

Outgoing County Bar Chief**He Helped Carry Law To The Public**

By LAWRENCE WALSH

To be called a bridge builder in these times of collapsing spans could be considered an insult.

But it's a compliment in the case of Donald L. Very, 46, who, as president of the Allegheny County Bar Association, spent 1978 building bridges across the "credibility gaps" between his members and the public.

Although he quickly points out the "excellent work" of his predecessors, boards of governors and administrative staff, Very, who is stepping down, and his committees last year did more than ever before to bring the bar association to the people.

Some of the group's 4,200 members opposed Very's continuing efforts, especially through unprecedented ads in layman's language, to bring the association into the Age of the Consumer. But he met their criticism head-on.

After stating in a report to the membership last June that some lawyers apparently didn't understand the purpose of his outreach program to a public that has grown increasingly cynical of the legal profession, Very said: "I believe it is time that the organized bar comes into the late 20th century and recognizes that the public has a right to know what services are available to it."

The newspaper ads in which Very asked county residents for suggestions, recommendations and criticisms, and promised to send them brochures on many common legal concerns, are believed to be the first in the country.

The program has been copied by many other bar associations and professional groups.

In his final report to the association,

Very said the half-page ads brought in more than 3,500 requests for informational brochures, a response he described as being "beyond our greatest expectation."

The association's "getting-to-know-you" campaign will continue under the direction of attorney John M. Feeney, who will take office next month.

Feeney soon will schedule a second meeting with representatives of the community to discuss problems such as the delivery of legal services to the poor, young, elderly and middle class.

Meanwhile, Very said the advertising budget for the association's own Lawyer Referral Service, one of its many free public services, has been increased.

Also new last year was the Consumer Service Casualty Insurance Co. which sponsors a pre-paid legal service plan for the public. This plan and others like it soon may be a part of employee fringe benefits.

In addition to helping Common Pleas Court in the appointment of master attorneys to reduce a backlog in zoning appeal cases, the organization also held more than 115 continuing legal education programs to keep its members updated on changes in the law.

During the past year the association also established Alcobar, the first metropolitan bar association-sponsored federal credit union for members of the organization, their families and employees.

Very's group also obtained a second carrier for malpractice insurance, which was described as a "much-needed alternative" to allow attorneys to "pick and choose" between two professional liability providers.



DONALD L. VERY
Ad campaign copied.

Deaths Elsewhere

Osa Irene Bunts, 81, formerly of Brentwood, in Struthers, Ohio.

John Ankeny, a former Pittsburgh resident and a developer of shopping centers and commercial buildings, in Sun City, Ariz.

John Shanklin, 87, Republican mayor of Charleston, W.Va., from 1959 to 1967, in Charleston.

Stephen J. "Steve" Stanko, 61, former national weightlifting champion and former holder of the Mr. America and Mr. Universe body building titles, in York, Pa.

Olga Deterding, 55, oil fortune heiress who worked with Dr. Albert Schweitzer's African clinic in the 1950s, in London.

Clipped By:



cristenajenner
Mon, Jul 17, 2017