

A Guide to the Requests for Certification to take the Written Bar Exam, 1897-1929 (bulk 1897-1909)

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Historical Information

In 1895, the General Assembly enacted legislation transferring responsibility for examining prospective lawyers from the circuit court to the highest court in the state. The Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia established rules that provided for a written examination to be held in Richmond, Staunton, and Wytheville at different times of year while the court was in session. The examinations were open to any applicant, provided he was at least 21 years old, a resident of Virginia for six months, and "able to produce a certificate of honest demeanor from his local circuit court." The new rules took effect July 1, 1896. Women were implicitly denied an opportunity to apply for membership in the bar. In 1894, a U.S. Supreme Court opinion upheld the Supreme Court of Virginia's ruling that the word "person" meant "man" in an 1887 statute regarding admission of foreign attorneys (LOCKWOOD, EX PARTE, 154 U.S. 116).

An act approved by the General Assembly March 14, 1910, established the Virginia Board of Bar Examiners and authorized it to license lawyers and determine the qualifications of applicants who wished to take the bar examination. The Board served under the auspices of the Supreme Court of Appeals.

Source: J. Gordon Hylton, "The Written Bar Examination and the Development of the Modern Legal Profession in Virginia," Richmond Law, Summer 1991 Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 6.

Scope and Content

The collection contains letters to the Supreme Court of Appeals from individuals seeking certification to take the written bar exam, 1897-1909. Most letters include character references from members of the bar in the applicant's local court. For some applicants, the only record is a letter requesting the transfer of the file to Staunton or Wytheville.

The letters are arranged chronologically and alphabetically within each year.

The collection also contains two folders of correspondence, 1902-1929, from attorneys requesting admission to the Virginia bar from other states and the District of Columbia.

Separated material: Law license applications, 1898-1899, and failed bar examinations, 1903-1906, part of the collection, Records of the Supreme Court of Appeals, 1871-1914, accession number 31211.

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Carter, Emery R.

DeJarnette, Jr., Elliott H. (Albemarle County)

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Sinclair, G.B. (Albemarle County)

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Requests for certification to take the written bar exam, 1902

Altizer, Marvin H. (Roanoke County)

Ames, Warner (University of Virginia Law Department)

Austin, Branch (Albemarle County)

Bailey, W. Norris (City of Richmond)

Booker, M.B. (Halifax County)

Bragg, S.B. (Brunswick County)

Bristow, J.C. (Middlesex County)

Davis, Beverly H. (City of Richmond)

Dillard, D.W. (Henry County)

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Elliott, J.W. (Floyd County)

Elliott, Milton C. (Albemarle County)

Fugate, Robert C. (Washington County)

Garrow, John Tommer (Warwick County)

Hairston, Samuel W. (Henry County)

Heth, Stockton (Radford)

Hilldrump, J.W. (Campbell County)

Jones, William C. (Gloucester County)

Lacy, Lane (City of Richmond)

Martin, James G. (City of Norfolk)

Moore, C. Ridgeway (Northampton County)

Mullen, J.M. (Petersburg)

Nelson, George E. (Bath County)

Nottingham, Gardner R. (Northampton County)

Rogers, Hamilton (Petersburg)

Roper, Albert S. (City of Norfolk)

Ross, William E. (City of Richmond)

Swift, Granville R. (City of Fredericksburg)

Tucker, J.R. (Rockbridge County)

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Colvin, Howard T. (Alexandria)

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French, K.S.

Harris, Thomas S. (York County)

Koteen, Meyer (Gloucester County)

Lightfoot, Jr., John B. (City of Richmond)
Marsh, I. Basye (Northumberland County)
Morrison, A.K. (Charlottesville)
Parrish, Winston (Albemarle County)
Pearson, Harry L. (City of Richmond)
Powell, Samuel Peter (Spotsylvania County)
Price, Jr., William H. (Charlottesville)
Smith, Howard W. (Fauquier County)
Snyder, W.T. (Charlottesville)
Teiser, Sidney (City of Norfolk)
Winston, Francis Byrd (Hanover County)
Woodson, B.B. (Cumberland County)
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Davies, H. Thornton (Prince William County)
Deans, Parke P. (Albemarle County)
Dey, Jr., William H. (City of Norfolk)
Goolrick, William K. (Albemarle County)
Hankins, J.G. (Halifax County)
Hudgins, Floyd A. (Newport News)
Isaacs, George Grant (City of Richmond)
Leonard, James N. (Fairfax County)
Lewis, R. Colton (Fairfax County)
McCoy, Taylor (Staunton)
Morris, George W. (Charlottesville)

Peery, Kent Eppa (Rockbridge County)
Richards, J. Donald (Fauquier County)
Segar, Jr., Arthur S. (Elizabeth City County)
Turner, J.M. (City of Richmond)
Upton, Robert J. (City of Norfolk)
Walker, R.C. (City of Richmond)
Wampler, T. Morris (Culpeper County)
Wooding, Jr., Harry (Danville)

Requests for certification to take the written bar exam, 1905

Alexander, J.R.H. (Loudoun County)
Armistead, Frank (Newport News)
Beverly, L.T. (Newport News)
Boyd, E.R. (Albemarle County)
Bragg, S.B. (City of Richmond)
Brown, C. Beverley (Albemarle County)
Collins, William G. (Fairfax County)
Crittenden, William L. (University of Virginia)
Dinwiddie, H.A. (Charlottesville)
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Jackson, W.M. (Patrick County)
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Overbey, R.

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Saunders, Hartley Poe (Charlottesville)

Shackleford, S.D. (Roanoke)

Walker, Otis P. (Henrico County)

Webb, J. McBryde (City of Norfolk)

Requests for certification to take the written bar exam, 1906

Anderson, J. Homes (Charlottesville)

Bassette, Jr., A.W.E. (Elizabeth City County)

Bickers, H.C. (Page County)

Bond, N. (City of Richmond)

Brigham, E. Foster (Albemarle County)

Brooke, H. Laurence (Albemarle County)

Brown, E. Walton (Charlottesville)

Bullock, Otis W. (Charlottesville)

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Dulaney, Paul (Bristol)

Elliott, J.W. (Floyd County)

Faires, Clifgard C. (Albemarle County)

Ferguson, A.H. (Winchester)

Foreman, A.H. (Albemarle County)

Galt, H.B.G. (Albemarle County)

Geddy, T.H. (Williamsburg and James City County)

Harrison, Edmund C. (City of Richmond)

Hubard, Robert T. (Charlottesville)

Jones, James Paris (Albemarle County)

Joyren, Herbert S. (Charlottesville)

Kelly, Emerson W. (Wise County)

Kelsey, D.A. (City of Norfolk)

Keyes, W.W. (Albemarle County)

Kizer, D.H. (Charlottesville)

Lewis, H. Stuart (Albemarle County)

McCandlish, F.S. (Middlesex County)

Monserat, D. (Albemarle County)

Payne, George M. (City of Norfolk)

Rust, George M. (City of Norfolk)

Shackelford, Virginius R. (Albemarle County)

Spratley, C. Vernon (Albemarle County)

Stayer, Harry V. (Albemarle County)

Stump, Robert W. (Fairfax County)

Visanka, Ernest L. (Charlottesville)

Wallace, H. Lewis (Fredericksburg)

Walsh, Horman W. (Albemarle County)

Way, L.B. (Albemarle County)

West, Eugene R. (Albemarle County)

Wiggs, James O. (City of Roanoke)

Wilhelm, William (City of Roanoke)

Williams, Ashby (Charlottesville)

Williams, Thomas J. (Albemarle County)

Woodhouse, Edward J. (Albemarle County)

Worth, E. Clay (Charlottesville)

Requests for certification to take the written bar exam, 1907

Beale, Richard L. (City of Richmond)

Cotten, P.S. (City of Norfolk)

Eanes, E. Ennis (Charlottesville)

Ferrall, E.T. (City of Richmond)

Foushee, W.L. (City of Richmond)

Garner, Henceford Noel (Alexandria)

Geddy, T.H. (City of Williamsburg and James City County)

Hanckel, Allan R. (City of Roanoke)

Hopwood, A.C. (City of Roanoke)

Kerse, T.L. (City of Richmond)

Masincup, W.H. (City of Roanoke)

McNeil, W.S. (City of Richmond)

Monserrat, Damian (Albemarle County)

Nelson, Berkeley (Roanoke County)

Parker, W.J.

Powell, Jr., J.L. (Spotsylvania County)

Purvis, Benjamin (Stafford County)

Selby, Innis C. (Middlesex County)

Walker, William R. (Albemarle County)

Washington, Richard B. (Alexandria)

White, William J. (City of Norfolk)

Williams, A. Roy (Portsmouth)

Williams, David T. (Pittsylvania County)

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Requests for certification to take the written bar exam, 1908

Arnold, John Murrelle (Rockbridge County)

Ball, Frank L. (Alexandria)

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Burnette, Gilbert (Albemarle County)

Cauthorn, Alexander J. (Bedford County)

Fife, William O. (Albemarle County)

Gore, B.S. (Bristol)

Harrison, James M. (City of Norfolk)

Hunter, Thomas Lomax (King George County)

Requests for certification to take the written bar exam, 1909

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