

# ROANOKE BAR REVIEW

Roanoke Bar Review June 2021

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# WHAT WE SHOULD LEARN FROM THE DEATH OF VIRGINIA'S DEATH PENALTY

BY TODD C. PEPPERS, ESQ.

Shortly before her death in the spring of 2011, I visited one last time with Marie Deans, my friend who was a long-time death penalty abolitionist. A South Carolina native, Marie moved to Richmond, Virginia in 1983 and opened the Virginia Coalition on Jails and Prisons. For the next decade, Marie would fight for the men of Virginia's death row – from finding them attorneys and working to improve prison conditions to standing "death watch" with the men during their final hours on earth. There were some victories but many defeats during Marie's time as an activist, and during our conversation she lamented the fact that she would not live to see the



end of capital punishment in Virginia. In response, I told Marie that I doubted that I – twenty-seven years her junior – would see it, either.

A decade later, I was surprised but pleased to be proven wrong. Almost ten years to the day of that final conversation, I watched the live news broadcast of Virginia Governor Ralph Northam signing legislation abolishing the death penalty in the Commonwealth. Fittingly, the signing ceremony was held outside of the Greensville Correctional Center – home of the death house and death chamber. As I listened to the Governor's comments, I wished that Marie could have seen such an important day in Virginia's history.

Now that Virginia has stopped its embrace of what former Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun called "the machinery of death," it is important to take account of the many costs and few benefits of capital punishment. And why this backwards glance at a now-abandoned practice? While there are many reasons to pause and examine the price paid for state-sanctioned death, one reason stands above the rest – to make sure that Virginia is not tempted to someday return to killing its citizens.

First, the basic numbers. No other state has executed more of its citizens than Virginia. Since the execution of Capitan George Kendall at Jamestown, the Commonwealth has hanged, electrocuted and poisoned (via lethal injection) approximately 1300 adults and children. The executions have included the mentally ill, the mentally handicapped, juvenile offenders, and arguably the innocent. This list includes Morris Mason, an inmate so profoundly intellectually disabled that he could not grasp the concept of his own death. Virginia continued to sentence the mentally handicapped to death until 2002, when the Supreme Court held in *Atkins v. Virginia* that such practices violated the Eighth Amendment. And the Supreme Court's ban against executing juvenile offenders came too late for Virginia death row inmates Douglas Christopher Thomas and Steve Roach (both executed in January of 2000 for crimes committed while juveniles).

Former death row inmates have had their convictions commuted or sentences reduced because of concerns of factual innocence. The most famous is Earl Washington, Jr., an intellectually disabled former Virginia laborer who came within eight days of being executed for a crime he did not commit. Washington's eventual exoneration is not an example of the system working – it was the result of a small group of dedicated volunteers, including fellow death row inmate Joe Giarratano, who shone a

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#### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY DANIEL P. FRANKL, ESQ.



My term as President of the Roanoke Bar Association has come to an end but, thankfully, it appears that the end of the pandemic is also at hand. As vaccinations have increased, the state and the country as a whole have loosened pandemic restrictions. As a result, we were able to hold our annual Bench Bar Conference that turned out to be our first in-person program of the year. We were also able to hold our first in-person lunch meeting of the

year on June 8th, at the Jefferson Center. In-person attendance at the 96th annual meeting was significant as it not only restarted the important social aspects of our profession but allowed us to honor the recipients of this year's Bo Rogers Lifetime Achievement Award, George I. Vogel II, and the Young Lawyer of the Year Award, Catherine "Cate" J. Huff, along with numerous others in our association who have continued to volunteer, in spite of the pandemic, to help the profession and our bar association.

As the 2020-21 bar year began, there is no way any of us could have imagined how the pandemic would affect all of the regular ongoing programs of the Roanoke Bar Association. However, not only did our association and its members continue to provide quality legal services to their clients, but it also provided meals and services to front-line healthcare workers, policemen and firemen, among others. I look forward to taking over the responsibility of leading the Roanoke Law Foundation next year and know that this Association will again flourish under the capable leadership of Macel Janoschka.

I am also happy to report, with your help, we were able to fully fund our "Keeping it Clean" initiative by collecting the necessary funds to provide and deliver commercial sets of washers and dryers to 20 of the Roanoke City public elementary, middle and high schools. Along with the machines themselves, the Roanoke Bar Association was also able to provide the schools with an abundance of laundry detergent and dryer sheets to help provide clean clothing for our homeless and underprivileged students here in the Roanoke Valley. I am truly humbled by the support and commitment of our members to this project.

None of these accomplishments during this trying year would have been possible without the commitment and support of the Roanoke Bar Association Board of Directors, who worked under trying conditions, but were still able to get the job done. A special thanks goes to our executive director, Diane Higgs, who has done an outstanding job at ensuring that all of our board meetings, monthly meetings and CLE programs have proceeded smoothly using a virtual platform that, before this year, none of us have previously had much experience using. Without her support and get-the-job done attitude, this trying year would have impossible to navigate. Finally, I would like to thank the Roanoke Bar Association membership for its continued support and patience throughout this past year. I look forward to seeing and reconnecting with everyone in-person in the fall when, hopefully, we can resume our normal monthly lunch meetings. In the interim, please stay safe and healthy and have an enjoyable summer.

Daniel P. Frankl is a partner of Frankl Miller Webb and Moyer,  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{LLP}}$ .

## GEORGE I. VOGEL, II: 2021 FRANK W. "BO" ROGERS, JR. LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

George I. Vogel, III, offered the following remarks in presenting this award.

George Vogel, II, is the recipient of the 2021 Bo Rogers Lifetime Achievement Award. As his son and having practiced law with him almost 20 years, I have the honor and privilege of introducing him for this esteemed award. I am a benefactor of his fifty-five year practice



(which continues today) and I am blessed to have the opportunity to share a small insight into my father's career; the career that has defined me and my practice and had such a positive impact on all those around him.

Dad, was born in Roanoke on March 9, 1942 living on Jefferson Street next to St. John Episcopal Church. From there he walked to Highland Park Elementary and after that to Lee Junior High School, where the Poff Federal Courthouse stands today. He graced the halls of this very building we are in when it was Jefferson High School. He left Roanoke in 1959, where he spent 11 years outside of the Roanoke Valley attending the Virginia Military Institute and Washington and Lee University Law School, and serving in the Army. He returned to Roanoke, began practicing law on First Street, and returned to residing on Jefferson Street after a brief stay in the boondocks of Roanoke County, otherwise known as Hunting Hills. Over the years he moved his practice to McClanahan and while he no longer lives on the street he grew up on, as I calculate it on Google Earth, my father has spent an extraordinary amount of his life within one-third of a square mile, in the heart of Roanoke City. It is within those few blocks that his life started and continues to this day. And it is here, through family, staff and clients that the mark of George Vogel, II will continue for a long time to come.

During his relatively short time outside the Roanoke Valley, Dad graduated from VMI in 1963 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army. He received a deferment from active duty to go directly to law school. During his 2nd and 3rd years of law school, he taught part time in the Electrical Engineering Department at VMI and was the Senior Law Class President. He passed the Virginia State Bar exam in December of his senior year and was admitted to practice in all courts of the Commonwealth on June 6, 1966. He entered active duty with the United States Army in the Judge Advocate Generals Corps in September of 1966. During his period in the army, he was admitted to practice in the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and the Supreme Court of the United States. He was honorably discharged from the Army in September of 1970 with the rank of Captain.

When Dad returned to Roanoke, my grandfather's old partner Bill Creasy took him in and gave him a start with his practice. Dad then practiced with John Wilson, Bob Hawthorne and Roy Creasy until John Wilson's retirement in approximately 1987. Thereafter, George and James Cromwell formed the firm Vogel & Cromwell which continued until Jim's recent retirement at the beginning of this year. In 1989, they opened a second office at Smith Mountain Lake. In 2002, I joined the firm and in 2015, my

## CATHERINE J. HUFF: 2021 YOUNG LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT



Monica Monday offered the following remarks in presenting this award.

Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to introduce you to Cate Huff, the 2021 RBA Young Lawyer of the Year.

Cate was born in Huntington, West Virginia, and grew up in Forest, Virginia in Bedford County with her parents, Larry and Kathy and her

brother Ross. In school, Cate began running cross-country and track. She broke Jefferson Forest High School's record in the Girl's 800 meter race, and was part of multiple State Championship teams in cross-country track at Jefferson Forest. Her talents were recognized on a national level when her 4 by 1 mile team placed  $7^{\rm th}$  in the country at the 2001 national meet. And her mile time earned her a place in Milestat's top 20 in the nation.

But running was not Cate's only interest. In her younger years, she considered future career paths as a veterinarian or a sports analyst. Later, though, the inspiration to become a lawyer came from a book – *The Firm*, one of John Grisham's early blockbuster legal thrillers. Cate wanted to become the type of lawyer who would understand how businesses work, provide the kind of sound advice to help them thrive and, when necessary, fight for them in the courtroom. And so a civil litigator was born.

Cate went to Virginia Tech, where she majored in Communications and Public Relations and was able to feed her love of all things Hokie. To this day she is an avid Hokie's football fan and a football season-ticket holder. Now I have seen Cate in full Hokie mode and I have this advice: UVA fans, just do yourself a favor and get out of her way! While at Tech, Cate also continued running until an injury ended her running career.

Cate graduated from Virginia Tech *magna cum laude* in just 3 years. She then began her legal career at Liberty University law school.

After law school, Cate joined the Roanoke law firm of Wooten & Hart, where she enjoyed a steady diet of litigation and opportunities to explore different areas of the law. In 2011, she became an associate at Gentry Locke, and was elevated to partner in 2017.

During her time at Gentry Locke, Cate has developed a successful practice focusing on employment law. Her practice includes not only employment law, but also workers' compensation, insurance, and everything litigation.

For a young lawyer working in the employment arena, Cate has a lot of trial experience and is very much at home in a courtroom. She has litigated cases in both state and federal courts in Virginia – amassing a record of over 20 trials. She has also handled close to 100 workers' compensation cases in the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission and has represented companies before the EEOC and the Department of Labor.

# TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE CLIFFORD R. WECKSTEIN

Editor's Note: One year ago this month, we lost our friend, the Honorable Clifford R. Weckstein. Due to COVID we have been unable to celebrate life and mourn his passing. In this article, his friends John Lichtenstein and the Honorable Samuel G. Wilson offer their thoughts. Judge Wilson's beautiful words are from the funeral service. We are also re-printing Judge Wilson's 2015 article regarding Judge Weckstein's retirement.



We hope to be able honor Judge Weckstein at an in-person meeting in the near future.

It took at least three or four seconds for unfamiliar counsel to recognize Judge Clifford R. Weckstein was unique: His deep, rich and ready voice; his active curled left hand, armed with a red pen to thoroughly revise whatever document was placed before it; his reactive mmmmmmm-hmmmmmmm as he listened to conflicting assertions of fact and arguments of law; intentionally dimming to closing eyes when arguments were felt to have exceeded necessary dimensions.

Judge Weckstein's written opinions were deeply versed in the ancient roots of the law at hand. At his desk at 3pm or 3am (both were common), it was as if Judge Weckstein would summon circles of swirling law, directing them – commanding them – to assert themselves. Constitutional, statutory and common law were wholly accessible. Minute facts from historic cases were effortlessly recalled and applied from the bench, not only for holdings of immediate relevance, but to identify the birth of historic trends of particular courts and particular judges, the importance of which Judge Weckstein would patiently instruct. He held a non-negotiable commitment to the right to trial by jury.

Judge Weckstein's best friend, the Honorable Samuel G. Wilson, United States District Judge, Ret., in a beautiful 2015 Roanoke Bar Review article on the occasion of Judge Weckstein's retirement, wrote that Judge Weckstein "... distinguished himself as a thoughtful, compassionate jurist who masters the most difficult cases, presides with seeming ease over complicated trials, simplifies complex legal issues, distills them for juries (and the appellate courts), and serves as a legal reference for his colleagues throughout the Commonwealth..." Judge Wilson cited the Honorable William Broadhurst, Judge of the Roanoke Circuit Court (Ret.) describing Judge Weckstein's "...command of the law as 'comprehensive, perhaps legendary.'" (See Judge Wilson's article reprinted below) Judge Weckstein was the daily responder to requests for help from the widest circle of judicial colleagues and practicing lawyers, who never stopped seeking and receiving his rare blend of superior knowledge and genuine, active compassion.

The force and command Cliff brought to the Law, he brought to many subjects of his regard: poetry, the human voice, Judaism, Broadway, UVA basketball, and many more. This was the realm of Cliff's agility. So, the decline of his physical health received less of his own attention. Allegedly im-

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# THE CONTINUING EVOLUTION OF GRANDPARENT VISITATION IN VIRGINIA

BY VICKI L. FRANCOIS, ESQ.



Grandparents continue to play a vital role in society often assisting, or even supplanting, the role of a natural or biological parent. And Virginia law continues to also recognize grandparents as "persons with a legitimate interest" when it comes to custody and visitation matters pursuant to Va. Code § 20-124.1.

This summer, a new statutory visitation provision benefitting grandparents will make its debut. Virginia grandparents will have a brand new tool to assist them in seeking visitation in the event that a parent is deceased, or a parent becomes incapacitated.

Under current law, if there is only one living natural parent, a grandparent (or any third party) must prove by clear and convicting evidence that the child would suffer "actual harm" if the visitation request were denied. This is the "actual harm" test that was initially set forth in <a href="Williams v. Williams">Williams</a>, 256 Va. 19 (1998). So not only is there a heightened burden of proof, but often an expert is also needed to prove that the child would suffer "actual harm" if visitation were denied.

Effective July 1, there will be an amendment to Va. Code § 20-124.2, which specifically addresses grandparent visitation where one parent is deceased or incapacitated. The new subsection, B2, provides as follows:

B2. In any case or proceeding in which a grandparent has petitioned the court for visitation with a minor grandchild, and a natural or adoptive parent of the minor grandchild is deceased or incapacitated, the grandparent who is related to such deceased or incapacitated parent shall be permitted to introduce evidence of such parent's consent to visitation with the grandparent, in accordance with the rules of evidence. If the parent's consent is proven by a preponderance of the evidence, the court may then determine if grandparent visitation is in the best interest of the minor grandchild. For the purposes of this subsection, "incapacitated parent" has the same meaning ascribed to the term "incapacitated person" in § 64.2-2000.

The new provision does not specify what evidence might be sufficient to prove the deceased or incapacitated parent's consent to visitation. Will a simple text or e-mail suffice to prove consent? Or, will we have to first have various inconsistent trial court rulings before we can hope for some clarity from Court of Appeals?

Another issue of concern is whether this new provision will be found to be constitutional based on the U.S. Supreme Court case of <a href="Troxel v. Granville">Troxel v. Granville</a>, 530 U.S. 57 (2000) and the 1998 Virginia <a href="Williams">Williams</a> case. The new provision completely discards the <a href="Williams">Williams</a> "actual harm" test which has been the precedent for over twenty years.

By way of reference, there is no change in the standard that a grandparent or any third party must meet when custody is at issue and a natural parent is involved. That test remains the five circumstances originally espoused by the Virginia Supreme Court in <u>Bailes v.</u>

# TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE CLIFFORD R. WECKSTEIN

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portant lifestyle changes were not callously disregarded (Pizza!), they simply couldn't compete. Similarly, severe physical consequences of progressive and competing disorders were remarkably accepted. seemingly without regard to their profound hardship. And as his physical health clearly waned, Cliff lost absolutely none of his humor, none of himself.

I never really believed Cliff would die. He had brushed up against death only to fully return on countless occasions. On the last day, Judge Wilson and I reached Cliff's acute care hospital and negotiated COVID restrictions, but he had passed – inconceivable to us – as we were fast approaching. We sat together – with Cliff – in his room, I think each of us fully expecting that at any moment he would open a mischievous eye. With love for Cliff, I am somewhat suspended in that state.

It is no overstatement – we have lost a Lion of the Law – and we have lost our true friend. His memory, for all of us, is a blessing.

John E. Lichtenstein, Esq.

Occasionally, Cliff and I spoke about death – not in the way poets speak of death but rather in the way friends speak of many things, in a stream of consciousness, when beer is involved.

I remember telling him that I'm not afraid of death – but of dying. Especially, I worry about those final moments when we struggle to maintain our essential selves, who we are, where we are and why we are.

Do we lose the coherence of our existence, or is it the moment, in the words of Khalil Gibran, that we "free the breath from its restless tides, that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?"

Though Cliff made every effort to postpone his death, he showed no fear of it. As his medical options narrowed, and his condition worsened, he maintained his focus, his essential self. He texted: "I want bagel, lox, cream cheese!" Throughout the day on Friday he updated me on his latest treatments. Friday at 4:11 PM I received what turned out to be his final text. I regret that I did not know it would be so.

But the essential Cliff never faltered.

Saturday night the hospital called and said I should come at once. He was failing. On the way the hospital I received another call. He had died. The nurse with whom I spoke, described Cliff directing events up until the very moment he breathed his last breath. They were not to revive him. Cliff did not become a pale, ephemeral, shadow of himself. He lived confidently and died just as confidently as he lived. He had, in the words of Gibran: "free[d] [his] breath from its restless tides that it [might] rise and expand and seek God unencumbered."

The day after he died, I sent him my final text message: "everybody thinks you died last night. I know better. Sam"

The Honorable Samuel G. Wilson

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The Honorable Bill Broadhurst recently retired as Chief Judge of the 23rd Judicial Circuit Court after over twenty-five years of distinguished judicial service in Roanoke. He began his judicial tenure as a Judge of the General District Court and then served for eighteen years as a Judge on the Circuit Court. As a lawyer, Judge Broadhurst had a successful career in private practice and in the office of the Commonwealth's Attorney for Roanoke County. He also enjoyed many years officiating college football games at the FCS level. Judge Broadhurst now brings this record of dedication and accomplishment to The McCammon Group to serve the mediation and arbitration needs of lawyers and litigants throughout the Commonwealth.



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# TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE CLIFFORD R. WECKSTEIN

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Reprinted from the Roanoke Bar Review, December 2015

#### Longest Sitting Active Circuit Judge Retires1

One of Virginia's most respected jurists, retired Loudon County Circuit Court Judge, Thomas Horne, has described Clifford R. Weckstein as "[t]he Mark Twain of the Virginia Judiciary, [a man with] a special insight into the worldly controversies that are forever flummoxing judges, a special command of the English language, and a red pencil respected by his peers." Forty-one years have passed since Cliff and I first met in a courtroom, and the only thing surprising about Judge Horne's description is his ability to capture Cliff's special mix of talents in a short, powerful sentence.

Cliff felt the pull of diverging career paths – one, journalism, and the other, the law. And he always recognized that those paths shared a common skill set: a devotion to the essential facts and the ability to express them intelligently, interestingly, and simply. After graduating from the University of Virginia with a B.A., Cliff chose the law. He attended Marshall-Wythe School Law at the College of William & Mary, graduating with a J.D., though plainly he never surrendered his journalistic instincts. As a consequence of Cliff's choice, the law gained a principled, compassionate man with a magnificent intellect and sense of humor, and journalism (sort of) lost a ruthless editor.

We were both admitted to practice law on September 27, 1974, were sworn in locally on October 11 by Judge Ernest W. Ballou, and later that morning appeared on opposite sides of our first case in the Circuit Court, with Judge Robert J. Rogers presiding. I was an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney, and Cliff was an associate to Barry Lichtenstein, a model lawyer and human being. Barry, whose young life was stilled by cancer in 1981, combined civility, genuine kindness, legal acumen, and persistence in a unique mix that dissolved his adversaries in and out of the courtroom. He was a fitting role model not simply for law, but also for life. How fortunate Cliff was to have such a mentor and to capture and share Barry's experiences with yet another generation. As an aside, I note that my first perceptions of Cliff arising out of our first Circuit Court encounter were these: this guy was born to do this stuff, and he reminds me of Chiam Topol who played Tevye in the 1971 film Fiddler on the Roof. He can turn a simple sentence into a melody worth hearing. Those initial perceptions have never changed.

Cliff has publicly reported that "modesty should forbid [him] from telling [the result of our first case]." Whatever the result (which the ravages of time, not modesty, forbids me from telling), it was a happy coincidence for me that we *met*. I gained a friend, advisor, and a stunningly frank, world-class editor.

Before he became a Circuit Judge, he had an uncommon breadth of experience, handling everything from personal injury litigation to capital murder. His peers recognized him as a "lawyers' lawyer" and sought his advice and assistance on a wide array of subjects. This recognition has followed him throughout his career.

He has spent 28 years as a Circuit Judge and, in that role, has distinguished himself as a thoughtful, compassionate jurist who masters the most difficult cases, presides with seeming ease over complicated trials, simplifies complex legal issues,

distills them for juries (and the appellate courts), and serves as a legal reference for his colleagues throughout the Commonwealth—a point echoed time and again by his judicial colleagues as well as the lawyers who appear before him. Cliff's Circuit Court colleague, Judge William Broadhurst, has described Cliff's command of the law as "comprehensive, perhaps legendary." In the words of another Circuit Court colleague, Judge David Carson, Cliff has an "encyclopedia command of the law" and "graciously [renders] assistance to senior jurists who often seek his counsel." Retired Circuit Judge, A. Joseph Canada from Virginia Beach said it well:

Judge Clifford Weckstein is well known in the legal community all over Virginia. He is known for his intellect, integrity and his superior knowledge of the law. He treats all participants in the legal system with respect. He has helped many young lawyers develop their skills. He was never too busy to help young lawyers. He has done much to make our judicial system better. He is full of integrity, brains and compassion. He is one of the best judges in Virginia. If there were a Hall of Fame for judges, he would be the first to be selected.

Senior Virginia Supreme Court Justice Lawrence L. Koontz, Jr. summed up this way: "Judge Weckstein has a large heart and an equally large intellect." As a testament to these qualities, every statewide and specialty bar gave Cliff its highest recommendation to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court of Virginia.

Perhaps Cliff's greatest contributions to the legal profession flow from his unswerving, selfless commitment to professional education. He has given more lectures throughout Virginia on trial practice, the law, and professionalism than nearly any other jurist in Virginia history. And for nearly 30 years he has taught at the National Trial Advocacy College at the University of Virginia School of Law. One of his long-time colleagues on the Trial Advocacy College faculty is United States District Judge Robert J. Conrad of the Western District of North Carolina. Judge Conrad says that he has a mantra to employ when faced with a tough courtroom decision: "'WWWD': What would Weckstein do?"

Cliff is not simply a master of the courtroom, the common law, and a repository of homespun wisdom. He is also a student of classic English and American literature, loves the sound of iambic pentameter, and essentially carries the manual of style in his head. He interned at the Roanoke Times and later worked there as a copy editor, which probably explains his strong love of journalism and his disdain for split infinitives, dangling participles, and misplaced modifiers. In the words of Judge Broadhurst, Cliff is a veritable "Strunk & Weckstein." As a consequence, Cliff has never hesitated to call or write journalists at the Roanoke Times (or anywhere else, for that matter) to correct perceived factual inaccuracies, legal misunderstandings, or grammatical missteps - though he always delivers his goodnatured critiques discreetly, in private, and with a twist of humor, often self-effacing. Journalists are not alone. The works of colleagues, lawyers, family, and friends are not immune. Whenever I consulted him concerning sentence structure, syntax and word usage, I arrived prepared to see more red ink than I ever saw in elementary school. Judge Broadhurst's thoughts mirror my own, "[Cliff's] help always made one's work better, but the drafter needed to come with his or her writer's ego firmly belted

I would like to proclaim Cliff's editorial talents to be unique. But in point of fact, they are no more unique than are

## **MEDIATION**

## **ARBITRATION**

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Having previously served twentyone years as both a full time and a retired, recalled circuit court judge, Jonathan M. Apgar has successfully mediated scores of cases. He is also certified in civil mediation by the National Judicial College. He offers skilled mediation and arbitration at a modest cost.

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# WHAT WE SHOULD LEARN FROM THE DEATH OF VIRGINIA'S DEATH PENALTY

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light on Washington's case and fought to save the innocent man. Giarratano himself would have his death sentenced commuted because of concerns of actual innocence, although he would not walk out of prison until December of 2017. Other recent Virginia death row inmates whose death sentences were commuted on similar grounds include Joseph Payne and Herbert Bassette. This error rate is unacceptable.

Often death or life turns not on the facts of the case, but the color of the defendant's skin. Virginia's judges and juries have disproportionately applied the death penalty to minority defendants, many of whom were executed in the early decades of the twentieth century for the alleged rape or attempted rape of white victims. And even in the era of the "modern death penalty" (1977 to present), an unacceptable number of Virginia defendants were assigned mediocre defense counsel and denied the basic tenets of procedural due process. It is not a coincidence that Earl Washington and Morris Mason were black.

One of the most glaring defects of Virginia's modern death penalty regime was the so-called "21-day rule," which states that criminal defendants cannot introduce new evidence of factual innocence more than 21 days after sentencing. The rule meant that Virginia had one of the shortest periods of time between imposition of sentence and execution. As former Attorney General Mary Sue Terry once wrote in a legal brief, "evidence of innocence is irrelevant" when condemned men challenge their death sentences. While the 21-day rule has been modified to allow the admission of DNA evidence, the change came too late for countless men on Virginia's death row.

The men sentenced to death in Virginia often faced inhumane conditions of confinement. In the 1980's and 1990's, death row was located at the Mecklenburg Correctional Center. The row was awash in drugs, alcohol, and violence. Several death row inmates committed suicide. And despite officials bragging about their state-of-the-art facility, Mecklenburg was the site of the only mass death-row prison break in modern American history. Death row was moved to Sussex I State Prison in Waverly, Virginia, in the late 1990's, where prisoners were isolated in their cells for up to 24 hours a day (each prisoner was allowed five hours of recreation time per week). As with many things to do with Virginia's death penalty regime, the practice was ended only because of litigation.

And what did Virginians get in return? Much of the public's support for the death penalty is based on the idea of general deterrence, namely, that others are less likely to kill if they know that they themselves will be killed for their crimes. This argument is based on the faulty premise that those who commit violent crimes engage in a rational, cost-benefit analysis of the risks of being punished versus the rewards of carrying out their plans. There is no solid body of social science research, however, showing that the death penalty deters. In fact, some researchers have suggested that the death penalty has a brutalization effect that causes murder rates to increase after an execution.

Another argument is that it is cheaper to execute inmates than house them for their natural lives. While a systematic study of the costs of the death penalty versus life without parole has not been conducted in Virginia, studies in other states ar-

# GEORGE I. VOGEL, II: 2021 FRANK W. "BO" ROGERS, JR. LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

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brother Kirk joined the firm and opened a third office in Richmond.

Dad has practiced in many areas of the law during his career. He began serving as a Bankruptcy Chapter 7 Panel Trustee in 1970 and continues to do so today. He has been a Commissioner in Chancery for the 23rd Judicial Circuit since 2002. And, during the early part of his practice, he assisted indigent defendants as court-appointed counsel for both the state and federal court.

In preparing for this presentation, I went through various photo albums and a scrapbook my mother had of newspaper clippings she collected over the years. On one page, the diversity of Dad's practice over the years was on full display. The titles of three articles were "Mountaintop Land Dispute settled by Jury;" "Woman Acquitted of Smuggling Drugs to Inmate" and "Two Market Buildings Sold." The first case involved dueling land grants from 1786 and 1795 regarding the ownership of McAfee's Knob when the federal government condemned it for the Appalachian Trail. The second was a court-appointed case in 1981, and the title of the article speaks for itself. The third article involved Dad selling the Earl Hotel and the adjacent Wright building as a Chapter 7 Trustee.

Dad was also appointed to several murder cases during his early career including one involving the murder of Wiley Jackson, a prominent businessman and highway contractor. While the facts of that case would make a great book, the interesting point for today is that Wiley Jackson's great granddaughter is sitting here today as Dad's daughter-in-law.

Dad was a true general practitioner; like many of his colleagues of the day, he handled most anything that came in the door. Yet, one area of his practice has stood out over the years. That is his knowledge of all matters relating to real estate. In addition to handling many cases and countless closings in Roanoke, Dad has been a central figure in the development of Smith Mountain Lake since the late 1970s. Representing the most prolific developer at Smith Mountain Lake, there are many subdivisions that have the mark of his name on them.

Like a lot of us, Dad is also known for working long hours, including nights and weekends. The notable part, at least in my mind, is that I don't think I knew how hard he worked while I was growing up. He attended most of my athletic events, he coached many of my teams, and he served as team manager. He was always present while he somehow balanced what I now know to be a very busy law practice. Every year Mom planned incredible trips to far flung places, and every year we spent at least a week relaxing on the beach at Pawleys Island. This is no small task, and I still wonder how he did it. I only hope I have been this engaged with my children.

Dad has also served the community in various aspects throughout the years. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Roanoke Bar Association during which time he oversaw the move of the Roanoke Bar Library. He has been president of The ARC of the Greater Roanoke Valley, and served on the Board of Directors of the Roanoke Star Soccer Club.

## CATHERINE J. HUFF: 2021 YOUNG LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT

(Continued from page 3)

Cate is a natural in the courtroom. She is comfortable, composed, confident, articulate, focused, unflappable, and fearless. She has the courtroom skills of a litigator well beyond her years. Indeed, she is a force to be reckoned with in the courtroom and can hold her own against seasoned lawyers with many more years of trial experience.

When asked what Cate's greatest strength is, Paul Klockenbrink, who works with Cate in the Employment practice group and has tried several cases with her said: "She has instincts in the courtroom that you can't teach." He described a jury trial in a sexual harassment case where Cate cross-examined a key witness who was – to say it mildly – hostile and difficult. Paul explained that Cate's instincts on how to approach this witness were spot on, and she ended up "fileting this witness without him even knowing he had been gutted."

David Paxton, head of the Employment practice group, traces Cate's success to her love of athletics. He summed it up this way: "Cate's impressive litigation track record is due in large measure to her willingness to accept and tackle any challenge that involves a trial or presentation, which is a trait she likely honed during her years of athletic competition. What strikes me the most about Cate, however, is her selflessness. In this world of endless self-promotion on social media and elsewhere, Cate has not sought attention within the firm or outside for her accomplishments, and this award by the RBA is well deserved." David expresses his regrets that he is not present today for this event.

Todd Leeson, another colleague who works with Cate in the Employment practice group, is especially impressed with Cate's ability to connect with anyone she meets. Todd said: "She is clearly a 'people person' and a joy to be around." Perhaps for that reason, clients love working with Cate and appreciate her direct advice and confidence.

As she is in the courtroom, Cate is very comfortable speaking in public. She has spoken at firm seminars and national conferences on employment-related topics, to help educate business owners and other lawyers on the often complex and quickly-changing laws that apply to large and small businesses.

Cate's talents have not gone unnoticed. Since 2015, she has been named a Rising Star by Virginia Super Lawyers, and was honored as a Legal Elite by Virginia Business magazine. Cate was also a member of the 2019 "Up & Coming Lawyers" Class for Virginia Lawyers Weekly's "Leaders in the Law" awards.

Cate has also lent her talents to the bar. Since 2017, she has been a member of the Board of Governors of the VSB Young Lawyers Conference, serving as the 8th district representative. This past year she has also served as Co-Chair of the Women & Minorities in the Profession Committee and the Domestic Safety Project. Cate has enjoyed working with other young lawyers around the Commonwealth and has found that this experience has helped to enrich her appreciation for the diverse backgrounds, life experiences, and practice areas of young attorneys all over Virginia. To help perpetuate the important work of the YLC, Cate has actively recruited lawyers in our region to become more involved in the VSB. Closer to home, Cate has volunteered for the Blue Ridge Legal Services Pro Bono Hotline and the Wills for Heroes program.

# TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE CLIFFORD R. WECKSTEIN

(Continued from page 6)

his command of English literature and world history, or even his cadence in delivering one-liners. They are modeled, or even "lifted" from a true master. While at the *Roanoke Times*, Cliff once wrote an article in which he purported to quote directly from Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn." But he got the quote wrong, and an alert reader and true master and prototypical Renaissance man, Cliff's father, Norbert Weckstein, took him to task. Cliff, be precise. These are Keats' words: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

While visiting New Caledonia this past February, I witnessed the most magnificent sunset over the South Pacific I thought I had ever seen. The sky and the ocean blended imperceptibly into one another. I sent Cliff a photo, together with the following allusion to Forest Gump: "Sometimes I didn't know where the water ended and heaven began." Cliff responded:

"Great picture and great quote but the actual quote is this: 'I couldn't tell where heaven stopped and the earth began.'" And, to an attached photograph of my wife and me, he responded, "Two people looking deceptively normal. Nice picture." So on the question of uniqueness, I rest my case.



Cliff is devoted to his three children, Ginny, Meg, and Ben. Like their father, all three are graduates of Patrick Henry High School.

Ginny has an undergraduate and an M.A. degree in English from the University of Virginia. She lives in Newcastle under Lyme, Staffordshire, England, where she works for a local organization that provides housing for children with emotional and behavioral difficulties. She is married to Nick Segar, an English professor at nearby Teale University.

Meg is also a UVA graduate. She resides in Washington D.C. and is a senior product development analyst at a healthcare technology company.

Ben is a graduate of Roanoke College and is an admissions counselor there.

Virginia Lawyers Weekly once reported Cliff's cautionary instructions to his Circuit Court colleagues, from a speech Cliff delivered to the Judicial Conference of Virginia: "When you write, you're a surgeon. Excise, excise, excise." Though circumstances might inspire you to start with Magna Carta and work forward, he reportedly said, "[t]ake it out back and read it to the dumpster, where it will resonate," and then get rid of it. Well, I am inspired by Cliff's unsurpassed dedication to his profession, his insightfulness, his accomplishments, and his genuine respect and compassion for his fellow man, but I am also chastened by his instructions to his colleagues, which always caution brevity. And so I will keep my personal observations brief.

There is a pureness of purpose that is rarely seen, a purpose to contribute, to make a difference, to give rather than to take, to see goodness that is hidden from others, and to respect the marginalized. I am no clairvoyant. I cannot say that I recognized that Cliff had these precise purposes in his heart when we first met in a courtroom in 1974. But I do take credit for this-

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# WHAT WE SHOULD LEARN FROM THE DEATH OF VIRGINIA'S DEATH PENALTY

(Continued from page 8)

rive at the same undeniable conclusion – that capital murder cases are much costlier to investigate, try, and defend on appeal than cases involving life without parole. Hundreds of thousands of dollars more. The irony is inescapable – we decided that the lives of certain defendants were worthless, and, to show exactly how worthless they are, we spent an obscene amount of money putting to death that which we deemed to be human garbage.

In the early 1990's, the old Virginia State Penitentiary was demolished. Located in downtown Richmond, for over seventy years the pen housed the death house and death chamber. When she learned of its pending destruction, my friend Marie Deans argued that the death house should remain standing as a warning about state-sanctioned death. The death house is gone, but the warning signs remain. Virginia's death penalty was a failure. It did not make Virginians safer. It was applied in a racially discriminatory way. It failed to provide many defendants with basic due process protections. It was meted out to some of the most vulnerable members of our society, including the mentally ill and the mentally handicapped. Its error rate was unacceptably high, requiring Virginia governors to step in and exercise executive clemency to ensure that the innocent were not executed. And those that we sentenced to death for their violent acts were subjected to violence at the hands of fellow inmates and guards. We must remember these lessons lest we be tempted to go down this path again.

Todd C. Peppers is the Fowler Professor of Public Affairs at Roanoke College and a visiting professor of law at the Washington & Lee School of Law. He is the co-author of Anatomy of an Execution: The Life and Death of Douglas Christopher Thomas and A Courageous Fool: Marie Deans and Her Struggle Against the Death Penalty.

# TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE CLIFFORD R. WECKSTEIN

(Continued from page 9)

I recognized that there was something special about him. Forty-one years later, I can now report what I've seen.

- <sup>1</sup>I had selected other possible headings:
- 10. Why my jokes will no longer be funny
- 9. He has forgotten more than I ever knew
- 8. Who are these people and why are they calling me judge?
- 7. They tell me I was once a judge.
- 6. I love what I do. What is it that I do?
- 5. Twenty-eight years is enough.
- 4. I quit.
- 3. I use the word counselor because I cannot remember your name.
- 2. Like equity, I would follow the law but I cannot see where she went.
- 1. If I could wander for 12 more years I could be just like Moses.
- $^2\mbox{There}$  is, however, some evidence in his recent writings indicating that he has mellowed somewhat on split infinitives.
- <sup>3</sup>I have no doubt, for example, that on reading my above reference to his mastery of "classic" English, Cliff would immediately question my use of the word "classic" rather than "classical."

# THE CONTINUING EVOLUTION OF GRANDPARENT VISITATION IN VIRGINIA

(Continued from page 4)

<u>Sours</u>, 231 Va. 96, 100 (1986) and subsequently reaffirmed in <u>Florio v. Clark</u>, 277 Va. 566 (2009). The moving party must demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence: 1) parental unfitness; 2) a previous order of divestiture; 3) voluntary relinquishment; 4) abandonment; or 5) demonstrate other "special facts and circumstances" to overcome the presumption in favor of a parent.

This uncertainty presents a perfect situation for proactive lawyering. If you have a parent, or grandparent, who wants try to try to ensure the chances of a visitation award going forward, the execution of a tailored and fact-based affidavit by a parent is a sound first step.

So before you begin your summer in earnest, perform a review of both your closed files and your open files. Do you have cases where a parent is ill, or where a grandparent has been serving as a regular babysitter or daycare provider? If so, then this is a great opportunity for you to reach out and ideally try to provide these families with some peace of mind and yet continue to differentiate yourself from other family law practitioners by staying ahead of the curve.

Vicki L. Francois is an attorney at Wiese Law Firm, PLC



Judge Cullen thanking Dan Frankl for purchase of his judicial robe



Dan Frankl, RBA, Rachel Thompson, SRCBA, Judge Cullen and Sue Cook, VWAA.

#### CATHERINE J. HUFF: 2021 YOUNG LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT

(Continued from page 9)

Cate has been active in our community as well. She has served on the Boards of the Roanoke Children's Theater, the Roanoke Valley Society for Human Resource Managers, and the Roanoke Wildlife Rescue. Protecting our world's wildlife and promoting conservation are close to Cate's heart. If she were not practicing law, she would probably be doing conservation and antipoaching work, especially to protect elephants. Her trips to Africa have put her close to some of our world's greatest wild animals and have reinforced her passion to protect and conserve these beauties of the wild.

Cate has been an active and engaged member of AFLA International, a global legal network of 150 law firms in the United States and other countries. She serves on the ALFA International Women's Initiative Steering Committee, which promotes the professional development of women attorneys in the USA and around the world. She has served as the group's marketing chair and is now chairing the Women's Initiative event this fall to be held in San Diego. She also serves on the Steering Committee for the ALFA International Hospitality & Retail group, and has spoken at international ALFA events to audiences of hundreds of people.

So what does Cate like to do outside of the courtroom or when she is not hanging out with elephants in Africa? Go to Disney World and watch the TV show "The Office." She has been to Disney World 18 times and has watched "The Office" almost 10 times from start to finish. In fact, Cate will confess to getting much of her "What not to do" employment examples from "The Office," so we might even be able to count this as "work."

Cate, you have a shining career ahead of you. Congratulations to you on being the 2021 Roanoke Bar Association Young Lawyer of the Year!







Cate Huff and family



President Dan Frankl presenting award to Cate Huff

## GEORGE I. VOGEL, II: 2021 FRANK W. "BO" ROGERS, JR. LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

(Continued from page 8)

While no one can remember which year he received it, Dad was awarded the "Boss of the Year" award from the RVLSA. This award is reflective of his dedication to his staff and his staff's dedication to him. His longtime secretary and paralegal, Betty, retired in 2006 after 29 years of service. Ann, Kristie, Mary Beth, and Danielle continue to work for the firm, having been with us 44 years, 24 years, 23 years, and 18 years, respectively. They have become experts in their respective areas from the training they received while working with Dad.

Throughout the years and through the many changes, Dad has practiced law at the highest level of integrity. I think it would be impossible to find another attorney that would say Dad has ever misled them or misrepresented his client's position. In fact, over the years, I have had many judges comment to me that they really appreciate and enjoy when Dad appears in their courts. They know that the facts will be fairly and accurately represented and the legal analysis will be fully developed. In other words, his candor to the court is known and valued. It is this honesty coupled with his legal acumen that defines him as an attorney that everyone in the community respects, even if they happen to be on the opposing side. Simply, he is the epitome of the citizen lawyer that raises the community's perception of the profession.

We all enjoy the collegiality of the Roanoke Bar and the Western District as a whole. I have never heard another attorney wish we were more like our counterparts on the other side of the state or that they regret practicing in Roanoke. My grandfather, George Vogel, started his legal practice in Roanoke in 1922 and was an initial member of this organization when it was chartered in 1925. While I never knew my grandfather, I have been told he and his colleagues created the foundation that has been furthered by Dad and his generation. We can all look to them for the incredible legal atmosphere they have created for us in the Roanoke Valley. Through the work of the bar and its members, we are continuing this heritage today and, in my opinion, it is alive and well.

While there are not any wild stories or eccentricities that I can embarrass Dad with, that is the epitome of who he is. He has quietly practiced law for fifty-five years developing a very loyal client base, cultivating a loyal and very competent staff, and maintaining a vibrant law firm that my brother and I have been able to join. Dad has significantly impacted, for the better, the lives of all those that have been fortunate enough to work with or along side him.

As you can see, my brother and I are not the only benefactors of our father's incredible career that perseveres today. Employees, whether they have been with him for 44 years or 1 year, partners, and clients have benefitted from the hard work, honesty and intellect my father has bestowed on them. And while he may not have made it far geographically from where he started, he sure has done a lot to make that one-third of a square mile a better place for all of us.

Finally, and I saved the best for last, I would be remiss, and in big trouble, if I did not mention my mother, Helen who has been supporting Dad since his second year of law school. I

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# GEORGE I. VOGEL, II: 2021 FRANK W. "BO" ROGERS, JR. LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

(Continued from page 11)

don't dare address the question of who can take credit for what, but it is fair to say they could not have done it without each other. Mom has always been there for Dad and Dad has always been there for her. Together they have left another indelible mark on those around them.

Congratulations Dad, this award couldn't be more well deserved.

George I, Vogel, III, is an attorney with Vogel and Cromwell, LLC  $\,$ 







President Dan Frankl presents award to George Vogel, II as his son, George Vogel, III watches.



George Vogel, II, his wife, Helen, his sons George and Kirk, and staff.

# CLSBA recognizes two Roanoke Bar Association projects with Awards of Merit for 2021

"Keeping It Clean"

"Meals for Heroes"

### In Memoriam

The following are the recent Association losses:

The Honorable Glen E. Conrad

Patrick T. Fennell, Esq.

In grateful recognition of the contributions of Judge Conrad and Mr. Fennell to our profession, and their contributions to our Association, the Association laments their passing.

## BENCH BAR CONFERENCE: FIRST IN-PERSON RBA EVENT FOR 2021

BY SARAH JESSEE

On May 14, 2021, the Roanoke Bar Association held its annual Bench Bar Conference. Although this event was held later in the year than it is typically held, it provided for the opportunity to meet in person (wearing face masks) at Mill Mountain Theatre, Center in the Square. The precautions in place allowed for a safe and successful event and set a good example for inperson events moving forward.

Patice Holland, Esq., principal at Woods Rogers, presented on "Blind Justice: Implicit Bias, Diversity and Inclusion in the Law." This thoughtful presentation included highlighting various events that have occurred in the last unpredictable year, and was a helpful reminder of a lawyer's responsibility to seek improvement of the law, the administration of justice, and the quality of service rendered by the legal profession.

Following the presentation, members of the local judiciary provided State of the Judiciary Addresses. A Judge from each court presented updates regarding the court's administration, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Judges reported that while more proceedings are moving forward in person, a virtual option will likely remain available for some proceedings. Chief Judge Urbanski and Magistrate Judge Ballou represented the U.S. District Court. Both Judges spoke to the efficacy of virtual proceedings. All were pleased to see Chief Judge Carson deliver the address for the 23rd Judicial Circuit. He was joined by Judge Clemens and Judge Ware. The Judges encouraged continued use of pretrial conferences to discuss COVID-19 precautions and logistics. Chief Judge Black presented for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court and discussed how attorney cooperation has led to timely resolving matters during the pandemic. Chief Judge Talevi, Judge Geddes, and Judge Roe were present for the General District Court. All are anticipating changes to the General District Court with the increase in jurisdictional limits on July 1, 2021. For the Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court, Judge Friedman presented in place of Chief Judge Griffith who could not be present, and she was joined by Judge Ferguson and Judge Rogers. These judges remarked on how their court was able to stay open during the pandemic to continue to serve minors and families in the area. A question and answer session followed the Judges' addresses. The Judges shared the sentiment that despite a challenging last year, the courts and the lawyers have worked well together to continue practicing effectively in the area.

Attendees then enjoyed a cocktail social on the outdoor patio area at Corned Beef & Company. The RBA Board thanks Ms. Holland and the Judges for presenting and extends a special thank you to Diane Higgs for coordinating a successful, in-person event for the first time in a year.

Sarah Jessee is an associate at Lewis Brisbois in downtown Roanoke









Patice Holland and Sarah Jessee



Judge Urbanski



Judge Talevi



**Judge Rogers** 



**Judge Carson** 



Judge Black, Judge Geddes and Dan Frankl



Cocktail party at Corn Beef & Co.



Sarah Jessee introducing the judges



Judge Friedman & Frank Friedman



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# RBA 96TH ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 8, 2021



President Dan Frankl calls the 96th Annual Meeting to order.



Monica Monday



Cate Huff



RLF Chairman, Patrick Kenney



The Vogel family



Dan Frankl passing the gavel to the new president, Macel Janoschka.



Macel Janoschka presenting outgoing president, Dan Frankl, with his past president's plaque.



Attendees at the RBA 96th Annual Meeting



# ROANOKE LAW FOUNDATION: SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS 2021



Kerin Daly, recipient of Jane Glenn Scholarship and James Kincanon scholarship



Nelson Helm, recipient of James Kincanon scholarship



Local Office on Aging, recipient of RLF Grant



Patrick Kenney, RLF Chairman

Thank you to the following donors who have purchased 20 washers & dryers for
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through the RBA / RLF
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Judge J. Talevi

Wayne's Import Automotive

**Woods Rogers** 

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

The Roanoke Bar Association welcomes the following new members:

#### **Active Members**

Effective May 1, 2021

Kristi J. Murray, Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley

Effective July 1, 2021

Kimberly M. Kronau, Covenant Real Estate Services

D. David Parr, Jr., solo

Brittany D. Salyers, Terry N. Grimes, P.C.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Roanoke Bar Association Meetings 2020 - 2021

October 13, 2020, virtual

November 10, 2020, virtual

December 8, 2020, virtual

January 12, 2021, virtual

February 9, 2021, virtual

March 9, 2021, virtual

April 13, 2021, virtual

May 3, 2021 (Law Day), virtual

June 8, 2021

Go to <u>www.roanokebar.com</u> for more information on all upcoming events.

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