

June 1961

President's Page

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West Virginia Bar Association

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Recommended Citation

Stanley Higgins Jr., *President's Page*, 63 W. Va. L. Rev. (1961).
Available at: <https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/wvlr/vol63/iss4/4>

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THE WEST VIRGINIA BAR ASSOCIATION

President's Page

The West Virginia Bar Association was organized on July 8, 1886, at Grafton. Reflection upon the occasion of this seventy-fifth birthday impels some consideration of the changes which have come about in the practice of law. In 1886 there were no problems of personal income tax, traffic accidents were confined to the "hot-rodders" of that day spurring their horses to greater speed with resultant assumption of the risk, interstate commerce was just that and no one had yet considered an activity which might affect commerce as having any particular esoteric significance. While West Virginia was then a young state and our lawyers were particularly concerned with settlement of rules of property and the development of our then system of common law pleading, those lawyers established a standard of professional competence and tradition which we, and those who follow us, will do well to emulate.

It is, however, a truism that the complexity of today's society has so injected into the daily life of every lawyer the necessity for knowledge of the far-reaching effect of almost the simplest act that only by continual study can any of us even hope to fulfill the traditional role of the lawyer. That role, to advise and represent, requires constant devotion to the goal of recognition of change.

It is further true that while all will recognize the desirability of continuing legal education, we have the very practical problem of finding the time to devote to the necessary study. Most of us become so involved with the day-to-day activity of making a living that we are inclined to put off for the morrow the improvement and maintenance of our legal skills. Few lawyers can afford the sabbatical year and if we could, we can hardly wait for seven years to determine what has been happening in the meantime.

We do have open to us the organized Bar groups, whether they be on a county, state or national level. Within these groups are opportunities for interchange of knowledge with others of our profession, which require only a willingness to join with our brothers in the development of legal knowledge. To this end, all should

lend their aid for in the law as in all else, our profession is judged by the standard of competence of all members of the profession and not by individuals alone. Competent service to our clients is our duty to offer and their right to receive.

The 75th Annual Meeting of the Association will be held this year on August 31st, September 1st and 2nd. This meeting offers one opportunity to maintain our standard of professional achievement by hearing those who are qualified to speak on varied legal subjects. Honorable Herbert S. Boreman, Judge of the Court of Appeals, will be the principal speaker at the banquet with his topic to be "The Value of Oral Argument." Honorable Stuart Rothman, General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board, will be one of the speakers at the morning session on September 1, and his address will be of interest in this day of complex labor-management relations. George Siebert, Jr. of Wheeling will report upon and explain some of the acts of the 1961 West Virginia Legislature and Robert K. Emerson of Huntington, will speak on the many facets of industrial development in West Virginia.

As a part of the Diamond Anniversary Meeting, the Association will recognize and present certificates of appreciation to those members of the Association who have been engaged in active practice for fifty years or more. Forty-four members of the Association have been so engaged in the practice of law and it shall be our privilege to recognize and honor them.

Let me urge all members of the Association to attend the 75th Annual Meeting.

Stanley Higgins, Jr.