients of their right to hire other counsel. Nearly every time, the response was the same: “I’m good with you.” They stayed because I was knowledgeable, professional, and confident—and over time, because my reputation preceded me.

My advice to young attorneys, new attorneys, and those feeling professionally stuck, is to proceed forward with purpose, guided by wisdom and not fear. Network, seek mentors, and do not be afraid to ask for help—be more afraid of pride if you do not. It is okay to take a job that is not your dream if it serves as a stepping stone or pivot.

When self-doubt arises, remember you earned your law degree through sacrifice, grit, and determination. Walk in that truth—and go be great.

**Judge Doris M. Causey, Court of Appeals of Virginia**

Serving as the 79th President of the Virginia State Bar was about far more than leading Virginia’s lawyers. It carried added significance—being the first Black president, the fifth woman, and the first legal aid lawyer. Breaking new ground was both challenging and rewarding, as it meant extending a path others had laid and widening it for those who would follow, regardless of race or gender.

*...proceed forward with purpose,  
guided by wisdom and not fear.*

I met those challenges by embracing the purpose of the role: Protect it. Improve it. Pass it on. Being the change required daily advocacy for diversity and inclusion and a focus on closing the justice gap. By the end of my presidency, increased representation of women, people of color, and legal aid lawyers in leadership had become the new norm—making every challenge worthwhile.

My advice is simple: step out on faith. Trust the path meant for you, even when progress is hard to see. You are making a difference and paving the way for others.

**Conclusion**

Being a woman in law is no longer unexpected. Of the more than 1.3 million lawyers in the United States, 41% are women.[1] Since 2016, women have attended law school at higher rates than men,[2] and in 2024, women comprised 56.2% of law students.[3] Women are not just entering the profession, they are excelling at it, both before and behind the bench.

You not need to conform to the outdated model of what a lawyer is “supposed” to be. Your eccentricities will set you apart in a sea of black and navy blue suits and may be the reason a client connects with you, a colleague trusts you, or you continue to love this profession decades in. This issue celebrates women in law, but do not let you being a woman in law be what primarily defines you. Let it be your brilliant brief, your reliability, your leadership, your humor, and your authenticity. Be unapologetically excellent at what you do – while just so happening to be a woman.



# THE RICHMOND BAR WELLNESS DOCKET

*A new feature in each issue of The Richmond Lawyer  
Featuring insights from:*



***Taylor Steffan, JD, LCSW  
Navigator Counseling***



***Parke Sterling, LPC  
Therapy for Men RVA***

# THE GIFT OF PERSPECTIVE

*Parke Sterling, LPC*

**I run a men's therapy practice.** Ninety-five percent of my caseload is men. Most of them are high-achieving, Type A's who go at work and life hard.

I often joke that the women I do work with are more hard-driving than the men. Recently, though, I had a conversation with one of my female clients who happens to be an attorney, and it changed how I think about that little quip.



We were talking about how she views herself and how that might differ from how others in her firm view her. I told her, "You come across as confident, competent, and decisive." She paused and said, "Hmm. I don't think that way about myself."

That intrigued me.

We talked about where that gap comes from. Of course, family dynamics and conditioning play a part, just like for all of us. But she also pointed to something bigger.

She said, "Well, you know how women are conditioned to relate to men."

I said, "No. Honestly, not really. Please educate me."

She explained that in many firms, and in society more broadly, women are taught to defer to men. Conditioned to see men as the experts. The ones more deserving of becoming partner or getting the preferred work.

She talked about how the standards of behavior are different. Men often benefit from being assertive or even aggressive in going after what they want. That behavior is rewarded. Men can even display erratic or intense behavior, and it is sometimes admired. They are driven. They want to win.

But women can be shunned for the exact same posture because it violates what we have traditionally expected women to be.

And then there is the part that feels most tragic to me.

It is not only that women may have to fight the battle externally. It is that the external messaging can seep in. Over time, it becomes internal. In quiet moments, a woman may begin to relate to herself the way she has been treated.

There is a basic psychological principle here. If you are told, overtly or subtly, that you are not smart enough, not skilled enough, second-rate, or not enough, your brain absorbs it. Eventually, you start telling yourself the same story.

I do not want to fall into overgeneralizing here. Not all men act this way. Not all women absorb messaging in the same way. But as a man who spends his days talking to other men, this was important for me to hear.

We do not know what we do not know. We are used to seeing the world from our own perspective.

I asked her how she deals with this.

She said, "I don't sit around thinking about it. I don't carry a lot of active resentment. It's just something I accept and factor into how I act."

She explained that with certain men, she cannot challenge them directly. She has to be more skilled and strategic. More calculated. She has to think about how to say something, not just what to say.

When I pressed her on why she does not feel more resentment, she said, "It's not all men."



She named several men in her firm who treat her as an equal. Men who respect her. Men she can be direct and assertive with. Men she does not have to play communication games with.

She said just knowing those men are out there makes a big difference.

So, I guess this article is directed at both women and men.

For women, we hear you. If your experience mirrors my client's, I hate that for you. And I am sorry.

For men, this is not about feeling bad about yourself or putting men down. We have had enough of that. It is actually the opposite. Feel great about yourself and make sure your actions match that.

This is more about recognizing how conditioning subconsciously molds our biases, decisions, and actions. We didn't choose that conditioning and we can't eliminate it. But we also don't have to blindly obey it.

If I were to make this practical, it might look like this.

**Be a good man with a strong moral compass.** Then make sure your behavior reflects it. God knows we need that now more than ever.

**Be aware of your biases, especially the subtle ones.** If your first thought is, "I don't have any," you are wrong. We all do. Awareness does not eliminate bias, but it keeps it from quietly shaping your decisions.

**Assume competence.** When a woman, or anyone, speaks in a meeting, assume she knows what she is talking about. Notice if you double-check her in ways you would not double-check a male colleague.

**Reward assertiveness consistently.** If you admire decisiveness in men, do not penalize it in women. "Strong leader" and "too aggressive" can describe the same behavior filtered through bias.

**Do not require strategic softening.** If someone has to overly cushion her message so you can hear it, ask yourself why direct communication feels different coming from her.

**Interrupt the interruption.** If a woman is talked over, redirect the room. "I'd like to hear her finish." Small moves matter.

**Promote based on performance, not comfort.** We tend to elevate people who make us feel comfortable, which often means they look like us or communicate like us. Be honest about that.

**Have enough confidence and humility to be challenged.** Admit when you are wrong. Nothing screams insecurity more than someone who cannot acknowledge a misstep.

Again, this is not about guilt. It is about awareness.

You cannot uproot your conditioning. You cannot fix the world. But you can influence the room you are in.

And to the men who already show up this way, keep going. You are doing great.

#### **About the Author:**

*Parke Sterling is a Licensed Professional Counselor based in Richmond, Virginia, and the owner of Therapy for Men RVA, a small group practice that specializes in working with stressed, anxious, and high-performing men. They offer walk-and-talk therapy along the James River as well as virtual sessions for clients throughout Virginia. Learn more at [www.richmondanxiety.com](http://www.richmondanxiety.com).*

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# SUPPORTING WOMEN IN LAW: PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

By Taylor Steffan, JD, LCSW

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In honor of The Richmond Lawyer's focus on Women in Law this month, here five actionable strategies for supporting women (and everyone!) in the legal profession.

- **Pay attention to the “extra” work**

Notice who does the notetaking, scheduling, mentoring, recruiting, and interpersonal maintenance in your office. Acknowledge and credit this labor, and then take steps to share the burden.

- **Practice real-time intervention**

Give credit to the right people and redirect others when you notice interruptions. You can try easy, non-confrontational phrases like “that sounds like what [colleague] was suggesting earlier” or “I think [colleague] was still speaking.”

- **Open doors, not just conversations**

Giving good advice is just one part of mentoring; facilitating access is often more meaningful. Make introductions. Invite women into rooms where decisions and opportunities actually happen.

- **Assume real life is complicated**

Whenever possible, offer flexibility and hybrid options to all employees. These policies benefit parents and nonparents alike, and they boost retention and lower stress for everyone.

- **Normalize taking parental leave**

Research is clear that paid parental leave benefits both families and the economy. Use it out without apology, no matter your gender. Plus, when everyone takes leave, caregiving stops being a career penalty. If your workplace doesn't offer paid leave, push for it as a sound business strategy, not a perk.



*A graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law and a former biglaw attorney, Taylor offers a unique perspective on counseling. She understands the complexities of work-life balance, stress management, and mental wellness for lawyers and professionals in high-pressure careers.*

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CONNECT. LEARN. LEAD.

*Your community for professional growth, trusted connection, and meaningful career impact.*

As the oldest bar association in Virginia, the Richmond Bar Association has been a cornerstone of the region's legal community since 1885. With more than 1,300 members, the RBA is where legal professionals at all stages of their career come to find connection, support, and community.

## **GROW YOUR NETWORK**

Build relationships that matter. From casual socials to signature luncheons with leading legal minds, RBA events foster genuine connections across firms, courts, and practice areas.

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Whether you're new to practice or a seasoned veteran, the RBA offers a professional home where your voice is valued and your contributions make a difference.

## **LEAD WHERE IT COUNTS**

Shape the future of the profession through opportunities to serve on committees, join sections, and support critical initiatives that advance justice, integrity, and the rule of law.

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