Conversation With Clerks

Description

Welcome to the first Conversation with Clerks. This conversation is with the Fairfax County Circuit Court, Christopher J. Falcon.

Christopher J. Falcon took office on January 3rd, 2024 as the Clerk of the Fairfax County Circuit Court. He previously served as Legal Counsel, Deputy Clerk and Civil Division Supervisor for the Arlington Circuit Court Clerkâ??s office. Before taking office, he was a practicing attorney and founder and owner of The Falcon Firm PLLC. Chris earned his undergraduate degree in Management from James Madison University and his JD from the Widener Commonwealth Law School. In 2016, Chris was the recipient of the Arlington County Managerâ??s Excellence Award for his contributions to the jury orientation video. He previously served as Vice Rector of the JMU Board of Visitors, member of the Fairfax County Human Services Council, the Arlington County ASAP Policy Board, the Board of Directors of Edu-Futuro, and served on the Virginia Latino Advisory Board under both Governors McAuliffe and Northam. Chris has also been a member of the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association, DC Hispanic Bar Association, Virginia Hispanic Bar Association, and the Virginia State Bar Immigrant Outreach Committee. Chris has also coached youth sports as an SYA and FPYC Boys basketball coach.

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VLTA: The VLTA President and the VLTA President-Elect have been meeting quarterly with the Virginia Court Clerkâ??s Association (VCCA) President and President-Elect to discuss issues affecting both associations. Do you have thoughts on how to build a stronger relationship between local Clerkâ??s Offices and members of the VLTA?

Falcon: Having open lines of communication like this is a great start. It would be nice to have a social gathering where we can get the Clerks and the VLTA members together. I know we tend to chat a lot when thereâ??s a filing being rejected but we should be dialoging all year.

VLTA: What is your position on out-of-state remote online notarizations for documents relating to Virginia properties?

Falcon: We accept documents that are remotely/electronically notarized if they are submitted to us electronically, pursuant to the Code. We do not accept them over the counter or through the mail, unless the e-filing system is down.

VLTA: How do you address the issue of past discriminatory covenants still in the land records?

Falcon: We are happy to accept and record Certificates of Release of racial covenants. The form is linked on our website. Recently, I took part in a community forum along with Senator Scott Surovell and Franconia District Supervisor Rodney Lusk to inform the community about this process to release these covenants. I shared that I found out both homes I grew up in located in Falls Church and Mantua in Fairfax County had racially restrictive covenants.

VLTA: Is there any movement towards Virignia Clerks having all jurisdictional land records accessible to the public at no cost, at a consolidated location, similar to Marylandâ??s MDLANDREC system?

Falcon: Not to my knowledge. The question came up recently when we were meeting with the FBI. Our Land Records team and I went to the FBI Northern Virginia field office to hold a training session for the fraud unit on using our land records program CPAN.

VLTA: Do you anticipate keeping the Reston remote Clerk open in 2025 and if so, will you add other locations in the County, and/or extend days/times at each location?

Falcon: I do intend to keep the Reston satellite office open. We are starting to get more customers, especially for marriage licenses. In February weâ??ll be sweetening the deal and I will be providing FREE civil marriage ceremonies during Valentineâ??s week. Normally couples have to pay at least $75 for a civil marriage ceremony and I know things are tight for many of our neighbors. My own parents got married at the court so this is personal to me. I hope to also be able to expand this service to the South County portion of Fairfax, but as with all things it will be dependent on staffing.

VLTA: Did Odell ever find his knife? A trio of title examiners â?? Jeff Ball, John Clancy and Mike Breen â?? started a band named Odellâ??s Knife and named themselves after a courthouse employee named Odell who had a pocketknife that he used at work. One day his knife went missing and it was quite the hubbub.

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Falcon: So Iâ??ve confirmed Odell worked for us but I do not know the story of the lost pocketknife.

VLTA: Tell us about Clem and where the marker is at the Courthouse.

Falcon: Ah, Clem the cat. I believe the story goes, Clem belonged to one of the original property owners for the land on which the Fairfax courthouse sits. Youâ??ll find his headstone near the flag court directly in front of the main entrance under a shade tree. I have not personally done the research, but Iâ??m told Clem needs to be left undisturbed or else.



Becky Taylor began her employment with Titleworks Inc. on May 29, 1995 as a settlement processor and post closer. She quickly moved to take on more administrative responsibilities to become Vice President as well as keep an active role in the settlement process. She assumed the role of owner, CEO and President of Titleworks Inc. in 2006. She is a graduate of Clemson University, mother of a Washington & Lee University graduate, Virginia Notary Public, and as of February 2024 is now a grandmother and currently serves as President on the Board of Directors for the Virginia Land Title Association. In January 2024, Ms. Taylor and Titleworks Inc. merged with Cobalt Settlements, LLC and Attorney Jeff Nowak. Ms. Taylor is a Virginia Certified Title Settlement Agent (VCTSA), a Virginia Certified Title Examiner (VCTE), and an ALTA National Title Professional (NTP). Ms. Taylor has been a licensed title agent since August 25, 1995 and has over thirty (30) years of experience in real estate settlements.

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