

# SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA

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WILLIAM C. MIMS



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Press Release: March 2, 2023

## JUSTICE MANN TO LEAD THE VIRGINIA LAWYERS' WELLNESS INITIATIVE

RICHMOND - Chief Justice S. Bernard Goodwyn has appointed Justice Thomas P. Mann to serve as chair of the Virginia Lawyers' Wellness Initiative, succeeding Senior Justice William C. Mims. As the new chair, Justice Mann will oversee the collaborative efforts of the Virginia Law Foundation, the Virginia State Bar, the Virginia Bar Association, and Virginia's eight law schools to provide education and assistance to judges, lawyers, legal staff and law students regarding professional health and wellness initiatives, with a specific focus on improving mental health and addressing substance abuse in the legal profession. Since 2019, the Virginia Lawyers' Wellness Initiative has administered funding to the Virginia Judges & Lawyers Assistance Program (formerly Lawyers Helping Lawyers), an independent non-profit organization, which provides confidential, non-disciplinary assistance to members of the Virginia legal profession, as well as their family members, who experience impairment as a result of substance abuse or mental health issues.

The effort to improve wellness in the legal profession was initiated by then-Chief Justice Donald W. Lemons when he appointed a 25-member Committee on Lawyer Well-Being and charged it to comprehensively examine the state of wellness within the legal profession. The Committee, chaired by Justice Mims, released its final report in 2018, "A Profession at Risk," [https://www.vsb.org/docs/A\\_Profession\\_At\\_Risk\\_Report.pdf](https://www.vsb.org/docs/A_Profession_At_Risk_Report.pdf), which became a blueprint for wellness programs and reforms throughout the profession.

Senior Justice Mims applauded the appointment of Justice Mann: "I was honored to work with many dedicated volunteers to bring this Initiative from concept to fruition. Justice Mann will carry it forward to greater success. I look forward to continuing to serve under his leadership."

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