VADA YOUNG LAWYERS BOOT CAMP

SPONSORED BY THE VADA YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION

Virginia Museum of History & Culture

428 N. Arthur Ashe Blvd, Richmond VA 23220

Reynolds Leadership Center & Byrd Meeting Room (2nd Floor)

Friday, December 4, 2026

DRAFT AGENDA

6.5 HRS (1.0 Ethics) CLE Requested

9:00 **Registration/Coffee**

9:25-9:30 **Opening Remarks**
Taylor Brewer, *Moran Reeves Conn,* VADA President
Lindsey Brock, *Woods Rogers,* VADA Young Lawyers Chair

9:30-10:30 **Navigating Your Way through Virginia General District and Circuit Courts and other Practical Tips in Civil Litigation**
Jonathan Gonzalez, *Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani,* VADA Board Member

This topic is designed to educate a new attorney about handling new cases in either general district and circuit court to include verification of jurisdictional basis, service, venue; noticing your appearance; what to do if case filed improperly against corporate client in small claims court; how to check service of process; what to expect and how to prepare for the first return in general district court; what to do at the first return in general district court; handling motions in general district court; what to expect and how to prepare for first trial in general district court; how to appeal a general district court case; taking the case to circuit court; addressing whether ad damnum can be amended; use of evidence presented in general district court in the circuit court case; preparation for appearance in circuit court; how to set the trial date; motions practice in circuit court; how to obtain jury pool information; jury size in circuit court if case appealed; how to determine the procedures of the jurisdiction where your case is pending; available resources to assist in navigation.

10:30-11:30 **The Survivor's Guide to Expert Witnesses**
Kathryn Bonorchis, *Lewis Brisbois,* VADA Regional Director, Potomac
Andy Southerland, M.D.*, Department of Neurology, University of Virginia*

This session will define a testifying expert witness, identify when an expert is needed, explore what type of litigation may benefit from the use of expert, define in what ways an expert witness can help, share how to go about identifying the best expert for your case and finish with a discussion on how best to work with your expert.

11:30-10:45 **Break**

11:45-12:45 **Ethical Issues in Civil Defense Practice (1.0 HR Ethics)**
B. Patrick O'Grady, *Thomas, Thomas & Hafer,* VADA Board Member

This session will give an overview of the tripartite relationship between defense counsel, insured and insurer; a consideration of conflict issues arising from the dual representation of the insured and insurer; defending a case in which the ad damnum does not exceed the amount of coverage; defending a case in which the ad damnum exceeds the amount of coverage; defending under a reservation of rights; how the excess carrier and reinsurer affect the tripartite relationship; and, issues faced in settlement. The session will end with a discussion of hypothetical ethical situations and possible strategies and resolutions.

12:45-1:15 **Box Lunch**

1:15-2:15 **Effective Advocacy in Mediation**
The Honorable Beverly Snukals (Ret.), *The McCammon Group*
Our speaker will discuss situations when mediation might be in a client's best interest, how you can best talk with your client about mediation, and how to prepare yourself and your client for a productive and successful mediation session. Finally, Judge Snukals will walk you through a mediation session, offering advice and tips regarding opening presentations, negotiations, settlements, and suggestions for follow-ups.

2:15-2:30 **Break**

2:30-3:15 **Written Discovery**
Sophia M. Miller, *Moran Reeves Conn*
Tracy Taylor Hague, *Woods Rogers Vandeventer Black*
This session will explore written discovery in state court, including the general provisions of governing written discovery, responses and objections to written discovery and how to handle claims of privilege and protective orders. Next, we will explain the obligations of counsel, discuss available discovery methods discovery tactics and timing, and review how to create a discovery plan and what should be in it. Finally, the speakers will explain what to do when you don't receive discovery, how to handle follow-up and supplemental responses and how to coordinate discovery with the deadlines in pre-trial scheduling orders.

3:15-4:00 **Insurance Coverage in Automobile Cases**
Donald E. Morris, *Law Offices of Donald E. Morris*
The scope of this presentation focuses on liability, uninsured and underinsured motorist provisions of the automobile liability policies, including voluntary, assigned risk, and certified policies as well as personal and commercial policies. It will explore statutory regulation of auto policies and which vehicles are covered, the persons insured and covered risks. We will discuss the amount owed under the liability policies, primary and excess liability coverage, duties of insured to defend, policy defenses and non-waiver agreements, exclusions, uninsured and underinsured motorist coverage and cancellation of policies.

4:00-4:15 **Break**

4:15-5:15 **Judicial Advice for New Lawyers Panel Discussion**
Hon. Richard B. Campbell, *Richmond Circuit Court*
Hon. Mark Colombell, *United States District Court, Eastern Division*
Hon. Angela Pais O'Connor, *Hanover County General District Court*
Moderator: Taylor Brewer, *Moran Reeves Conn,* VADA President
The judges will explain pre-trial matters such as scheduling orders, pre-trial motions, discovery issues and pre-trial conference and settlement conferences. Next, they will discuss brief writing, including filing deadlines and suggestions for formatting. Then, they will discuss parts of trial including voir dire, opening statements, direct and cross, motions to strike, jury instructions and closing. Finally, they will explore post-trial motions, miscellaneous trial issues and offer specific tips for young lawyers.

5:15 **Optional Virginia Museum of History and Culture First Fridays Event**
Enjoy free admission to the galleries, specials in the Café, Holiday Makers Market, access to food trucks, and live music.