



# Virginia Law Foundation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## 23 Citizen Lawyers Inducted as Virginia Law Foundation Fellows



CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA, **January 27, 2026** — On Thursday, January 22, the Virginia Law Foundation (VLF) gathered nearly 200 supporters and leaders to induct 23 citizen lawyers as Fellows at their annual dinner and celebration in Williamsburg. The Class of 2026, listed below, reflects an incredibly talented group of civic leaders from across the Commonwealth dedicated to advancing the practice of law and improving their communities.

The evening commenced with a joint reception with the Virginia Bar Association before the formal VLF event began. At the dinner, attendees were welcomed by **Chief Executive Officer Brigadier General (Ret.) Alison Martin** and **VLF President David J. Gogal**. Each spoke to the organization's strategic vision of creating a more just Virginia and to the instrumental role Fellows play in advancing that vision. The formal induction ceremony was led by **Roscoe Connell Roberts**, VLF board member and chair of the Fellows Committee. A highlight of the evening was a moving keynote address by **Justice D. Arthur Kelsey** of the Supreme Court of Virginia. In addition to underscoring the values of Virginia Law Foundation Fellows, he spoke to the critical importance of civic virtue and the opportunity every citizen has to place common good above self-interest.

Joining more than 800 distinguished VLF Fellows, the Class of 2026 includes former Bar leaders, non-profit directors and volunteers, educators, dedicated judges, and public servants. "Since 1983, the Virginia Law Foundation has recognized outstanding Virginia lawyers and judges who demonstrate the highest professional and ethical standards in their work, together with a solid history of community service over the course of their careers," says Roscoe Connell Roberts. "This year's class demonstrates a steadfast commitment to strengthening their communities and to upholding the Rule of Law, and we are proud to honor them for their contributions to their professions and communities."

Nominated confidentially by their peers and selected by the Fellows Committee, each VLF Fellow must be a member of the Virginia State Bar for at least ten years, reside in Virginia, exhibit integrity and character, uphold the highest professional standards, and be outstanding community members, distinguished in the practice of law. Fellows play a vital role in advancing the VLF's mission, which is to promote, through philanthropy, the Rule of Law, access to justice, and law-related education.

To learn more about the Fellows program, visit [virginialawfoundation.org](http://virginialawfoundation.org).

## Virginia Law Foundation Fellows Class of 2026

**Lori J. Bentley**, Johnson, Ayers & Matthews, PLC / Roanoke  
**Matthew W. Broughton**, Gentry Locke Attorneys / Roanoke  
**William Hamilton Bryson**, University of Richmond School of Law / Richmond  
**Stephen J. Cannella**, Cannella & O'Neal / Richmond  
**Frank M. Conner III**, Covington and Burling LLP (ret.) / Alexandria  
**Trevor S. Cox**, Hunton Andrews Kurth, LLP / Richmond  
**Mark D. Cummings**, Sher, Cummings and Ellis / Arlington  
**Melinda Douglas**, City of Alexandria (ret.) / Alexandria  
**Plato George Eliades, II**, The Eliades Law Firm / Chesterfield  
**Douglas S. Granger**, Hunton Andrews Kurth, LLP / Richmond  
**Sandra L. Havrilak**, Blankingship & Keith, P.C. / Fairfax  
**Rudene Mercer Haynes**, Hunton Andrews Kurth, LLP / Richmond  
**Christie Marra**, Virginia Poverty Law Center / Richmond  
**Justice (Ret.) Elizabeth A. McClanahan**, Virginia Tech Foundation and Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center / Blacksburg  
**Richard H. Ottinger**, Woods Rogers / Norfolk  
**Randall S. Parks**, Hunton Andrews Kurth, LLP / Richmond  
**Kimberlee Harris Ramsey**, FloranceGordonBrown, PC / Richmond  
**Cliona Mary Robb**, Thompson McMullan, PC / Richmond  
**Brooks Meredith Smith**, Troutman Pepper Locke / Richmond  
**W. Edgar Spivey**, Kaufman & Canoles, P.C. / Norfolk  
**Matthew C. Sunderlin**, Clark & Bradshaw, P.C. / Harrisonburg  
**Carlyle R. Wimbish, III**, Wimbish Gentile McCray & Roeber, PLLC / Richmond  
**The Honorable Joseph Ross Zepkin**, 9th Judicial District Court (ret.) / Williamsburg

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## About the Virginia Law Foundation

**The Virginia Law Foundation** has provided more than \$30 million in grants since its inception to support law related projects throughout the Commonwealth that further its mission to facilitate access to justice and promote an understanding of the Rule of Law. **Virginia CLE**, the VLF's education division, is the recognized leader in providing continuing education for Virginia lawyers.

The Virginia Law Foundation accepts donations year-round and guarantees that 100% of every unrestricted donation is allocated to the grants program. Its two designated funds include the Bobzien-Gaither Education Fund, which supports ongoing continuing legal education and engagement, and the Adam Roush Fund for Wellness, which supports wellness programming and equitable access to well-being resources for legal professionals.

## Media Inquiries

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