

NYCLA Annual Meeting
May 24, 2018
Annual Report
Michael J. McNamara, President

- The next item on our agenda is the President's Report.
- Copies of the Annual Report detailing all of our activities this year are available in the lobby and on the website.
- In my remarks I will focus on some of the highlights of the past year and talk a little about the future.
- This was an extremely busy and successful year for NYCLA and all of our members should be proud of what we were able to accomplish together.
- We continued to be an influential thought leader; we provided outstanding programs on matters of current interest; we helped New Yorkers in need; and we had fun, putting on some of the finest events in the Bar world.

Thought Leadership

- In our role as thought leader, NYCLA issued a groundbreaking report on the multi-billion dollar on-line legal forms industry.
 - A few minutes ago that Report was awarded the Eppler prize.
- With this terrific report and the forum that preceded it, NYCLA established itself as a leading voice on the

important issues involving these providers and their relationship to consumers and the legal profession.

- The Report won the endorsement of numerous bar associations around the State, and was overwhelmingly approved by the State Bar Association's House of Delegates.
- Because these issues affect consumers and lawyers nation-wide, NYCLA and NYSBA are jointly submitting the Report's recommendations to the ABA.
- In the meantime, NYCLA's Task Force on On-Line Legal Providers is on to its next project, planning a forum for later this year that will focus on some of the ethical and other issues involved with on-line legal referrals.
- My thanks to all of the members of the Task Force for their hard work and on-going efforts.

Education

- In addition to continuing to put on outstanding CLE programs under the leadership of our CLE Director, Bari Chase, we organized public forums and shed light this past year on 2 very timely subjects that were in the news: the pros and cons of a Constitutional Convention and the many issues surrounding Sanctuary Cities.
- My thanks to Peggy Finerty and Susan Lindenauer, who spearheaded the ConCon forum, and to Kevin McKay and Jim Kobak for organizing the Sanctuary Cities program, which received a prize earlier this evening.

- I would add that we are very excited about some of the initiatives the Justice Center is working on and I hope this is the first in a long line of awards for the Center.
- At the invitation of John Werner, Chief Clerk of the Supreme Court, Civil Branch, NYCLA created an exhibit that is currently on display in the rotunda of the Courthouse at 60 Centre Street entitled, "Why Bar Associations Matter in American Law."
- Our thanks to Membership & Marketing Director Toni Valenti for all of her efforts in assembling and installing the exhibit.
- Photos of the exhibit are included in the Annual Report and it will be on display at the Courthouse through the end of June so I encourage all of you to stop by and see it.

Pro Bono

- We continued our mission to serve those in need.
- This past year NYCLA's pro bono programs helped close the justice gap for hundreds of New Yorkers in critical matters involving their homes, families, jobs and government benefits.
- And our pro bono programs continued to earn accolades: A new initiative to help formerly incarcerated individuals obtain certificates of relief from civil disabilities that we collaborated on with the New York County Clerk, Milton Tingling, received the Bar Leaders Innovation Award from the State Bar

Association and a grant from the New York Bar Foundation.

- Many thanks to our General Counsel, Anthe Bova, who led this initiative for NYCLA.
- On a bittersweet note, at the end of this month we will be saying goodbye to our Director of Pro Bono, Lois Davis, who is retiring after 28 years at NYCLA.
- I will have much more to say about Lois and her contributions later in the program.
- Anthe Bova will be taking on added responsibilities as Director of Pro Bono upon Lois's retirement, and we are confident that under her leadership NYCLA will continue to build on the outstanding foundation Lois created.

Celebrations

- We also found time to have fun.
- Our Annual Dinner, where we celebrated Outstanding Women in the Law, was a huge success. 1000 guests were on hand as we presented our highest honor, the William Nelson Cromwell Award, to Chief Judge Janet DiFiore of the NY Court of Appeals and Chief Judge Colleen McMahon of the US District Court for the SDNY.
- The Law Day Lunch this past Friday, sponsored by the Supreme Court Committee, honoring Presiding Justice Rolando Acosta of the First Department was a memorable event, highlighted by the Judge's daughter, Zila Reyes Acosta-Grimes, an associate at

Debevoise, presenting her father with the Capozzoli Gavel.

- Last fall the Federal Courts Committee presented District Court Judge Kevin Castel of the SDNY with the Weinfeld award. The annual luncheon event was, as always, a great success with a large crowd of federal judges and practitioners on hand.
- My special thanks to Bob Haig, Craig Kesch, Tom Fini and Scott Klugman for their efforts in chairing these wonderful events.
- Our past Presidents have also given us cause to celebrate: In January we toasted Stewart Aaron on his appointment as a Magistrate Judge in the SDNY with a reception here at NYCLA.
- And, looking forward, on Monday, June 4th, we will be hosting the official swearing in of Michael Miller as President of the New York State Bar by Chief Judge DiFiore in what will certainly be a very special event at NYCLA.

Looking Ahead

- We have also been thinking about how best to serve our members today and tomorrow.
- Some of you will recall that Carol Sigmond's parting gifts to me at last year's annual meeting were a toy moving van and a hammer.
- We have been engaged during the past year in an extensive evaluation of our real estate options.

- This is obviously an extremely important matter for this Association and we have approached it thoughtfully.
- We have spent a great deal of time working with real estate consultants, architects and construction managers, considering various options regarding this building as well as visiting and assessing potential new homes for the Association.
- While we have made a good deal of progress in refining our options, there is more to be done.
- We plan to continue our work and hopefully next May I won't be re-gifting the moving van and hammer to Steve Lessard.
- We have also renewed our focus on membership.
- Our membership team, Toni Valenti, the Co-Chairs of the Membership Committee, Pam Gallagher and Jack Yoskowitz, and the rest of the Committee have been hard at work focusing on strategies aimed at attracting law students and young lawyers.
- In the upcoming year, we will expand that focus to include Senior Lawyers under the leadership of Mike Siris, our new chair of the Senior Lawyers Committee, and with the help of Board member David Cohn, we intend to pay attention to the interests of lawyers in the public sector.
- In doing this, we are emphasizing that true to our founding principle of inclusion we welcome all lawyers (and law students) at all stages of their careers and we want them to be active members of our community.

Conclusion

- Before concluding, a few additional thank yous, first I want to thank my wife, Maryellen, and my son, Chris, who are here tonight; my daughter, Megan, and son-in-law, Owen, who could not be here tonight, for their support and encouragement throughout the past year.
- And I want to thank my partners and colleagues at Seward & Kissel for their support of my activities and of this Association.
- I want to thank the officers--Steve Lessard, Vince Chang, Adrienne Koch and Asha Smith—for their support and dedication and the other EC members, Board members, Task Force leaders, Committee Chairs and volunteers who worked so hard this past year to make NYCLA a success.
- Finally, a special word of thanks to the incomparable NYCLA Staff: Sophia Gianacoplos, our Executive Director, Anthe Bova, Bari Chase, Lois Davis, Dan Jordan, Toni Valenti, and all of our support staff.
- None of this just happens: it takes hard work and dedication to do everything NYCLA does and it is simply remarkable what we accomplish during the course of a year.
- Please join me in thanking Sophia and the staff.