

**MRWBA Programs Committee
2018-2019
Alexis Fisher-Rizk and Mansi Shah, Chairs**

This year, the MRWBA continued its tradition of hosting a wide variety of luncheons and added an evening event as well, entitled *Balancing the Scales*. Our luncheons all took place at the Willow Oaks Country Club.

MRWBA continued to host its traditional luncheons – which were all well attended and well received. We started the year with an exciting guest at our September luncheon, candidate Abigail Spanberger, who went on to be elected to the United States House of Representatives in November.

In October, MRWBA co-hosted an evening event with the Hill-Tucker Bar Association. The event was entitled *Balancing the Scales: Women in the Law*, and included a screening of the film *Balancing the Scales* followed by an exciting panel discussion. The film *Balancing the Scales* was directed and produced by Sharon L. Rowen. The film features interviews with women lawyers and judges, including Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Gloria Allred and explores discrimination and cultural bias in the workplace. The panel discussion after the film was led by Sharon L. Rowen, and featured Doris H. Cause, VSP immediate past president; and Jennifer M. McLemore, partner, Christian & Barton. The MRWBA will be receiving an Award of Merit for the program from the Virginia State Bar at its annual meeting next month.

Our November luncheon was our annual pro bono luncheon. It was entitled Rule 6.1: The Justice Gap and Voluntary Pro Bono Reporting and was approved for one hour of CLE credit. Crista Gantz, Director of Access to Legal Services at the Virginia State Bar, and John Whitfield, Executive Director of Blue Ridge Legal Services gave a wonderful and information presentation.

December was our annual awards luncheon and this year, our honoree was Professor Julie McConnell. Professor McConnell gave an amazingly stirring speech at the luncheon.

In January, we welcomed speakers Dr. Phoebe A. Ashley, Cynthia Bade, and Colleen M Quinn, Esq., who all gave a wonderful presentation entitled *Lawyers Firing on All Cylinders: Make Wellness Your New Year's Resolution*. This program was also approved for CLE credit.

Our February luncheon focused on Ethics and was entitled *Legal Ethics in Virginia: Staying on the Right Side of the Line*. Ashley T. Davis, Esq., kept us all laughing during

her presentation and a hour of Ethics CLE credit was earned by those who attended.

Our March luncheon was a huge success and focused on the topic of Women in Leadership: Knowledge is Power. Our panelists included Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth; Karen Gould with the Virginia State Bar; Valerie O'Brien with the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association; Lucia "Pia" Trigliani with the Virginia Bar Association; and Ray White with the Virginia Law Foundation.

In April, we held our annual Legislative Luncheon, which was well attended and informative as always.

This was a very successful programs year featuring many fascinating luncheon topics to engage the MRWBA membership as well as the Balancing the Scales program that we are especially proud of.