



The Docket

February 2021

Association of Clerks of the District Courts of Virginia

New District Court Positions Update

At the request of Karl Hade, the Clerks Association Executive Council submitted on a proposal to allocate the new positions reauthorized during the 2020 Special Session. Unfortunately, 120 FTE does not provide enough new positions to staff every understaffed court at least 80%; however, using criteria based on caseload and population trends, size of court, and number of judges, the Association made recommendations to the Office of the Executive Secretary regarding new position alignment that makes the best use of the new staff allotment.

Simultaneously, OES developed their own allocation plan. Not surprisingly, the Association's version did not differ significantly from the OES version. Using the OES plan, the Association conducted a court-by-court analysis to determine how the

positions should be filled (i.e. grade analysis).

The Association Compensation and Classification Workgroup met one year ago this month to determine how courts should be organized across the Commonwealth. The number of employees, size of court, and management structure were all important factors considered in this plan. Ultimately, the analysis we performed as a workgroup helped construct a consistent classification/management model that we would like to see implemented statewide.

Based on monies allotted, we are unsure at the time of this issue's publication how the positions will be advertised and hired. As more information is available to share, it will be. **Please note that there may be good news regarding state employee raises. As of now, the legislature has agreed on 5%. It moves to the Governor next.**

Clerks Association Leadership

Officers

President	Rick Kahl
President-Elect	Laura Griffin
Past President	Terri Rea
Vice President	Kimberly McKittrick
Secretary/Treas.	Amy Burnham

Regional Representatives

Region 1	Courtney Payne
Region 2	Kelly Douglas Wiggins
Region 3	Shannon Meadowcroft
Region 4	Laura Hatch
Region 5	Melissa Gil
Region 6	Shanna Henry
Region 7	Stephanie Crisman
Region 8	Ginger Webb
Region 9	Nikki King
Region 10	Kathy Vance

Inside this issue:



New District Court Positions Update	1
Access to Justice Commission Commendation and	1, 5-7
News from around the State	2-3
Resolution for Connie Roberts	3
Retirement Spotlight	4
Certified Court Executive and Fellows Reward Program	7-9

Access to Justice Commission crafts Commendation and Proclamation

The Access to Justice Commission issued a Commendation and Proclamation for civil servants, including clerks, to highlight the work performed to keep the courts operating during the Pandemic. The Proclamation has been printed in this issue on **pages 5-7**.

Co-Chair of the Access to Justice Commission, Virginia Supreme Court **Justice S. Bernard Goodwyn**, gave this statement about the Proclamation: "The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world

around us. The Virginia Access to Justice Commission knows that it has been no easy task maintaining access to our legal system, while protecting the public's health. Dedicated civil servants across the Commonwealth have worked diligently to ensure that our court system continues to function and that citizens have access to justice. The Commission believes that the efforts and sacrifices of those civil servants need to be appreciated, recognized, and commended."

See pages 5-7

Campbell GDC—Clerk **Chantel Jones** would like to welcome **Emily Smith** to her team! Welcome, Emily!

Chesterfield JDR—Clerk **Laura Griffin** would like to welcome **Jennifer Phillips** to their Court. Welcome, Jennifer! Laura also recognizes the following service milestones in 2021: **Cheryl Anderson** (35 years); **Kara Galluzzo** (20 years); **Jennifer Jones** (15 years); and, **Jeovellina Cruz** (10 years). Congratulations, ladies, on 80 years of combined service to the Court! Finally, Laura would like to thank her team for working so hard to fill many gaps this year. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed and it is so very appreciated!

Danville JDR—Clerk **Tammy White** would like to recognize current staff for years of service and dedication to the Virginia Judiciary as of February 1, 2021:

Dale Wiley, Judge, 23 years
Tammy White, Clerk, 14 years
Nancy Hill, 6 years
Christina Davis, 4 years
Dana Barber, 4 years
Lisa Richardson, 3 years
Ashley Williams, 2 years
Stephanie Keatts, 1 year
Kimberly Coleman, 6 months

Halifax GDC—Clerk **Veresia Wood** would like to extend a special thank you to their awesome Judges **Darrel W. Puckett** and **Chief Judge Calvin S. Spencer, Jr.** for assisting the Clerk's Office with the purging of records, early last year during the Pandemic.



Pictured at left:
 Hon. Darrel W.
 Puckett,
 purging files in
 Halifax.

Veresia would also like to recognize the following service milestones: Veresia Wood (20 years); **Patricia Chambers** (16 years); **Angela Glasscock** (5 years); and **Heather Keatts** (5 years). Congratulations, ladies! Finally, Halifax GDC will moving back to their permanent location at 8 South Main Street Courthouse Square Halifax, VA 24558 on

March 29, 2021, after approximately three years of being in a temporary location. Welcome home!

Hampton GDC—The judges and staff of the Hampton General District Court would like to congratulate Clerk **Barbara Fagley** on her retirement after 41 years of excellent service. Congratulations, Barbara! (See [Retirement Spotlight on page 4](#)).

Hanover GDC—Clerk **Cheryl DeVaughn** would like to congratulate deputy clerk **Brittany Tate** on the birth of her son, Wickham, on 10/9/2020. Congratulations, Brittany!

Lexington/Rockbridge JDR - Clerk **Lisa Fischer** would like to welcome new deputy clerk, **Marnie Mikels**, to the Court. Lisa reports that Marnie has been a great addition to her small staff. Welcome, Marnie!

Lynchburg JDR—Clerk **Victoria Baez** would like to welcome supervising deputy clerk, **Robyn Williams**. Welcome, Robyn! Victoria would also like to thank her crew for working so hard during the COVID crisis!

Prince George CMB - Clerk **Denise Covington** would like to welcome **Jennifer McDole** and **Cheri Giles**, who transferred from Chesterfield GDC and Hopewell CMB, respectively, at the end of 2020.

Prince William JDR—Clerk **Monica Burnett** submitted the following:

We would like to thank each one of our clerks who have had to adjust their work lives, home lives, way of thinking, schedules, and all-around daily minute to minute thoughts. While most of us that work in the court system are quite familiar with changing gears and adapting, COVID-19 has flipped our world and sent us hurling through the atmosphere with no space suit in site. It is difficult to hear front line essential workers receiving acknowledgement all over the world without the court ever being mentioned. So we acknowledge and thank our clerks for doing whatever it takes to get the job done despite feeling isolated, exposed and unsafe in our work environment. From our Oprah inspired bathroom tissue, and chicken exchange celebrations in the office - to the random phone calls from clerks who ventured out to the grocery store and have found and purchased an item that someone else in the

News From Around the State, cont.

office needed. We thank our clerks for their generosity during the holidays for purchasing items to donate to others in our community that were in need despite their own needs. We have developed a new unified strength as a court. You are all truly dedicated during this time of uncertainty and we appreciate each and every one of you. Thank you to the Prince William JDR Court Family.

Hear, hear! We couldn't have said it better!

Richmond GDC—The judges and staff of the Richmond General District Court would like to wish Clerk **Sandy Blount** best wishes on her well-earned retirement, effective April 1, 2021. (See [Retirement Spotlight on page 4](#)).

Richmond JDR—Clerk **Felicia Edmonds Rustin** would like to congratulate **Robin Mercer** on 40 years of service. Congratulations, Robin, and thank you for your many years of loyalty and dedication to the Virginia judicial branch!

Spotsylvania JDR—Clerk **Susan Klingensmith** would

like to recognize and welcome her newest team member, **Marcey Magner**. Welcome, Marcey! Susan would also like to recognize the following employees on their service milestones:

Ashlee Chudanov (1 year); **Alyssa Smith** (5 years); **Kaila Higgins** (3 years); and, **Renee Higgins** (3 years). Congratulations, ladies!

Susan would also like to recognize and thank her entire staff for all of their hard work and willingness to adapt to many changes during these unusual times. Susan says, "You all have really pulled together as a team! You are noticed and SO appreciated! Thank you!"

Warren GDC—Clerk **Lauren Jones** welcomes three new deputy clerks: **Lindsay Cooper**, **Sheila Walker**, and **Matthew Leeds**! Welcome, ladies and gentleman!

Wise GDC—Clerk **Sherry Bishop** would like to wish best of luck to **Christa Roach** who left to work for the Washington County Magistrate's Office. Wise GDC also welcomes **Carrie Lund** and **Nicole Miniard** to the Clerk's Office. Welcome, ladies!

Resolution for Connie Roberts, Retired Clerk of Tazewell J&DR District Court

WHEREAS, The Association of Clerks of the District Courts of Virginia considers from time to time to recognize and pay tribute to one of its members for faithful and personal contributions to the success of the Association, and

WHEREAS, Connie Roberts began her career on October 29, 1990 as Deputy Clerk, Tazewell Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court and was subsequently promoted to Clerk in 2003, and

WHEREAS, Connie Roberts served as President; President-Elect; Vice President, Membership and Programs Chair; a member of the Advisory Committee; and as Regional Representative during her membership in the Association

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Connie Roberts be made an Honorary Member of the Association of Clerks of the District Courts of Virginia for the term of her life, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be read at the next in-person annual meeting of the Association, a copy be incorporated in the minutes of the Association, a copy be published in the next issue of The Docket, and a copy be presented to Connie Roberts.

ADOPTED: October 9, 2020

**ASSOCIATION OF CLERKS OF THE DISTRICT COURTS OF VIRGINIA,
BY: RICK KAHL, PRESIDENT**



Congratulations, Sandy Blount, on your retirement after 44 years of service!

The Richmond General District Court judges and staff would like to congratulate **Sandy Blount** on her retirement after 44 years of excellent service. Sandy began her employment in the civil division of the Richmond General District Court on July 1, 1977, as a clerk typist. After several promotions, she became Clerk of Court on April 1, 2003.

Sandy has been instrumental in carrying the flag of court administration throughout her career. She participated in many seminars and presented at many new lawyers' orientations for the Richmond Bar throughout her tenure. She has spoken at various school events, including a seminar at John Tyler Community College.

Sandy was named "Clerk of the Year" in 2017, and was awarded a plaque by the Association of Clerks of the District Courts of Virginia at the annual conference. Sandy's knowledge and expertise

will truly be missed and the Association wishes to acknowledge her contributions to the district court system. Thank you, and many wishes for a happy, healthy retirement, Sandy! You deserve it!



Pictured at left (from left-to-right): Judge Joi Taylor (Retired, Richmond General District Court), Judge Barbara Gaden (Retired, Richmond General District Court), Judge W. Reilly Marchant (Richmond Circuit Court), Sandy Blount, and Judge Jayne Pemberton (Chesterfield J&DR District Court)

Congratulations, Barbara Fagley, on your retirement after 41 years of service!

The Hampton General District Court judges and staff would like to congratulate **Barbara Fagley** on her retirement after 41 years of excellent service. Ms. Fagley leaves the office with an incredible legacy of public service, caring, and diligence that is reflected in everything she has accomplished throughout the years.

In 1976 Ms. Fagley began her career in the Judiciary as a Clerk for the Magistrate's Office. A few years later she moved on and into a position within the Hampton General District Court and would eventually, in 1984 assume the title of Supervisor for the Civil division. A few years later Ms. Fagley continued to grow in her career receiving a Clerk of Court certificate from Thomas Nelson Community College and earned extra credits in Police Sciences. She later became the Chief Deputy Clerk, and finally, the Clerk of Court, in 2011.

Ms. Fagley will be missed by her friends and colleagues in Hampton. On behalf of the Association, thank you for your service and best wishes for a wonderful retirement!





A COMMENDATION AND PROCLAMATION
OF THE ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION
OF THE SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA

JANUARY 12, 2021

WHEREAS Access to Justice is a fundamental and essential right in a democratic society, in our Commonwealth and in our Nation;

WHEREAS Access to Justice is entirely dependent on a functioning Court System;

WHEREAS a functioning Court System requires the presence, dedication and professionalism of a multitude of Civil Servants, including Clerks, Deputy Clerks and other Clerks' Office Staff; Judges; Judicial Assistants; Guardians Ad Litem; Court Reporters; Foreign Language Interpreters; Magistrates; Sheriffs, Sheriffs' Deputies and other Sheriffs' Office Staff;

WHEREAS these Civil Servants provide courthouse and courtroom security, operate the Clerks' Offices, conduct hearings, trials, appeals and all other judicial proceedings, and provide critical support for all such proceedings;

WHEREAS maintaining a functioning Court System and providing Access to Justice in the Commonwealth during the COVID-19 pandemic has required these Civil Servants to interact on a daily basis with lawyers, litigants, witnesses, members of the public, incarcerated individuals and others involved in the judicial process;

WHEREAS the personal interactions required of these Civil Servants to maintain a functioning Court System and provide Access to Justice during the pandemic have exposed them to greater risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus;


WHEREAS notwithstanding the increased risk they faced, these Civil Servants have made, and continue to make, substantial personal sacrifices necessary to keep the Commonwealth's Court System open and functioning, thus ensuring that Access to Justice has been maintained and preserved during the COVID-19 pandemic;

WHEREAS these Civil Servants have been the front-line, first responders for the Commonwealth's Court System so that Access to Justice has been maintained and preserved for citizens of the Commonwealth during the COVID-19 pandemic;

ACCORDINGLY, the Access to Justice Commission hereby recognizes and honors all Civil Servants working in support of Virginia's judicial system for their diligent presence, dedication, professionalism and sacrifice during this pandemic to ensure that Access to Justice has been preserved in the Commonwealth; and



ACCORDINGLY, the Access to Justice Commission hereby COMMENDS these Civil Servants throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia, PROCLAIMS its deep gratitude for their service and ENCOURAGES all, including specifically lawyers and litigants, who have benefitted and all who will benefit from the diligent presence, dedication, professionalism and sacrifice of these Civil Servants during this pandemic to take the opportunity to express their admiration and gratitude for the work these Civil Servants have done to maintain a functioning Court System and thereby to preserve Access to Justice for all Virginians.


 The Honorable S. Bernard Goodwyn, Justice
 Supreme Court of Virginia


 John Whitfield, Executive Director
 Blue Ridge Legal Services, Inc.

Co-Chairs, Virginia Access to Justice Commission

Virginia Access to Justice Commission Members

Andrea L. Bridgeman, Esq.

The Honorable Deborah V. Bryan, Judge
 Virginia Beach Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

Tara L. Casey, Director, Harry L. Carrico Center for Pro Bono Service
 University of Richmond School of Law

Karl A. Doss, Deputy Director, Legal Services Corporation of Virginia

Crista Gantz, Director
 Access to Legal Services, Virginia State Bar

Chaz W. Haywood, Clerk of Court
 Rockingham County Circuit Court

The Honorable Tonya Henderson-Stith, Judge
 Hampton General District Court

Pamela Kestner
 Deputy Director of Housing
 Department of Housing and Community Development

The Honorable Mary B. Malveaux, Judge
 Court of Appeals of Virginia

David Neumeyer, Executive Director
 Virginia Legal Aid Society



Lonnie D. Nunley, III
Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP

Scott C. Oostdyk
McGuire Woods

The Honorable Daniel E. Ortiz, Judge
Fairfax Circuit Court

Stephen Otero
Senior Vice President & Chief Counsel,
Litigation & Employment
Capital One

Bryan Slaughter
MichieHamlett

Gail Warren
State Law Librarian
Supreme Court of Virginia

Ray White, Executive Director
Virginia Law Foundation

Certified Court Executive (CCE) and Fellows Education Reward Program

On February 23, 2021, Karl Hade announced a new CCE and Fellows Education Reward Program. It is estimated that nearly 70 current district court employees and magistrates will be positively impacted by this program at present, with all district court employees and magistrates eligible for future rewards, once eligibility criteria are met.

The program announcement is as follows: "Effective March 16, 2021, any active full-time district court employee or magistrate who completes the CCE program will receive a one-time bonus of \$2,000. In addition, active full-time district court employees and magistrates completing the Fellows Education Reward Program will receive a \$3,000 salary increase.

Full-time district court employees and magistrates who have already completed these programs and who are still employed on March 16, 2021 will also receive these benefits."

The following information was also shared in a second communication from the Office of the

Executive Secretary: "In 2013, the OES entered into a Licensee Agreement with the National Center for State Court's (NCSC) Institute for Court Management (ICM) to offer Virginia judicial branch employees court administration credentials of a national caliber. The goal of this program is to provide judicial officers and court employees the knowledge, skills and abilities to further increase their proficiency in fundamental court competencies and help them develop as court leaders.

Initially funded through two federal grants, a limited number of CCM and CCE courses were offered at no cost to district court employees and magistrates. Once grant funds were depleted, the Licensee Agreement allowed OES faculty to teach the courses at the licensee rate of \$200 per course (payable to the NCSC). For the past several years, at least three to six CCM and CCE classes have been offered through OES each year. These courses may also be taken through NCSC but at a higher tuition rate.

Certified Court Executive (CCE) and Fellows Education Reward Program, cont.

ICM offers three certification programs – CCM (Certified Court Manager), CCE (Certified Court Executive) and ICM Fellows. It is ICM's policy that participants seeking program certification from ICM complete their course of study within a 7-year timeframe for each of the following two levels of certification – Level One (CCM) and Level Two (CCE). Though courses may be taken in any order, all CCM and CCE courses must be completed in order to earn the Certified Court Executive credential. The ICM Fellows program is not part of the Licensing Agreement and is only offered directly through the NCSC. Curricula, course descriptions and class formats are explained on its website. Attendees of courses offered through the NCSC register through its website. When OES offers ICM courses through its partnership with the NCSC, they are advertised with registration made available through the e-Registration system. Tuition reimbursement may be requested for classes offered through NCSC and through OES.”

An updated list of ICM courses offered by OES in 2021 is pasted below.

The Clerks Association announced previously that we were working with OES to reward district court employees who completed the ICM classes similarly to our circuit court counterparts who already have a CCM incentive program. (see *The Docket*, issues February 2019 and May 2019).

After two years of regular meetings with Mr. Hade, and an intervening pandemic, the program terms were developed and announced last week. Negative responses have been disappointing, especially to those who have been working hard to support the purpose of the Clerks Association, and leave the district court system in a better place than which we found it.

The interest in the CCM/CCE courses has

skyrocketed, which was expected under the new incentive. The more district court employees who become certified, the better our service delivery to the public will be. The classes are relevant, meaningful, and facilitate relationships with court employees all over Virginia, which we all know is the cornerstone of effective court administration.

The Association has been involved in regular meetings with the Executive Secretary about many initiatives over the past decade. During this time we have seen more movement on salaries, positions, and acknowledgement of the legitimacy of our Association than in the two decades prior. Below is a summary of some of the initiatives the Association either spearheaded or co-led with OES:

- **Compensation:** Association leadership lobbied for increased compensation at the General Assembly alongside the Executive Secretary. As a result, \$4.4 million was authorized to address salary issues for district court employees in 2017, with the following achievements:
 - The entry level salary was raised to more than \$30,000 for a deputy clerk (a 9% increase)
 - All grade 6 deputy clerk positions were eliminated by increasing them to at least a grade 7
 - All grade 9 deputy clerks who did not receive an additional \$500 raise in a previous session of the General Assembly were made whole
 - All but 171 district court employees (including Clerks of Court) received additional compensation

CCM Courses	Dates	Time (each day)
Accountability & Court Performance	April 15, 16, 26, 27	12:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Caseflow & Workflow Management	June 23, 24, 29, 30	12:00 – 4:00 p.m.
CCE Courses	Dates	
Executive Decision Making	August 12, 13, 16, 17	12:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Visioning & Strategic Planning	December 2, 3, 9, 10	12:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Certified Court Executive (CCE) and Fellows Education Reward Program, cont.

- **Performance Evaluations:** a workgroup retooled the performance evaluation form, cycle, and policy, which OES/HR adopted in 2018.
- **Position Descriptions:** a workgroup developed position descriptions for all levels within the district court system and provided this work to OES in 2018.
- **Classification and Composition:** a workgroup developed a statewide court composition and classification system so that each court will be composed similarly and have consistent management structures. Compensation issues were also discussed, but the workgroup realized that the classification and composition issues must be addressed before an adequate compensation system can be implemented. Information was submitted to OES in 2020.
- **Staffing:** Association leadership lobbied for new positions at the General Assembly alongside the Executive Secretary to address the issue of understaffed district courts. As a result, 120 new positions were authorized by the 2020 General Assembly, but were later paused due to the pandemic. During the 2020 Special Session, Association leadership continued to write letters and lobby for the unpausing of these funds in concert with the Executive Secretary. Association outreach included an editorial in the *Roanoke Times*, radio spots on Virginia Public Radio, and many letters written to key legislators. These unified efforts were ultimately successful and 120 new district court positions have been funded for hire within the next several months.

To have a seat at the table in order to foster a better relationship with OES and district courts comes with great responsibility. The Association cannot change the fact that as a group we have been historically underpaid; however, we can take steps to make incremental changes that benefit most, if not all. Part of the plan to legitimately wage that fight is to show that we are highly educated and credentialed *court administrators*, especially since the term “Clerk” is anachronistic and diminutive. The ICM Program through the NCSC is the only court-specific educational program in existence. We are extremely grateful to OES for

bringing a licensee program to Virginia whereby we can become certified court managers and executives. We are also extremely grateful to have a tuition reimbursement program to help off-set the costs, which have been greatly reduced through the licensee program.

We are an entirely volunteer-led organization, and we need your assistance to be the voice of the district court system. While many folks are disheartened that there are not pandemic bonuses or raises for everyone, please know that systemic change, like Rome, doesn't happen overnight.

It is indeed a shame that we cannot immediately reverse 20+ years of insignificant acknowledgement or compensation, but does that mean we should singularly focus on individuals instead of moving forward for the good of the organization? No, we cannot do that, lest we lose our credibility as a group.

Now is not the time to re-live the past; instead, it is time to continue the upward movement and celebrate the achievements the Association is able to realize regardless of how small they are. To every clerk, supervisor, and deputy clerk who wants to be involved in the next generation of change and impactful initiatives: please join the Association; become a part of the leadership; and, think of new and innovative ideas to make the district court system better for our current and future employees. We would love to have you join our efforts, help us create new pathways for new opportunities, and identify the disparities amongst our soon to be almost 1,700 colleagues.

For more information about the ICM Program, please see their [website](#). For more information on the purpose of the Association, see page 10.





Serving Virginia's District Courts since 1962.

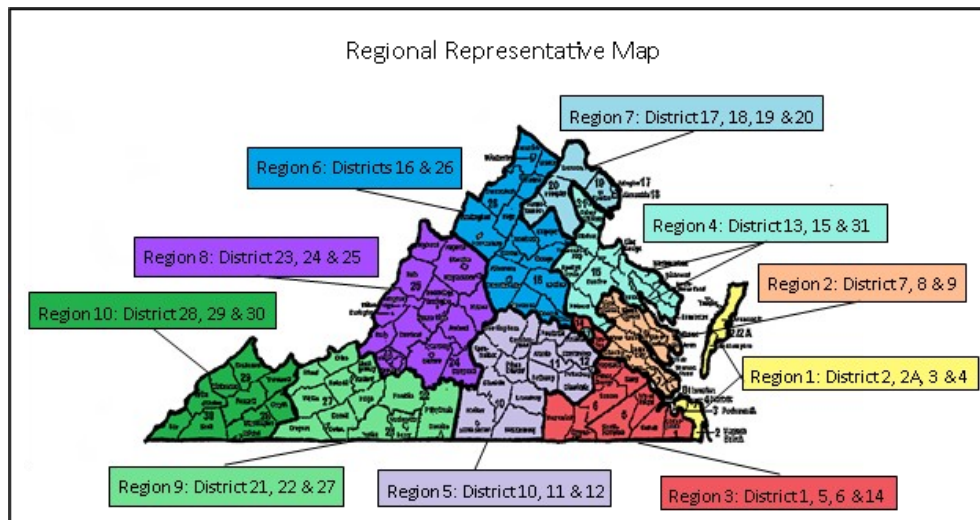
Committee Chairs

Budget & Finance	Amy Burnham & Terri Rea
CATS Manual	Barbara Shaw
Historian	Stephanie Swift
Legislative	Barbara Shaw & Ginger Webb
Membership	Laura Griffin
Mentorship	Terri Rea
Nominating	Terri Rea
Parliamentarian	Christina Davis
Programs	Lindsey Short & Lauren Jones
Publications	Laura Griffin
Resolutions	Dean Sprague
Special Issues	Amy Burnham & Terri Rea
Technology	Laura Griffin
Ways & Means	Lauren Jones

Clerks Association Mission

- ◆ *To foster a closer relationship among the district courts of Virginia*
- ◆ *To improve proficiency and professionalism of court personnel*
- ◆ *To promote uniformity of procedure*
- ◆ *To recommend improved techniques and procedures to more efficiently perform the duties of the Clerk's Office*
- ◆ *To provide educational and training opportunities for all district court employees*
- ◆ *To foster cooperation and understanding between court personnel, judges, the legal community, and others involved with or interested in courts*

Please visit our webpage at www.vadistrictclerks.com



For News and Current Events, please see our website. If you have interest in joining any of our committees, please contact your Regional Representative! Our organization is entirely volunteer-led and requires the participation of any district court employee! Please consider lending your time to your Association!

