

VIRGINIA LAWYERS WEEKLY

NEWS STORY

Presenting the 2007 'Leaders in the Law'

By Sarah Rodriguez"
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Virginia Lawyers Weekly is pleased to announce the recipients of our "Leaders in the Law" awards for 2007. Fifteen members of the legal community were selected based upon their significant contributions to the practice of law in Virginia over the past year. The group of honorees includes attorneys in private practice, bar leaders, mediators, a law school professor and a non-profit director.

The 2007 "Leaders in the Law" are:

- * **Richard J. Bonnie.** The University of Virginia law professor was appointed chairman of the commission on mental health reform by Chief Justice Leroy Rountree Hassell Sr. following the Virginia Tech shootings.
- * **Richard Cullen.** A partner at the Richmond-based legal giant McGuireWoods LLP, Cullen was promoted to chairman of the firm at the end of last year.
- * **Kyung (Kathryn) N. Dickerson.** Dickerson, a partner with the Vienna firm of Smolen Plevy, recently completed a four-year tenure as president of the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Virginia.
- * **Wyatt B. Durette Jr.** This year, Durette, a member of the Richmond firm DuretteBradshaw PLC, started a "virtual" intellectual property law firm, the XDL Group.
- * **Thomas A. Edmonds.** After a nearly 19-year term, Edmonds will retire as executive director of the Virginia State Bar. His service to the National Association of Bar Executives also came to a close this year.
- * **Betsy Wells Edwards.** As director of the Virginia Fair Trial Project, Edwards persuaded the General Assembly to limit the waiver of cap fees for attorneys representing indigent criminal defendants.
- * **L. Steven Emmert.** Emmert, a Virginia Beach lawyer, has worked towards developing appellate law as a practice, and has served as chair of the Virginia State Bar's appellate practice subcommittee.
- * **Robert L. Harris Sr.** Harris, a retired Richmond Circuit judge, has reached numerous significant settlements in 2007 through his mediation work with The McCammon Group. The total value of settlements he has overseen is approaching \$1 billion.
- * **Robert R. Hatten.** In 2007, the Newport News attorney won a significant case in the Supreme Court of Virginia, advancing the development of law in Virginia to obtain remedies for asbestos victims.
- * **Carina J. Mason.** The Fairfax lawyer has been a leader in the constitutional challenge to the state's

remedial fees approved by the General Assembly this year.

* **Stephen A. Northup.** A partner with the Richmond office of Troutman Sanders LLP, Northup became the firm's first pro bono partner and represented federal death row inmate Richard Tipton.

* **William R. Rakes.** Rakes, a partner with the Roanoke firm of Gentry, Locke, Rakes & Moore, chaired the American Bar Association's Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar for the 2006-2007 term.

* **Diane M. Strickland.** Strickland, a retired Roanoke Circuit judge and a mediator for The McCammon Group, served as a member of the commission that investigated the April 16 Virginia Tech shootings.

* **William R. Van Buren III.** As immediate past president of the Virginia Bar Association, the Norfolk attorney helped lead the effort of the VBA and other legal organizations to win improvements in indigent criminal defense.

* **William T. Wilson.** This year, Wilson, a partner with the Covington law firm of Wilson, Updike & Nicely, concluded his term as past chairman of the Virginia State Bar's Senior Lawyers Conference.

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