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President's Page

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West Virginia Bar Association

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THE WEST VIRGINIA BAR ASSOCIATION

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LEADERSHIP DEFAULT?

Historically the civilized world has recognized three great professions, the Clergy, Medicine and Law. Generally, the Clergy addressed itself to matters religious and spiritual, physicians attended to and pursued medical matters, while lawyers looked after legal and judicial matters and individually took an active part in matters dealing with business, education, politics, government, and the public welfare.

Lawyers raised, discussed and debated matters of public interest, and the public looked to the legal profession for information and leadership. More recently, however, there has been a growing indifference among members of the legal profession and a disinclination on the part of lawyers individually to raise, discuss or debate issues of public interest and the public welfare. Many are saying, like the missing eye-witness, “It is none of my business,” “I don’t have the time,” “I cannot afford to take a part,” whereas we know it is our business, we should take the time, and we cannot afford not to take a part in matters affecting the public interest.

We have defaulted much of our business as well as community leadership to others not as well trained or qualified in most instances. The prerogatives of the legal profession are being usurped by many non-professionals. Much can be and is being done by bar associations to correct this situation but basically it is the responsibility of the individual lawyer to do the work, both in and out of bar association organizations.

Let us all engage in bar association activities, and individually as lawyers take an active part in matters affecting community and public welfare, seeing to it that the public is impartially informed, and effectually represented.

James H. Coleman, Jr.
President

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