

## PREFACE

The *University of Richmond Law Review* is proud to present the thirty-second issue of the *Annual Survey of Virginia Law*. The *Law Review* published the first issue of the *Annual Survey* in 1985 to provide a resource detailing legislative, judicial, and administrative changes to practitioners and students in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Our mission remains the same today. Now, the *Annual Survey* is the most widely read publication of the *University of Richmond Law Review*, reaching lawyers, judges, and legislators in every corner of the Old Dominion. With this in mind, we selected articles and essays we think are invaluable for keeping our readership abreast of the most important updates to Virginia law.

This issue of the *Annual Survey of Virginia Law* contains five articles, providing summaries of changes in the last year to substantive areas of the law. The topics of these updates include Civil Practice and Procedure; Criminal Law and Procedure; Family Law; Taxation; and Wills, Trusts, and Estates. Additionally, this book contains three essays on narrower topics of law, including a primer on the *Achieving a Better Life Experience Act*—a landmark federal statute with its roots in Virginia—and analyses of improper delegation of judicial authority in child custody cases and e-commerce in real property transactions. The *Law Review* is proud to also include two comments written by University of Richmond Law School students, proposing criminal discovery reform and examining the recent Supreme Court of Virginia case, *Howell v. McAuliffe*.

The *Annual Survey of Virginia Law* would not be possible without the dedicated authors who wrote specifically for this issue. Many of these authors contribute to the *Annual Survey* each year, despite their numerous other professional and personal commitments. All of these authors are talented lawyers and experts in their respective fields. I extend my deepest gratitude for the countless hours of researching and drafting you spent crafting these pertinent articles. Each author was a pleasure to work with, and I hope our professional paths cross again in the future.

I would also like to extend thanks to the *Law Review* staff and executive board for their careful editing and shrewd advice. The leadership of Emily Blair, our Editor-in-Chief, and Shannon Noonan, our Executive Editor, has been invaluable throughout the publication process. Thank you for all the hard work you contributed to this publication. If not for your ingenious *Bluebook* tabbing, I would still be searching for the appropriate capitalization rules for the word “governor.” Thank you also to Glenice Coombs. Your keen commitment to the *Law Review* is venerable and vital to ensure our final product is always first-class.

Last, but certainly not least, thank you to my family, especially my parents Mike and Lynne Melnyk. I could not be where I am today without your steady love, guidance, and support. Erin Potter, thank you for your love and encouragement throughout my time in law school. You are my teammate in life, and I look forward to building our future together.

The entire *University of Richmond Law Review* staff is proud to showcase the work of these gifted authors. We hope you find the 2017 *Annual Survey of Virginia Law* timely, useful, and thought-provoking. Thank you for continued readership and patronage.

Brian M. Melnyk  
*Annual Survey Editor*