



I'ANSON-HOFFMAN INN OF COURT NEWSLETTER

Spring 2021

VOL. 32, NO. 2

Welcome back, Inn! As we near the end of the 2020-2021 year for our Inn, we want to say a big thanks to our members and leadership. It's been a challenging year, and we appreciate every one of you for your understanding and participation during the pandemic-related limitations. We're proud that we've been able to keep the mission of the Inn moving forward, but the **best news is we get to end the year with a bang.** That's right - our June 17 end of year banquet will be **IN-PERSON** and better than ever. We strongly encourage everyone to try to attend. It will be the last chance we have to meet before our long break, with an excellent guest speaker, the Honorable Rossie Alston, United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia. You will not want to miss it!

NEXT MEETING

END OF YEAR BANQUET

Norfolk Botanical Gardens

June 17, 2021

Time TBA (probably 5:30)

Toastmaster: Micaylee Noreen

(Please RSVP to Judge K.M. Duffan at iansonhoffmaninnofcourt@gmail.com)

MAY MEETING RECAP

The Inn met virtually on May 17, 2021 for a spectacular program from Pupilage Group 3 on the topic of "Lawyer Wellness."



It is hard to imagine a more appropriate, timely topic given the emotional and physical toll of the pandemic. The presentation was impactful and engaging, featuring speakers with deep expertise in the topic-area.

The first segment featured remarks from Dr. Leah Nathan, a clinical psychologist and "divorce coach" for Cooper Ginsberg Gray PLLC. Dr. Nathan discussed some of the unique challenges and solutions to a lawyer's well-being, particularly mental health. Our profession suffers a disproportionate rate of depression, substance abuse and suicide. Confronting that reality is an important first step according to Dr. Nathan. Dr. Nathan had a calming presence and useful strategies to reduce stress and focus on a comprehensive approach to lawyer well-being.



The next speaker was the Honorable William C. Mims, a current justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia and former Attorney General, who offered his deeply personal presentation on depression and suicide prevention in the profession of law. It was refreshing to hear personal stories from such an accomplished jurist. One clear message from Justice Mims was that no member of the legal community is immune from the often-silent affliction of depression. It can be difficult for lawyers and judges to speak up or ask for help during difficult times, but it should be our collective responsibility to lift each other up



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whenever possible. Sometimes a simple check-in with a colleague can make a world of difference to a suffering individual.



Justice Mims is a courageous advocate for mental health, and his presentation resonated with all who attended.

Finally, we heard from Margaret Ogden, Esq., the Wellness Coordinator for the Virginia Lawyer's Wellness Initiative at the Virginia Supreme Court. The Wellness Initiative funds and supports the Virginia Judges & Lawyers Assistance program, which replaced the long-standing "Lawyers Helping Lawyers" program.



Ms. Ogden spoke about the initiative, which aims to provide non-disciplinary support and intervention to members of the bar struggling with addiction and mental health challenges. One clear takeaway is that members of the legal profession do not need to fear disciplinary action merely for seeking assistance for mental health and substance abuse issues.

In closing, we extend our gratitude to Pupilage Group 3 and the guest speakers for a truly memorable presentation. We look forward to gathering with all of you at the Norfolk Botanical Gardens to celebrate a return to relative normalcy, enjoy some delicious food and drink, and cap off a successful year!

Until next time,

Andrew Gordon and Micaylee Noreen
Newsletter Committee 2020-2021