

A Guide to the Office of the Executive Secretary Records, 1952-1995.

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Descriptive Summary

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English

Creator

Virginia. Supreme Court. Office of the Executive Secretary.

Physical Characteristics

0.90 cu. ft. (2 boxes)

Repository

Supreme Court of Virginia Archives, Virginia State Law Library

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research.

Use Restrictions

Because the library is not open to the general public, researchers should contact the library to arrange access to the collection.

Acquisition Information

The collection was transferred to the State Law Library from the Office of the Executive Secretary in 2005.

Preferred Citation

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Historical Information

The Office of the Executive Secretary was established in 1952. It provides administrative support for all of the courts and magistrate offices within the Commonwealth. This includes the training and education of all judicial branch employees, as well as legal research assistance for judges.

Hubert Bennett the first person appointed to the position of Executive Secretary. He served from 1952 to 1976.

Robert N. Baldwin was Executive Secretary from 1976 to 2005.

The Judicial Council of Virginia was established by the General Assembly in 1928. It is charged with the responsibility for making a continuous study of the organization, rules and methods of procedure and practice of the judicial system of the Commonwealth. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is presiding officer for the Council whose membership includes one Court of Appeals judge, six circuit court judges, one general district court judge, one juvenile and domestic relations district court judge, two attorneys qualified to practice in the Supreme Court and the Chairmen of the Committees for Courts of Justice in the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates. Council members are appointed by the Chief Justice and serve for four years or at the pleasure of the Chief Justice.

By order of the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia dated November 29, 1966, new rules for depositions and discovery were adopted effective February 1, 1967. Existing Rule 3:23 was repealed and replaced by new Rules 4:1 through 4:12. The new rules were substantially the same as the corresponding Federal Rules of Civil Procedure adopted in 1938.

The Court System Study Commission was created by the regular session of the 1968 General Assembly to make a full and complete study of the entire judicial system of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Justice Warren l'Anson was appointed chairman. In 1971, the commission reported to the General Assembly recommendations for changes in the organization of the court system and recommended creation of an immediate court of appeals.

At a meeting on March 28, 1994, the Judicial Council of Virginia appointed an Ad Hoc Committee for Development of a Proposal for a Study of Gender Bias in the Virginia Court System. In December 1994 the committee reported there were sufficient areas of inquiry to merit study as to justification formation of task force to study gender bias in the court system of Virginia. Committee members were Justice Elizabeth B. Lacy, Judge Robert W. Stewart, Judge John F. Daffron, Jr., Judge Suzanne K. Fulton, William G. Broadus, and Lisa C. Germano. A task force was appointed and submitted a final report to the Judicial Council of Virginia in October 2000.

Scope and Content

The collection contains three series of records created by the Office of the Executive Secretary, 1952-1995: the Hubert Bennett files on changes in rules for discovery and pretrial procedures, 1952-1967 (box 1, folders 1-3); court reorganization implementation strategy records, 1972-1981 (box 2); and records of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Development of a Proposal for a Study of Gender Bias in the Virginia Court System, 1993-1995 (box 1, folders 4-21).

The Hubert Bennett files (3 folders) are research files, reports, and memos pertaining to changes in rules for discovery and pretrial procedures, 1952-1967. They include a report of the Judicial Council Special

Committee to Study Discovery and other Pretrial Procedures, chaired by Richmond attorney Aubrey Bowles, 1965; a letter from Judge Walter A. Page outlining his reasons for dissenting from the report of the committee, 1965; a copy of a report to the Judicial Council in Virginia," 1962, about confusion over Rule 3:23, and other reports, letters, and memos pertaining to the issues, 1952-1955. Correspondents include Chief Justice Hudgins, Richmond lawyer Israel Steingold, Richmond Chancery Court Judge Brockenbrough Lamb, and State Corporation Commission Judge Ralph T. Catterall, responding to an article on Rule 3:18 (d) by Florian J. Bartosic in the William and Mary Review of Virginia Law.

Court reorganization strategy records document strategies for implementation of recommendations made by the Court Study Commission in 1972, including creation of an intermediate appellate court. The collection contains a memo and timeline outlining a strategy for implementation of the commission's recommendations, memos from Robert Baldwin, Executive Secretary, to the Ad Hoc Committee on Court Reorganization, 1980; presentations (outlines) containing rationales for changes in the administration of the circuit court system, in the court cost and fee structure, the use of chief judges and substitute judges, the magistrate system, and procedures for granting a trial de novo; draft documents and legislation, and research files. Also included is a copy of a speech given by Court Study Commission Chair, Justice Lawrence I'Anson, to an October 19, 1972, meeting of the Judicial Conference of Virginia in Fredericksburg. In the speech, I'Anson summarizes the commission's suggestions and recommendations for relieving the Supreme Court of Virginia's case load.

The records of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Development of a Proposal for a Study of Gender Bias in the Virginia Court System, 1994-1995, contain correspondence, memos, research files containing findings from studies on gender bias in the courts in other states, draft reports, and conference files pertaining to the National Conference on Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Bias and Gender Bias in the Courts in Albuquerque, New Mexico, March 2-5, 1995.

Index Terms

Corporate Names:

Virginia. Judicial Commission. Ad Hoc Committee on Court Reorganization.

Virginia. Judicial Commission. Ad Hoc Committee on the Development of a Proposal for a Study of Gender Bias in the Virginia Court System.

Virginia. Supreme Court. Office of the Executive Secretary.

Virginia. Court of Appeals. History.

Virginia. Court Study Commission.

Personal Names:

Baldwin, Robert N.

I'Anson, Lawrence W. (Lawrence Warren), 1907-1990.

Subjects:

Court administration -- Virginia.

Courts -- Virginia -- history -- twentieth century.

Discovery (law) -- Virginia.

Courts -- Virginia -- history -- twentieth century.

Sex discrimination in justice administration -- Virginia.

Sexism -- Virginia.

Genre/form

Articles.

Black and white transparencies.

Memorandums.

Presentations.

Reports.

Speeches.

