

William C. Bischoff

PARTNER, STALLINGS & BISCHOFF

William C. "Bill" Bischoff was named president of the Virginia Beach Bar Association.

FROM PREMED TO HISTORY MAJOR

I became interested in law when my older brother was attending law school. Initially, I was pursuing a degree in pre-med at the University of Virginia. Unfortunately, the chemistry classes were too much for me. I graduated U.Va. as a history major. I've always had an interest in government and history. All of it ties together, and it appealed to me. I read a lot of books on history, and I'm currently reading stuff on world pre-history. As for law, it has always been a fascinating career.

STALLINGS & BISCHOFF

Our law firm is based in Virginia Beach, and we do quite a bit of litigation. We've been around for about 30 years. I personally don't do criminal or domestic work. The firm focuses on a lot of criminal, domestic, divorce and custody cases. We also do a lot of civil litigations. I specialize in civil and commercial litigation as well as corporate disputes. What I really enjoy the most is getting good results for a client who deserves it. It's very satisfying to me to have a client come out on top. The firm also does pro bono work. Sometimes it doesn't necessarily start off as a pro bono case. Often clients get in a situation where they simply can't pay you. Instead of getting out of the case, you stick with it because you feel strongly about the client's situation. We get inquiries all the time from people who say we don't have the resources to pay you but we need help.

VIRGINIA BEACH BAR ASSOCIATION

The association has been around for 53 years. It started out as a social group with the intention of helping lawyers de-

velop and maintain working relationships. We have now gotten more involved in charitable causes and supporting groups who support the courts and various aspects of the courts. Our association is also the voice of the legal community in Virginia Beach. Our members have spoken up on issues that are important to judges, clerks, lawyers and the community.

ROLE AS PRESIDENT

I'm in charge of a variety of things at the association such as educational courses for lawyers and non-lawyers, monthly meetings, state bar events and other events in Hampton Roads. It's a one-year position that is rotated through the ranks. I'm highly interested in building and cultivating the relationship with the Virginia Beach Bar Foundation. It's our charitable and fundraising arm. Our main concern is trying to raise monies that will help out the community. For instance, First Colonial High School is one of several schools that have a legal academy. We would love to be more involved in that. The foundation will help us out in that area. It will help us raise money for other groups and try to help folks gain access to the courts. For example, many domestic relation petitions that are filed are by single moms who don't have access to lawyers. The foundation supports these efforts and allows us to work on cases like these.

FUTURE PLANS

One of the things I want to do is continue to expand the charity aspect of the work we do. The old saying, "to whom much is given, much is expected," is very true for lawyers. We have been given the opportunity of a good education and the economic ability to provide for our families. With that said, it's im-



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portant that we give back to the community. It's not just something we should do on a part-time basis but put full-time effort into giving back as much as possible. Over the years, more and more of the association events have been geared toward charity. It's something that we are definitely focusing on in the future.

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