

New York County Lawyers Association

CONSPICUOUS SERVICE AWARD TO THE

NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM

April 6, 2022

Good evening. Allow me to start by expressing my sincere thanks to President Vincent Chang, the indomitable Bob Haig and the members of this Association for organizing this evening's event. My congratulations to Chief Judges Margo Brodie, Debra Ann Livingston and Laura Swain. I'm truly honored to be in the company of such a distinguished group of women.

I am so very proud to accept this Award this evening. And I accept the "Conspicuous Service Award" on behalf of, and in honor of, the

Judges and court professionals who make up the New York State Unified Court System. Over the past two years, our judges and nonjudicial staff have demonstrated enormous courage and dedication in meeting each and every challenge that has been presented during this historic public health crisis, and they have worked effectively to keep our courts up and running to provide access to justice to the people we serve.

Since March of 2020, our court family has traveled a long, remarkable journey together. And while we remember and mourn the losses suffered and the stresses endured over the last 25 months, we can, and we should, recognize the extraordinary feats performed:

- Transforming and reinventing ourselves as a virtual court system in a matter of weeks, and then reinventing ourselves as a new hybrid operating model while working continuously to modernize and improve our services.

- Our courthouses are open and functioning, and we are almost back to our pre-pandemic level of operations, albeit with important safety protocols remaining in place, including our mandatory vaccination policy for all judges and staff, the continuation of our mask mandate in all public parts of our buildings and our screening protocols for all court users.

And while it hasn't always been perfect or without controversy -- few things are these days -- I am immensely proud of the way in which our judges and professional staff have answered the call, performing and honoring their responsibilities to keep the courts open to deliver justice and uphold the rule at a crucial and difficult time in our history.

So, on behalf of the entire New York State Unified Court System, thank you again for this wonderful honor, and this well-deserved recognition of our dedicated judges and professional staff in the New York State Courts.