New York County Lawyers Association
2019-2020 Annual Report

The New York Lawyer's Source for Connecting, Learning and Collaborating
Letter from the President

May 28, 2020

Stephen C. Lessard
President
New York County Lawyers Association

Dear NYCLA Member,

As my first term as the 64th President of NYCLA comes to an end, I am honored to lead an organization that makes such meaningful contributions to the New York legal community, especially now. Together we are facing the extraordinary COVID-19 pandemic with challenges on every front – business, family, community. The good news is that it has illuminated our resiliency as a community. Under the direction of Sophia Gianacoplos, NYCLA’s Executive Director, and her staff, the Association responded to these sudden changes in our work landscape with an overnight transformation, becoming a virtual operation in order to continue to be the go-to resource for our 8,000+ Members. You can read the details on what we have accomplished on behalf of our Members in this report, and below are some highlights.

Our NYCLA COVID-19 Resource Center for Lawyers launched only days after the pandemic shutdown began through the efforts of Toni Valenti, NYCLA’s Director of Marketing and Membership Development. This information hub indexes daily updates from the courts, which are also sent to our Members in real time. It hosts up-to-the-minute information from the CDC and government agencies, and contains hundreds of relevant documents, links, on-demand webinars, and access to a weekly support group exclusively for lawyers.

NYCLA Sections and Committees continue to meet regularly using our virtual meeting room services. On March 23, NYCLA’s Appellate Courts Committee issued a statement on Electronic Filing and Service During the Current Pandemic. On May 4th, our Committee on Professional Ethics delivered Ethics Opinion 753 on Disbursement of IOLA Funds to a Third Party. Our Honorable Richard Lee Price Public High School Student Essay Contest is well underway, with a virtual awards ceremony planned for June 4th. And our Minority Judicial Internship Program, despite court closings, continues with dedicated Judges at the helm. These are but a few examples.

Last fall and winter, our CLE Institute, led by Bari Chase, NYCLA’s Director of CLE Institute & Programing, delivered cutting-edge live events, many in collaboration with our Sections, Committees, and Task Forces. The influential Jack Newton Lerner Landlord-Tenant Practice Institute, co-sponsored by our Real Estate Section and co-chaired by Hon. Jack Stoller, the Plea-Bargaining Task Force of the NYCLA Justice Center presented Solving the Problem of Innocent People Pleading Guilty, and an all-day program on Security in a Cyber World that featured experts from Homeland Security, US Attorney General’s Office, FBI, and US Attorney’s Office EDNY are just a of their noteworthy events.
Overnight, in response to the shutdown caused by the pandemic, we launched The New Virtual CLE Institute to deliver interactive online learning and certification. Fully accredited in New York and New Jersey, the New Virtual CLE Institute is fully in step with the current guidelines from the Office of Court Administration and offers over 130 On-Demand courses, as well as live webinars, and that portfolio is growing daily.

Our pro bono programs, supervised by Anthe Maria Bova, NYCLA’s General Counsel & Director of Pro Bono Programs, have not let the COVID-19 pandemic interfere with our mission. Project Restore, the State Central Registry Project, the Social Security SDNY Project, and Manhattan Claro Legal Counseling have continued to help New Yorkers during the shutdown because our incredible NYCLA Volunteers will not let a pandemic restrict access to justice to those who need it most. I would like to personally recognize the efforts of NYCLA Members Colin Bull, Andy Eibel, Julie Hong, Keith Walsh and Lijun Zhang for their tireless efforts. Details on their meaningful work can be found in this report.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown, the NYCLA Board of Directors has continued to meet regularly and do the vital work of the Association. An important decision that I want to inform you of is that the NYCLA Board of Directors has determined, after careful consideration, to terminate the agreement to sell our building that was approved last year, due to a default by the prospective purchaser.

While deeply disappointing, the Board still firmly believes that it is in the long-term interest of the Association to sell our building and relocate to a contemporary space that enables us to best serve our membership for generations to come. We are moving forward to accomplish this goal and are pleased to share that we are already in discussions with other parties who are interested in purchasing our building.

This development does not have any impact on our ability to continue to deliver the quality membership services that you have enjoyed in the past, whether they are provided virtually, as we are now providing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, or in person from our current headquarters at 14 Vesey Street. It will also not hinder us in carrying out our mission to promote the rule of law through our pro bono programs, public policy initiatives, and work with other bar associations, the courts, and educational institutions.

NYCLA remains focused on delivering the services 21st century lawyers need today and into the future. Our library, face-to-face continuing education programs and Member lounge will be available to our Members once COVID-19 restrictions allow businesses to reopen. Our current virtual organization is busy delivering critical information, on-demand and live CLE and our Committees and Sections continue to meet and collaborate virtually. We are looking at new services and innovations in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the way our Members work and live in our “new normal.”

I remain confident that, as one of the largest and most influential bar associations in the country, NYCLA will endure as an essential resource to the New York legal community and I thank each of you for your continued contributions and support. We are a community and we are all in this together, and we will emerge stronger for it.

Stay Safe and Be Well,

[Signature]
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MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS

The NYCLA Membership and Communications Department develops and manages programs and services for the NYCLA community, made up of more than 8,000 attorneys, judges, academics, and law school students. Through Member benefits, events, communications, publications, and more, NYCLA helps Members keep learning, stay competitive, expand their professional networks, and elevate their professional value and credibility.

Member Benefits
The legal profession evolves and as it does, so does NYCLA. There are many ways in which NYCLA Members can learn about the latest in the law while also connecting and collaborating with others in the legal community. NYCLA helped Members stay on top of emerging trends and legal news with our weekly e-News, which delivers relevant, timely information to our broad range of Members from newly admitted to senior partner. NYCLA also offers thought-leader opportunities to Members providing a blogging platform, #NYCLA Blog, where they can submit best-practice articles. An open Committee structure; discounted products and services; reduced cost high-quality CLE; and best-in-class librarians—all high-value benefits for the Member's career, business, and life.

Open Committee Structure
NYCLA’s open Committee structure allows Members to benefit from joining any Committee or Section to advance their understanding of their field of practice and meet other leaders in the profession. NYCLA Committees and Sections play a key role in the public policy arena through the issuance of reports and comments on critical issues affecting the bench, bar, and public, and are encouraged to analyze and report on pending legislation and proposed rulemaking by administrative agencies and the courts. NYCLA Committee and Section Reports and Amicus Briefs serve an important function in aiding legislators and judicial and government administrators during the decision-making process. The benefits of participation in Committee or Section work are available to all NYCLA Members—from law students to experienced attorneys. We thank the Committee-on-Committees Co-Chairs Dyan M. Finguerra-DuCharme and Adrienne B. Koch, for their invaluable support and dedication to expanding NYCLA’s committees and their activities.

Professional Development and CLE
NYCLA offers preferred pricing on CLE seminars and webinars; free professional and personal development opportunities; and access to an extensive collection of legal research materials in digital, print, and other formats with a helpful staff to assist Members as needed.

Library Services
New York County Lawyers Association Library maintains a collection geared specifically to meet the needs of the practicing bar. The Library’s New York practice collection is one of the finest on the East Coast and our staff is second to none. Our Members can enjoy access to Westlaw in our computer lab as part of their membership.

Member Benefits that Make Work and Life Easier
NYCLA recognizes that Members want to access benefits usually only available to employees of large corporations—like discounts on gym memberships, shopping, and car rentals, to name a few. We also know that many Members are business owners who need discounts on essential services such as shipping, web design, electronic discovery, malpractice insurance, and financial services. We offer a broad range of membership benefits and are committed to expanding our benefits program with additional products and services that enhance both the professional and personal lives of our Members. Our 2020 Member Benefits Line Up includes these fine companies:
Career Support for Members

NYCLA Members have access to the Association's complimentary and low-cost career-building programs and services. Whether Members are transitioning between fields, unemployed, or just starting out, NYCLA provides a variety of offerings to help Members accomplish their goals. NYCLA’s “How-To” programs and networking events such as the annual Fall Mentor Auction for law students help Members learn from industry leaders and network with others in the legal community.

Resume Review

The Peer-to-Peer Resume Review Service team assists Members—from recent law school graduates to seasoned attorneys to attorneys looking to change practice areas—by reviewing resumes in the following areas:

- Supervisory
- Lateral
- Transactional
- Litigation
- Big firm
- Public service/government
- Compliance

Communications and Publications

Members stay connected to NYCLA through the weekly e-newsletter #NYCLANEWS. Each issue contains links to articles of interest to the legal community, upcoming CLE programs and events, featured jobs, Committee/Section meetings, Member benefits, and more. The weekly e-newsletter aims to inform, engage, and support our Members with access to valuable curated information to assist in their professional pursuits and daily lives.

Member Resources

NYCLA is committed to continue to provide resources to support our Members to respond, recover, and thrive under the “New Normal”. The unprecedented pandemic created opportunities for NYCLA to implement the most expedient, efficient, and responsive resources to serve our Members in their continuing efforts to guide and serve the legal community at large. NYCLA’s Leadership and Committees have remained persistent, engaged, and focused while facing uncertainty in these extraordinary times.

NYCLA Virtual Meeting Rooms for Committees were established to ensure our Committees were able to conduct meetings remotely to continuing the essential work of the committees and supporting our actively engaged community committed to NYCLA’s Mission.

NYCLA COVID-19 Resource Center for Lawyers

In March 2020, NYCLA launched a robust resource center for Lawyers which contains up-to-the-minute information from the courts, from the government, links for professional resources and even personal resources to help our members navigate the unknowns impacting millions of lives throughout the world.
NYCLA Membership Webinar Series

NYCLA understands the significant impact of COVID-19 on our legal community, especially small firms and solo practitioners. We are dedicated to sharing the latest information on financial relief resources, business guidance, programs to assist our Members & their business. NYCLA presented a series of webinars in support of small firms and solo practitioners with the United States Small Business Administration, New York District.

NYCLA Continued Commitment to Health & Well Being within the Legal Community

NYCLA has invested in providing resources that provide helpful information and instructions on maintaining mental health and wellness in the legal community. The NYCLA COVID-19 Resources Center for Attorneys provides a detailed list of resources to provide valuable tools, easy to access educational resources, and coping techniques to assist our Members in their day-to-day lives.

Due to the intensified stressors caused by the pandemic, NYCLA is offering complimentary interactive 1-hour psychoeducational support group sessions for Members on Zoom led by NYCLA Member Sheldon Siporin, Esq. Adjunct Associate of Psychology, PACE University. The 6 session series commenced with the commencement of Lawyer Well Being Week - May 4 through May 8, 2020.

Social Media

NYCLA’s Members continue to access content utilizing social media. The speed of information sharing is facilitated by daily dissemination of legal news trends, court updates and best practices around the profession of law. Therefore the Association increasingly uses these channels to engage in discussion with the New York legal community and spread the word about programs and initiatives. NYCLA’s Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn channels help the Association keep in constant contact with the audiences we most need to reach, while each channel allows us to target our message to most effectively reach the audience on their terms. Within NYCLA’s LinkedIn group, its 3,321 Members engage in discussion about various topics related to the legal industry. Meanwhile, over 1,854 Members of the legal community are fans of NYCLA on Facebook (facebook.com/NYCL Assoc), where we aim to keep them informed about the happenings at NYCLA with informational, photo, and video postings. The NYCLA Twitter handle, @NYCLA, with 1,700 followers, keeps our community up-to-date on industry news and Association event and activities. NYCLA also established an Instagram account @NYCOUNTYLAWSYERS to highlight happenings at the Association.

NYCLA Publications

Attorneys’ Guide to Civil Practice in the New York Supreme Court

The Attorneys’ Guide to Civil Practice in New York County Supreme Court, will be available in late Spring 2020, serves as a valuable tool for all attorneys engaged in civil litigation in Manhattan. In its 25th edition, the 2020 edition of the Guide includes summaries of the many recent changes to the rules and is also a concise resource for details about judges, court personnel, and procedures in the Supreme Court. Special pricing is offered to NYCLA Members.
NYCLA Publications

Commercial Litigation in New York State Courts

The Fourth Edition of the treatise Commercial Litigation in New York State Courts, a highly successful joint venture between NYCLA and Thomson Reuters, continues to receive critical acclaim and generate substantial annual royalties for NYCLA. More than 35 legal newspapers, bar journals, and other publications throughout the State of New York have published favorable book reviews of the Fourth Edition since it was published during the fall of 2015. This eight-volume, 10,188 page treatise, written by 182 distinguished judges and well-known litigators, contains 127 chapters and covers all aspects of civil procedure in New York State courts. It has been estimated that the authors and their law firms have invested more than 40 million dollars of their own billable time in working on the four editions of this treatise and its annual Pocket Parts. In addition to the print edition, the entire treatise is available on Westlaw.

Justice Center Sponsored Programs
NYCLA’s Law Related Education Committee was chaired by the Hon. Richard Lee Price for over 26 years. Justice Price, New York State Supreme Court, 1981 to 2017 passed away in 2019. Justice Price was the inspiration and driver of the Justice Center’s youth law education programs and activities. The NYCLA Law Related Education Committee is now chaired by Mariam Burnbaum, Esq. In honor of Justice Price’s tireless commitment to educating the youth of New York on matters related to the law the New York High School Essay Contest has been renamed to the Hon. Richard L. Price Public High School Essay Contest.

Youth Law Education Program
Hon. Richard L. Price Public High School Essay Contest
NYCLA’s Law-Related Education Committee, chaired by Marian Burnbaum, continues to co-sponsor the Hon. Richard L. Price Public High School Essay Contest, which had over 200 entries this year from various high schools across the city. On June 4, 2020, the Committee will hold a virtual awards program presenting cash prizes and certificates to the New York City public high school students who wrote the winning essays. This year’s topic investigates the New York specialized high school admittance process and student selection methods. The more than 200 essays are evaluated by the Law Related Education Committee Members and the winning essayists receive prizes of $1,000 for first place, $750 for second place, $500 for third place, $300 for fourth place, and up to $50 each for fifth to tenth places.

Honorable Harold Baer Jr. and Dr. Suzanne Baer Minority Judicial Internship Program

The Honorable Harold Baer Jr. and Dr. Suzanne Baer Minority Judicial Internship Program has been an integral part of NYCLA’s mission to increase diversity in the legal profession. Established in 1989, the program provides a unique opportunity for law students of color to be introduced to the judicial system during a paid summer internship with local state and federal judges. The program is administered by NYCLA’s Minorities and the Law Committee and accepts first and second year law students from five law schools in New York County as well as Brooklyn Law School, St. John’s University School of Law and City University of New York School of Law at Queens College. To promote the program, a kick-off reception was held in October 2019. Eligible law students, law school administrators, sponsors of the program, members of the Minorities and the Law Committee and NYCLA Board members attended. In February of 2020, NYCLA awarded internships for the summer of 2020 to five students: Justin Julian Hernandez, St. John’s University School of Law; Vanessa Lee, New York Law School; Jennifer Lopez, The City University of New York – CUNY School of Law; Kira Lopez, New York Law School; Catherine Sims, St. John’s University School of Law.

Financial support for the program is provided through individual contributions and a generous contribution from Pfizer Inc.
2019-2020 EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

In 2019-2020 NYCLA hosted a wide range of events to meet the needs of its membership, from networking events to professional development events, public forums, work-life balance programs, and special events. In response to the PAUSE Order issued by the Governor of the State of New York on March 17, 2020, the New York County Lawyers Association pivoted to offering events in virtual format. NYCLA recognizes the importance of community and connection, in times of extraordinary change. NYCLA continues to ensure Members remain connected throughout the legal community by offering a wide range of events and programs to foster information sharing, networking, attorney well being.

105th Annual Dinner
At its 105th Annual Dinner held on Monday, December 9, 2019 in the Empire Ballroom of the Grand Hyatt Hotel in midtown Manhattan, NYCLA honored Corporate General Counsel. The event honored 34 distinguished General Counsel of major corporations who entered the Empire Ballroom accompanied by the theme music from the movie "Rocky." The recipient of the Boris Kostelanetz President's Medal was Richard P. Swanson, Chief Legal Officer at York Capital Management, and NYCLA Treasurer. Brad S. Karp, Chairman of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP received the William Nelson Cromwell Award. Remarks were provided by two of the Dinner Co-Chairs: Michael D. Fricklas, Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary of Advance, and Robert L. Haig, Partner, Kelley Drye & Warren LLP.

Lectures, Special Events, and Award Recognition

The following forums, lectures, special events, and award ceremonies were held in 2019-2020. We thank our Committees and Sections for organizing many of these valuable programs and events and appreciate the unwavering support by Vincent Chang and Brett Ward, Co-Chairs of the Committee-on-Committees, whose dedication to NYCLA's Committees and Sections has enabled the organization to maximize the membership experience.

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<td>Civil Court Practice Section Annual Dinner</td>
<td>June 10, 2019</td>
<td>This annual awards dinner hosted by the Civil Court Practice Section was held at Battery Park Gardens and celebrated the supervising and administrative judges of the Civil Court, past and present. Honorees included the Hon. Carol Sharpe, Supervising Judge of the Civil Court of the City of New York, Hon. Jack Stoller, Judge of the Housing Court of the City of New York, the Hon. Joan Lobis, Justice of the Supreme Court, First Judicial District (Retired), Chair of the Housing Court Advisory Council. The Melvin C. Levine Distinguished Service Award Recipients were: Alia Razzaz, Chief Clerk of the Civil Court of New York, and Sirajul Kahn, New York County Housing Senior Court Clerk and Fiscal Manager.</td>
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<td>Bench &amp; Bar Event Membership Event—Pouring for Pride</td>
<td>June 20, 2019</td>
<td>NYCLA’s Bench &amp; Bar Membership Event - Pouring for Pride celebrated diversity within the legal community. NYCLA has championed diversity and inclusion since 1908. Throughout its history, NYCLA’s bedrock principles have been the inclusion of all who wish to join and the active pursuit of legal system reform.</td>
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<td>Office for Civil Rights (OCR): A Primer for Education Discrimination Complaints</td>
<td>June 24, 2019</td>
<td>NYCLA’s Education Law Committee co-sponsored this webinar with Program Chair, Amy Leipziger, Queens Legal Services Inc. A esteemed panel of presenters discussed the complaint process before the Office for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education. Presenters also provided insights, strategies and reflections on filing discrimination complaints with OCR.</td>
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<td>Winning Cases in Federal Court</td>
<td>July 8, 2019; July 15, 2019</td>
<td>NYCLA Federal Courts Committee Program Chair Joel Silverstein and Judicial Chair Hon. Pamela K. Chen, EDNY. Day 2 Judicial Co-chair: Hon. Lois Bloom, Magistrate Judge, EDNY presented a 2 evening workshop on how to try a case in Federal Court, with commentary on a view from the bench.</td>
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<td>Special Stress Management Workshop for Lawyers</td>
<td>August 15, 2019</td>
<td>Special interactive workshop presented by NYCLA Membership Benefit Partner: Equinox. As a part of NYCLA’s continued commitment to investing in ensuring the wellbeing of our Members and the legal community at large, partnered with Equinox to present a stress management interactive seminar which focused on overcoming stress and incorporating simple relaxation techniques into our Members’ daily routines.</td>
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<td>The Network of Bar Leaders Induction &amp; Installation Event</td>
<td>August 20, 2019</td>
<td>NYCLA co-sponsored and hosted The Network of Bar Leaders Induction &amp; Installation by the Honorable Paul G. Feinman, Associate Judge of the New York Court of Appeals.</td>
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<td>2019 NYCLA Public Service Awards and Reception</td>
<td>September 17, 2019</td>
<td>This event honored attorneys who have distinguished themselves in the public sector. The event is chaired by Catherine A. Christian, Special Assistant District Attorney for External Affairs, Chief, Elder Abuse Unit New York County District Attorney’s Office. Remarks were given by Hon. Rosalyn H. Richter, New York Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department. During the event seven attorneys were given awards.</td>
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<td>Perspectives on Practicing Before the NY Court of Appeals</td>
<td>September 24, 2019</td>
<td>NYCLA’s Committee on Appellate Courts presents retired NY Court of Appeals judges Hon. Eugene Pigott, Hon. Albert Rosenblatt and Hon. Robert Smith as they give insights on practice before the NY Court of Appeals —past, present and future.</td>
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<td>Special CLE/Membership Event—CLE, Dinner, Mets vs Miami Marlins</td>
<td>September 25, 2019</td>
<td>NYCLA members gathered at CitiField for an evening of CLE, buffet dinner, Mets v Marlins Game, plus Pete Alonso hitting his 51st home run.</td>
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<td>2020 Hon. Harold Baer Jr. and Dr. Suzanne Baer Minority Judicial Internship Program Reception</td>
<td>October 3, 2019</td>
<td>NYCLA’s Minorities and the Law Committee held its Annual informational 2020 Hon. Harold Baer Jr. and Dr. Suzanne Baer Minority Judicial Internship Program Reception for New York area law students. The reception is the first opportunity new students have to meet and interact with NYCLA Members and discuss the Hon. Harold Baer Jr. and Dr. Suzanne Baer Minority Judicial Internship Program.</td>
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<td>Jack Newton Lerner Landlord Tenant Practice Institute</td>
<td>October 18, 2019</td>
<td>A sold out program co-sponsored by NYCLA’s Real Property Section discussing the most important events occurring during the year with a focus on the new Rent Laws of 2019. Co-chaired by Hon. Jack Stoller, Housing Court, Civil Court of the City of New York, New York County; and Jonathan Geballe, Esq.</td>
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<td>2019 NYCLA Committee Chair Breakfast</td>
<td>October 24, 2019</td>
<td>The 2019 NYCLA Committee Chair Breakfast was hosted by Stephen C. Lessard, NYCLA President, Committee-on-Committees Co-Chairs: Dyan M. Fingueua-DuCharme, NYCLA Board Member and Adrienne B. Koch, NYCLA Vice President. NYCLA Committee Chairs participated in this information packed session to find out how to be successful as a Committee Chair or Co-chair.</td>
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<td>11th Art Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice Institute*</td>
<td>October 25, 2019</td>
<td>Sponsored by NYCLA’s Art Law Committee and co-chaired by Amelia Brankov and Megan Noh, this program discussed the most important issues affecting the Art world today.</td>
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<td>Technology &amp; the Law—The Future is Now; Book Launch/Program</td>
<td>October 29, 2019</td>
<td>Book launch program and reception of <em>Law and Technology: The Future is Now</em>, by NYCLA’s Law and Technology Committee.</td>
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<td>Luncheon Honoring the Federal Courts in New York City</td>
<td>November 7, 2019</td>
<td>The NYCLA Federal Courts Committee Edward Weinfeld Award Luncheon took place at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Downtown New York City on November 7th. With the event sold out, the venue was filled with distinguished members of the Bar and Bench to celebrate Hon. Laura Taylor Swain, United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. Judge Swain was presented the Edward Weinfeld Award by Chief Judge Robert A. Katzmann, United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. The event was chaired by Scott B. Klugman, Partner, Levine Lee LLP.</td>
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<td>105th Annual Dinner Honoring Corporate General Counsel</td>
<td>December 9, 2019</td>
<td>During the 105th Annual Dinner NYCLA’s 2019 William Nelson Cromwell Award was presented to Brad S. Karp, Chairman of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton &amp; Garrison LLP. NYCLA’s 2019 Boris Kostelanetz President’s Medal was presented to Richard P. Swanson, Chief Legal Officer, York Capital Management and Treasurer, New York County Lawyers Association at The Grand Hyatt New York Hotel. The Black Tie event was chaired by Robert L. Haig, Partner, Kelley Drye &amp; Warren LLP.</td>
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<td>Solving the Problem of Innocent People Pleading Guilty</td>
<td>January 9, 2020</td>
<td>The Plea Bargaining Task Force of NYCLA’s Justice Center presented their findings and recommendations, along with a riveting keynote by Rodney Roberts of the Innocence Project about why he pleaded guilty to a crime he did not commit.</td>
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<td>FREE FORUM: 21st Annual FINRA Listens ... And Speaks</td>
<td>February 3, 2020</td>
<td>Katherine M. Bayer, Regional Director, Northeast Region, FINRA Dispute Resolution, Arthur Baumgartner, Senior Case Administrator, FINRA Dispute Resolution and Moderator Martin L. Feinberg exchanged views among arbitrators, counsel for claimants and counsel for respondents.</td>
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<td>Christian, Islamic and Jewish Dispute Resolution in the NY/Metropolitan Area— Program and Reception</td>
<td>February 4, 2020</td>
<td>NYCLA’s ADR Committee and AMAL sponsored a unique and fascinating discussion of faith based dispute resolution in the New York/Metropolitan area.</td>
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<td>18th Annual Ida B. Wells-Barnett Justice Award Ceremony</td>
<td>February 25, 2020</td>
<td>NYCLA and the Metropolitan Black Bar Association presented the Ida B. Wells-Barnett Justice Award in Honor of Black History Month to Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. The award is presented to a woman of color whose life reflects her spirit of couragousness by distinguishing herself in the fight for racial and gender equality. 18th Annual Ida B. Wells-Barnett Justice Award Ceremony was generously sponsored by Orrick and hosted by Stephen C. Lessard, NYCLA President. The awards event is chaired by Justice Pam Jackman Brown, Queens County Supreme Court.</td>
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<td>Reception for the Judiciary</td>
<td>March 5, 2020</td>
<td>NYCLA’s Reception Honoring the Judiciary took place at the Home of Law in Downtown Manhattan on March 5th. The event honored Newly Elected, Newly Appointed, Re-Elected and Re-Appointed Judges. Welcome Remarks were given by Hon. Rosalyn H. Richter, Associate Justice, Appellate Division, First Department. Additional remarks were provided by NYCLA President, Stephen C. Lessard, Esq. of Orrick, Herrington &amp; Sutcliffe; Russell David Morris, Esq., Supreme Court Committee Co-Chair; and Alyssa Carlin Goldrich, Esq., Supreme Court Committee Co-Chair. The event was chaired by Craig S. Kesch, Esq., Partner, Ganfer Shore Leeds &amp; Zauderer LLP.</td>
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<td>Animal Rescue Law 2020</td>
<td>March 12, 2012</td>
<td>NYCLA’s Animal Law Committee and Chair Kevan Cleary present the 7th annual program discussing legal issues relating to animals for attorneys and animal lovers alike.</td>
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<td>Virtual Civil Trial Practice Institute</td>
<td>March 24 and 25, 2020</td>
<td>Program Chair Robert Kelner and an esteemed panel of litigators and judges presented a virtual 2-day program on how to prepare for and try civil cases in NYS Supreme Court. The program also discussed how COVID-19 is affecting commercial and PI litigation, as well as the practice of law.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYCLA Presents: SBA Financial Resources for Solo Practitioners &amp; Small Firms: The CARES Act and More - Part 1</td>
<td>April 22, 2020</td>
<td>NYCLA Webinar Series dedicated to sharing the latest information on financial relief resources, business guidance, programs to assist Small Firms and Solo Practitioners significantly impacted by the financial strains of COVID-19. Presenters: Beth L. Goldberg, New York District Director, U.S. Small Business Administration; and John Mallano, New York District Deputy Director, U.S. Small Business Administration.</td>
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<td>Psycho-educational &amp; Support Group for Attorneys</td>
<td>May 8, 2020—June 12, 2020</td>
<td>Due to the intensified stressors caused by the pandemic, NYCLA is offered-interactive 1-hour psycho-educational support sessions on Zoom to NYCLA Members. These complimentary sessions were facilitated by Sheldon Siporin, Esq., Adjunct Associate Professor Psychology, PACE University NYC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYCLA Presents: SBA Financial Resources for Solo Practitioners &amp; Small Firms: The CARES Act and More - Part 2</td>
<td>May 12, 2020</td>
<td>NYCLA Webinar Series dedicated to sharing the latest information on financial relief resources, business guidance, programs to assist Small Firms and Solo Practitioners significantly impacted by the financial strains of COVID-19. Presenters: Beth L. Goldberg, New York District Director, U.S. Small Business Administration; and John Mallano, New York District Deputy Director, U.S. Small Business Administration.</td>
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CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Educating and Training Attorneys

The CLE Institute continued to educate and train attorneys in ethics and professionalism, law practice management, professional practice, skills and diversity, inclusion and the elimination of bias. Many new programs were developed in 2019-2020 to keep pace with the ever-changing needs of the legal profession, especially in light of the changing way attorneys learn, the increasing dependence on technology, and the ever-present need to sharpen skills. An unparalleled roster of experts from the bench, bar, government, academia and related disciplines taught the programs, offering their insights, knowledge, strategies and tactics and guidance to attendees.

Extensive Selection of Live Programs and Live Stream Webinars

NYCLA offered programs in both substantive law and skill building. While some programs focused on new developments in specific practice areas, such as Litigating Discrimination Cases, other programs were focused on important developments in and around New York City, such as the numerous programs conducted about The New Rent Laws of 2019 and the seminal Jack Newton Lerner Landlord-Tenant Practice Institute, co-sponsored by NYCLA’s Real Estate Section and co-chaired by Hon. Jack Stoller. The CLE Institute continued to partner with other organizations to create specialty programs, such as the partnership with the New York Women’s Bar Association Litigation and Civil Courts Committees to present New York Practice: Are You Up to Date, featuring Hon. Salianni Scarpulla. NYCLA also developed programs to assist lawyers in honing their legal and business skills, such as Ethically Improving Your Networking Skills and Optimizing Your Law Firm’s Business Practices for Greater Profitability.

The CLE Institute also conducted programs to teach basic skills such as How to Conduct a Deposition, How to Handle a No Fault Insurance Case and The Business Side of Law.

The CLE Institute continued to present important programs in key areas of the law. In October we conducted an all-day program on Security in a Cyber World: Whistle Blowers, Cyber Threats, Domestic Terrorism, Financial Fraud, Policy by Twitter .. and the Evolving Role of the Lawyer and Firm, featuring experts from law firms, Homeland Security, US Attorney General’s Office, FBI, US Attorney’s Office EDNY and academia. In January, The Plea Bargaining Task Force of the NYCLA Justice Center presented Solving the Problem of Innocent People Pleading Guilty, where Task Force members discussed the proposals adopted by the Task Force, and the Keynote Speaker, Rodney Roberts of the Innocence Project, gave a riveting discussion of why he pleaded guilty to a crime he did not commit. NYCLA’s Appellate Court Practice Committee sponsored an illuminating program on Perspectives on Practicing Before the NY Court of Appeals, featuring retired Court of Appeals judges Eugene Pigott, Albert Rosenblatt and Robert S. Smith. We also conducted our 11th Art Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice Institute highlighting important issues in the field, including the HEAR Act, Museum Ethics and the Art of Divorce.

The CLE Institute continued streaming many of our important programs via interactive webinars, including a fascinating and unique discussion sponsored by NYCLA’s ADR Committee on Christian, Islamic and Jewish Dispute Resolution in the NY/Metropolitan Area and What Could Possibly Go Wrong? Key Issues to Resolve BEFORE an Office Lease is Signed.

We also continued our Lunch and Learn webinar series where attorneys can multi-task during their lunch hour by attending one of our interactive webinars from the comfort of their home or office, such as Representing the Foreign Company Doing Business in New York.
Special Events

In October, the CLE Institute and NYCLA’s Membership Department co-sponsored a special event at CitiField featuring a pre-game CLE program in a private suite, buffet dinner in the Delta Lounge and baseball game featuring the NY Mets vs the Miami Marlins where rookie Pete Alonso hit his 51st home run of the year.


Training Programs, Roundtable Discussions and Pro Bono Training Programs

Along with traditional programs, we conducted small group training programs this year. During the Summer we re-visited our ever popular 4 Part Practice of Law Workshop Series focusing on developing the skills of solo and small firm practitioners, and in September we conducted a sold-out workshop on How to Create Satisfaction in Your Career from Within. We continued to sponsor Pro Bono training programs in Landlord-Tenant Law, Employment Law and Matrimonial Law for NYCLA’s Legal Counseling Program and we co-sponsored a training on Legal Protections for Military Members and Veterans in Housing and Employment with co-sponsors NYC Commission on Human Rights and the Fordham Law School’s Feerick Center for Social Justice.

NYCLA’s Ethics Institute

NYCLA’s Ethics Institute continued to offer CLE programs discussing ethical issues facing attorneys. Due to the rapidly changing technological landscape, we continued our series of programs focusing on Ethics and Technology, in conjunction with NYCLA’s Law and Technology Committee. We also held a sessions on Ethics and Aggressive Lawyering, Be Prepared: Planning Ahead for Retirement and Disasters While protecting Your Clients’ Interests, and conducted an interactive program dealing with What You Need to Know About dealing with Clients and Their Issues.

Law and Technology

The CLE Institute edited and published the first edition of Law and Technology: The Future is Now, developed by, and written by, members of NYCLA’s Law and Technology Committee under the direction of Joseph Bambara, Won Kyung Chang and Robert Rosenthal. The publication was introduced at a Book Lunch program and reception in October.

CLE On Demand

NYCLA’s CLE Institute offers a wide-range of our most popular programs On-line/On Demand. Attorneys are able to access programs and watch them from their computers, tablets or even their phones. Course materials and power point slides, if any, are also provided in electronic form. The affirmations and issuance of CLE certificates are both handled on-line and via email, eliminating the previous cumbersome submission and certificate issuance process. We also offer numerous multi-credit packages of programs, including the new 30-credit custom bundle, as well as specialized CLE packages in certain practice areas and a compliance package for newly admitted attorneys.

In addition, selected programs are also available in CD and DVD format.

The New Virtual CLE Institute

NYCLA’s CLE Institute is an accredited provider in New York and New Jersey of interactive webinars. When the spread of COVID-19 became a pandemic, and shelter in place orders were handed down for the region, the CLE Institute instantaneously became a virtual provider of CLE programs. Since the middle of March we have been providing interactive webinars on a myriad of topics, including programs on dealing with the overwhelming issues being faced as a result of the current crisis, such as: Domestic Violence, Children and Custody, Surviving Divorce vs COVID-19; Using Mindfulness Techniques for Attorney Well-Being in a Time of Crisis; Pandemics and Planning: Estate Planning Essentials in a COVID-19 World; Protecting Yourself Against Scams and Data Breaches; How COVID-19 Has Affected Commercial and PI Litigation and the Practice of Law; Ethical Business Development Techniques During a Crisis; Cybersecurity During COVID-19 and Working From Home: If You Think It Isn’t Your Problem ... You’re Wrong!

NYCLA thanks the CLE Committee and its co-chairs Dyan Figuerra-DuCharme and Hon. Stephen G. Crane for their invaluable support and guidance during the year.
OVERVIEW OF PRO BONO ACHIEVEMENTS

An important aspect of NYCLA’s mission is our commitment to assuring that no New Yorker be denied access to justice because they cannot afford an attorney to help them navigate the legal system. NYCLA’s programs are all the more valuable in light of recent public health events involving COVID-19. With rising unemployment, increased costs of living, housing issues, domestic disputes, our volunteers rise to meet the legal needs of our community. To bridge the gap between the growing number of persons who need assistance and the limited resources available in the legal services community, NYCLA’s pro bono projects improve the lives of, and empower low-income New Yorkers by providing high-quality, free legal assistance. Our projects span from full representation, limited scope representation, brief legal counseling and referrals.

Pro Bono Reception and Honorees—October 2019

In celebration of National Pro Bono Week, the New York County Lawyers Association, the New York State Bar Association, and the New York State Courts Access to Justice Program held a reception to honor dedicated volunteers for their pro bono service. NYCLA’s honorees are highlighted in connection with our various programs described below.

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NYCLA is deeply proud of its tradition of public service and looks forward to building on it in the future. With the support of volunteers, NYCLA’s Pro Bono projects provided assistance to hundreds of individuals this past year. As the communities we serve and the legal needs of those living in them change, we will continue to redefine and revise our programs to meet those needs. This cannot be done without the support of the extraordinary committed group of Members of the Pro Bono Committee. NYCLA acknowledges their tireless work and especially thanks its Chair, Lisa E. Cleary. NYCLA’s pro bono efforts were made possible by the generous support of NYCLA Members, the IOLA Fund, the Office of Court Administration and the New York Bar Foundation.

When people cannot afford legal counsel or are uncertain about how to obtain legal assistance, they can become discouraged by the legal system. Individuals can endure needlessly and unjust hardship or give up on problems that might otherwise be easily solved. Our Legal Counseling Project, NYCLA’s longest-running and most popular volunteer opportunity, provides free weekly in-person counseling in the areas of Housing, Family and Employment Law. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this program shifted to phone consultations to continue to meet the needs of our community.

With the growing number of New Yorkers using credit cards to make ends meet, the Civil Courts are being inundated with consumer debt cases. The Manhattan CLARO Project responded by providing limited legal advice to the unrepresented debtor being sued by creditors in New York County Civil Court. Rather than representing these individuals in court, volunteer attorneys provided advice on self-representation strategies at free weekly walk-in clinics. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been working with our community partners to address the compounded consumer debt needs of individuals in collaboration with the courts.

Most taxpayers who appear in front of the Tax Court are unrepresented and cannot afford to pay an attorney to represent them. While some calendar call locations have Low Income Taxpayer Clinics, such clinics in New York only provide representation to taxpayers who are already clients. This leaves many pro se taxpayers without access to legal advice. NYCLA’s Tax Court Project provides legal assistance to those unrepresented pro se petitioners at calendar call. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our program’s volunteer coordinator—Frank Agostino—has led a team of volunteers to interpret and translate information on the IRS Economic Impact Payments. The IRS Commissioner acknowledged and commended their efforts during this crisis.
When the New York State Office of Children and Family Services receives a call regarding suspected abuse or neglect, a report is entered into the New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment. Every day, the names of individuals are wrongfully or unfairly placed on this registry. As a result, they may be denied employment, prevented from becoming a foster or adoptive parent, or the information on the registry may be used against them in a child custody proceeding. Similar to mass incarceration, this system disproportionately affects the poor and persons of color. Our volunteers advocated for individuals who sought to clear their names. This project has continued with limited interruption during the COVID-19 pandemic, with only increased need from individuals targeted by the registry.

Through our Social Security Disability SDNY Project, pro bono attorneys represented plaintiffs whose applications for Social Security disability benefits were denied by the Social Security Administration. They prepare opposition briefs in response to motions for judgment on the pleadings filed by the U.S. Attorney’s Office. They argued the motion in front of the district or magistrate judge if the judge chose to hold argument. If the case was remanded to the Social Security Administration, the pro bono attorneys continued representing their client in front of the Social Security Administration.

NYCLA currently runs two reentry programs, assisting individuals with criminal convictions break down barriers to employment, housing and voting. NYCLA’s Project Restore provides representation to individuals who seek to appeal the New York Department of State’s denial of a vocational license solely on the basis of having a criminal record. This project has continued with limited interruption during the COVID-19 pandemic—the needs of individuals with criminal records will compound in light of this crisis and we plan to meet this need head-on.

NYCLA’s Veterans’ Discharge Upgrade Project provided assistance to veterans seeking to upgrade the characterization of their military discharge. Military discharges that are not characterized as “Honorable” can disqualify veterans from many benefits and carry a stigma that can make it difficult to find employment. A service Member generally receives a discharge characterization that is less than Honorable due to inferior performance or misconduct. However, a number of military service Members have received less than Honorable discharges due to misconduct arising from post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury that was misdiagnosed or undiagnosed at the time. We honored Lew Popovski and Jackie Bonneau at our 2019 Pro Bono Awards for their efforts in this program.

NYCLA’s Clemency Project provides representation to non-violent offenders incarcerated by the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision to prepare petitions for executive clemency. Clemency is the power of the Governor to pardon a person convicted of a crime or to commute a prison sentence to a lesser term than was initially imposed.
NYCLA continued to administer the Part 137 Attorney-Client Fee Dispute Resolution Program, a public service that provides for the informal and expeditious resolution of fee disputes between attorneys and clients through arbitration or mediation. We are very pleased with the work of the volunteer arbitrators and mediators; without them the program would not be a success. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been working remotely to answer questions regarding the program and the status of open matters. NYCLA owes a special debt of thanks to Lew Tesser, Chair of the Joint Committee on Fee Disputes and Conciliation, for his invaluable support and guidance, Fee Dispute Program Supervisor Anthe Maria Bova and our Fee Dispute Program Administrator, Faviola Herrera.

JUSTICE CENTER

Justice Center Task Force on the Problem of Innocent People Pleading Guilty

In an effort to explore the issue of plea bargaining, the Justice Center created a special Steering Committee led by Past President Lew Tesser and Chet Kerr, which developed into a Task Force of 70 individuals across various interest groups. To develop a report on the issue of innocent people pleading guilty, the Task Force held a forum with Judge Rakoff as lead speaker, which resulted in approximately 100 recommendations for solutions on how to specifically address the issue. The final report addressed 6 specific solutions, and was approved by NYCLA’s Board of Directors on October 15, 2019. This was followed by a public forum on January 9, 2020 to publicize the report, with keynote speaker Rodney Roberts. Judge Rakoff and Lew Tesser presented the report before the New York State Bar Association House of Delegates at its January 31, 2020, which was formally adopted by the House of Delegates at that meeting. Special thanks go to the Co-Chairs of the Justice Center—Past President Jim Kobak and Judge Joseph Keven McKay.

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

The NYCLA Library, continues to offer NYCLA members the legal reference materials needed to meet their obligations to their clients. The Association’s Reference staff who have decades of skills in using the databases available, both legal and non-legal stand ready to assist patrons in meeting those obligations.

The NYCLA Library supports 22 patron personal computers, 20 of which have access to Westlaw. The Westlaw subscription is rich in secondary source content (treatises, law reviews, ALRs, form sets and more). Primary source materials, cases, statutes, and some administrative materials, are available for all the states and the Federal system in the NYCLA Westlaw subscription. When available, the NYCLA Library has selected treatises in the area of Immigration Law, Landlord and Tenant Law, and New York Family Law and Litigation on Westlaw, while also keeping these materials up to date in print. Other digital and print resources give our NYCLA members access to the McKinney’s Consolidated Laws, the New York City Charter and Administrative Code, The Rules of the City of New York and Administrative Decisions from a broad range of City Agencies.
Library Services and Special Resources for NYCLA Members

- The NYCLA Library has a special New York Code, Rules, and Regulations Collection which allows staff to reconstitute historic administrative rules from the NYCRR. If you are trying to track down an old New York regulation, contact us at Reference@NYCLA.org We are one of the few Law Libraries in New York State that can provide this service.

- The NYCLA Library has a strong collection of superseded treatises. If you find a reference to an old volume in a case, the NYCLA Library is likely to have it.

- The NYCLA Library can assist members with the legislative history and legislative intent of current and out-of-date New York statutes, New York City Charter and Administrative Code, and provisions and changes in the Rules of the City of New York. The Library also has capability and skill in doing this for other state’s statutes and the United States Code.

- The NYCLA Library has the best collection of Records and Briefs available to lawyers for the New York Court of Appeals and the four New York Appellate Divisions. These materials are in print and in microform. In addition, selected New York Records & Briefs are available through the NYCLA Westlaw subscription.

- The New York Law Journal arrives in the Library every day that it is published. The NYCLA Library has the complete back file of this publication in microform. The holdings of the NYCLA Library have been selected and preserved to best meet the needs of NYCLA members, onsite and off-site.

- Free access to Westlaw. Printing and emailing materials is available.

- Through the NYCLA Library’s fee based services you can leverage the NYCLA library collection to assist your practice. Email Reference@NYCLA.org for assistance.

In addition to using our services, we encourage NYCLA Members to apply for a New York State Library -Attorney Borrower’s Card, which provides access to several legal research databases and a broad range of other databases. NYCLA Members holding a NYSL-ABC may use the NYCLA Library patron PCs to access Lexis - State Capital Universe, FastCase, Legaltrac, and more. The databases provide access to state and federal primary source materials, annotated State Statutes and related materials through Lexis-Matthew Bender, and hundreds of Law Reviews. These materials are available to all New York residents who are licensed to practice law in New York.

All members are encouraged and welcome to visit the NYCLA Library to see how it can aid you in your practice.

Call the Library at 212-267-6646, ext. 204.
Email the Library at Reference@nycla.org
Fax the Library at 212-791-6437
TASK FORCES, WORKING GROUPS AND CENTERS

Task Force on Online Legal Matching Services
On the heels of the New York County Lawyers Association successful work on Online Legal Providers of Legal Forms, NYCLA convened a Task Force on Online Legal Matching Services. In a similar format to its predecessor Task Force, the group held a public form followed by collective research and writing to produce a report to address what is called the “access gap” between low- and middle-income consumers and available lawyers. The report addresses the current nonprofit legal referral schemes in New York, different regulatory structures and ethics issues such as “pay for play” and bona fide ratings systems. The report was approved by the NYCLA Board of Directors at its February 10, 2020 meeting.

PUBLIC POLICY & LEGAL INITIATIVES

June 28, 2019
The New York County Lawyers Association Issues Statement on the Detention of Immigrant Children

March 23, 2020
NYCLA Appellate Courts Committee Issues Statement on Electronic Filing and Service During the Current Pandemic

March 25, 2020
The New York County Lawyers Association Issues Statement on Electronic Filing and Service During the Current Pandemic

April 30, 2020
The New York County Lawyers Association Issues Letter Regarding a “Humanitarian Exception” to the Courts

ETHICS OPINIONS

May 4, 2020
NYCLA Issues Ethics Opinion 753 on Disbursement of IOLA Funds to a Third Party

OTHER STATEMENTS

July 23, 2019
The New York County Lawyers Association Issues Statement on the Passing of Robert Mongenthau

August 27, 2019
The New York County Lawyers Association Issues Statement on the Passing of Kenneth J. Bialkin

December 2, 2019
The New York County Lawyers Association Issues Statement on the Passing of Justice Richard Lee Price

February 4, 2020
New York County Lawyers Association Issues Statement on the Passing of Judge Deborah A. Batts

May 1, 2020
New York County Lawyers Association Statement on the Importance of Participating in this Year’s Virtual Law Day

NGO STATUS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Since 2003, NYCLA has held special consultative non-governmental organization status at the United Nations, which permits us to send a delegation to participate and/or observe various events at the UN that are pertinent to NYCLA’s mission. In early 2020, NYCLA selected its delegation for the coming year: Clara Flebus, Oleksander Kryvenko, Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, Maria Vanikiotis, and Hon. Joseph Kevin McKay (along with NYCLA President Stephen C. Lessard and NYCLA General Counsel Anthe Maria Bova). The delegation represents members from NYCLA’s Foreign & International Law Committee and Justice Center.
NYCLA FOUNDATION DONORS

Under the leadership of Board Chair Martha Cohen Stine and Foundation President Vincent T. Chang, the members of the board of the New York County Lawyers Association Foundation gave generously of their time to both governance and fundraising. The Foundation’s Second Century Campaign helps support NYCLA projects, including the Justice Center, Hon. Richard Lee Price NYC High School Essay Contest, pro bono programs, Edith I. Spivack Fund for Women in Law and Society, and Hon. Harold Baer, Jr. and Dr. Suzanne Baer Minority Judicial Internship Program as well as various operations and capital initiatives.

NYCLA and the NYCLA Foundation would like to extend a sincere thanks to all of those donors who make our programs possible.

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