

**FINAL REPORT ON THE FIRST ANNUAL  
BENCH-BAR CONFERENCE OF  
THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND**

**Planning Stage**

In the fall of 1997, Jim Nolan suggested to the Maryland State Bar Association, Section of Litigation, Federal District Court Subcommittee, the possibility of holding an Annual Bench Bar Conference of the United States District Court for the District of Maryland. After consulting with his colleagues, Chief Judge Motz informed Subcommittee Chair Michael Berman on October 1, 1997 that the Bench was amenable to the concept.

A Bench-Bar Conference Committee was then formed consisting of James J. Nolan, Jr., Chair, Michael D. Berman, Charles G. Byrd, Jr., Paul Mark Sandler, and Donna Sanger (President of the Federal Bar Association). James W. Bartlett, III, later joined the Committee.

The first of six formal Committee meetings was held on December 16, 1997. The Committee planned the Conference Agenda. Mike Berman publicized the conference in the Daily Record, The Litigator and other publications. He also sent out individual letters to all of the state, local and specialty Bar Associations. Donna Sanger made arrangements for catering by Mount Vernon Caterers and planned the menu. Jim Nolan enlisted Augie Cage to receive RSVP's from conference participants and organized the Break-Out Sessions with Jim Bartlett's thoughtful advice and suggestions. Paul Sandler coordinated the Plenary Session with Magistrate Judge Gauvey. The whole Committee recruited Discussion Leaders for the Break-Out Sessions.,

**The Conference**

On October 9, 1998, the Judges of the United States District Court for the District of

Maryland conducted the First Annual Bench-Bar Conference at the United States Courthouse in Baltimore.

The Conference was co-sponsored by the Litigation Section of the Maryland State Bar Association, the Maryland Chapter of the Federal Bar Association, and the American Bar Association. Approximately 230 people attended the program which began with a Plenary Session in the Ceremonial Courtroom. There were approximately 40 additional registrants on a waiting list.

The plenary session consisted of a presentation by The Hon. Benson E. Legg, The Hon. Charles B. Day, and the Hon. Susan K. Gauvey on significant decisions of the court and the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

After the panel discussion, participants divided into smaller groups and each group met with one or two members of the court for an informal workshop session. The purpose of the session was to permit an open exchange of ideas between the Bench and the Bar. Topics included discussions of the Local Rules, discovery practices, whether civility guidelines are needed, alternate dispute resolution, and the attorneys' fees Rules and Guidelines.

The next portion of the program was a report from Richard Wasserman on behalf of the Bankruptcy Bar. In this session, matters unique to bankruptcy practitioners were discussed.

The bankruptcy portion of the program was followed by the presentation by the Federal Bar Association of the Peter A. DiRito Award to Mr. Ronald Lawson. Mr. Lawson is a Deputy Clerk who has always exemplified the highest ideals and traditions of the United States District Court.

The Hon. J. Frederick Motz, Chief Judge, then delivered the "State of the Court" address.

Chief Judge Motz discussed the Court's goals and objectives, both in terms of the physical facilities and the Court's role in the justice system.

The Maryland State Bar Association and the Federal Bar Association presented the Court with a grandfather clock for Chief Judge Motz' courtroom in recognition of the efforts of the Chief Judge's services to the Court, the Bar, and the community. The Conference concluded with a reception on the first and second floors of the Courthouse.

### Additional Items

A transcript of the Plenary Session and the State of the Court Address has been prepared by Court Reporter Gail Simpkins and is attached to this Report as **Attachment A**.

An evaluation form was distributed to participants. Approximately 80% of those responding described the Conference as "extremely valuable" or "very valuable." Participants overwhelmingly indicated that a one-half day program was the appropriate length and that the program should be conducted on an annual basis. A tabulation of the evaluation forms is attached to this Report as **Attachment B**.

A Bench-Bar Conference Program Book was prepared through the efforts of Donna Sanger and was distributed to all participants. A copy of the booklet is attached to this Report as **Attachment C**.

Summaries of the discussions in several of the Break-Out Sessions are attached to this Report as **Attachments D1-3**.

The total cost of the Conference was \$6,549.26. These costs were paid through the generosity of the U. S. District Court Attorney Admissions Fund, the ABA, MSBA Section of Litigation, and the Federal Bar Association. An income and expense statement is attached to this

Report as **Attachment E**.

The Committee wishes to thank all of the Judges and lawyers who participated in the Conference, particularly those who acted as discussion leaders and presenters.

A final note of special thanks goes to Augie Cage and Ron Wiley of the Clerk's Office for their above and beyond the call of duty contributions to the success of the Conference.

Respectfully submitted,

James J. Nolan, Jr., Chair

Michael D. Berman

Charles G. Byrd, Jr.

Paul Mark Sander

Donna Sanger

James W. Bartlett, III

January 14, 1999