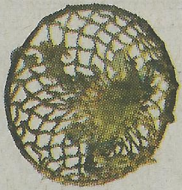


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• SERVING THE 'HEART OF HISTORYLAND' SINCE 1879 • WARSAW, VA. • MAY 8, 2013

Tappahannock Legal Eagle named Attorney of the Year

BY NICHOLAS VANDELOECHT
Reporter

For nearly 30 years, Tappahannock Attorney John R. Rellick has not only handled the legal needs of seven counties with a small staff, but a pillar of support to his local community.

And on Wednesday, his hard work and dedication to the Northern Neck and Upper Middle Peninsula was praised and rewarded by the Supreme Court of Virginia.

On May 1, the Virginia State Bar (VSB) announced that Rellick had been selected to receive the 2013 award for Legal Aid Attorney of the Year.

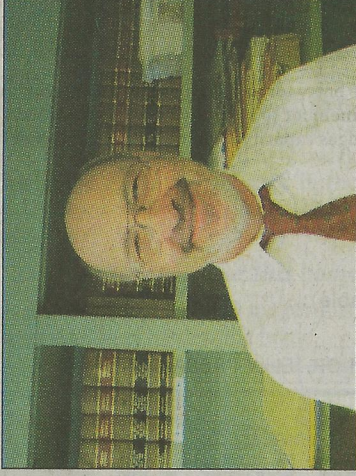
Originally a native of Pennsylvania, Rellick entered the legal profession as a staff attorney for Northwestern Legal Services in Erie, PA in 1978.

Six years later, Rellick moved to Virginia, where he joined Rappahannock Legal Services (RLS) as managing attorney for their Tappahannock branch office.

As the sole attorney in the branch, Rellick has covered cases in the rural counties of Essex, Richmond, Lancaster, Northumberland, Westmoreland, King William and King & Queen.

Currently, he only has Paralegal Hope Bunch, with whom he has worked for 17 years, to assist him in cases.

But that hasn't stopped him from lending a helpful hand and ear to others,



John R. Rellick

said Ann H. Kloeckner, executive director of RLS.

"He's just available all the time in a way that is pretty astonishing, considering the cases he has and what he's got on his plate," said Kloekner, who added in her letter supporting Rellick's nomination for the Legal Aid Award that he was "the glue that holds our office together."

Kloekner shared that the junior attorneys on staff always approach Rellick with questions.

Rellick, in turn, was always willing to offer them suggestions and talk through procedures, Kloekner added.

RLS volunteer attorney Bill Botts praised Rellick for his extensive services to the community.

Botts highlighted his work with The Haven, the regional organization and shelter for domestic violence victims, and the Family Focus of Richmond

County in supporting Rellick's nomination for the award.

"His work with Family Focus garnered a nomination by the National Association of Counties as one of President George H. Bush's Thousand Points of Light," wrote Botts. "His nomination was approved by the President, and his name now appears on the Points of Light roll at the Bush Presidential Library."

Joanna Suyes, Chairman of VSB, said the Bar was very impressed by his qualifications, and that Rellick's work within the community was essential in determining his selection for the award, as his impact extended beyond his normal job.

"His colleagues were [enthusiastic] about the work he has done in the community to advocate on behalf of the elderly, domestic violence victims and people who need affordable housing," said Suyes.

While noting that the selection process does not take service area into consideration, Suyes expressed her belief that attorneys working in the rural areas had a "little bit more difficult road to hoe" in comparison to legal aids in the cities.

"A lot of times they don't have as many attorneys in their area who can volunteer and assist them with their normal workloads," said Suyes. "People like John and others in smaller communities often have to rely on their particular skills to make an impact for the lower-income people."

Kloekner complimented Rellick's extreme dedication, as well as his compassion for his clients.

"Our clients are poor, and they're often treated like dirt," said Kloekner. "He treats them with respect. That's a very important quality in someone professional who needs to solve somebody's legal problems."

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