Greetings and welcome to the New York County Lawyers’ Association’s Judicial Reception honoring newly elected, appointed, re-elected and re-appointed judges, hosted by our Committee on the Supreme Court. I would like to thank our Reception Co-Chairs, Josh Burns and Hal Kennedy, and the rest of NYCLA’s Supreme Court Committee for organizing tonight’s special event.

We are very pleased to recognize the judges who are being honored here this evening. You are all the backbone of our justice system, and as members of the bar, we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to all of you.

NYCLA has an enduring commitment to support the judiciary. We established a Rapid Response Task Force, which defends judges when they are unfairly attacked in the media. NYCLA has submitted letters to the editor and otherwise issued statements in defense of the judiciary.

Last year, we were part of the efforts of the organized bar to address the critical issue of judicial compensation. I was privileged to testify over the summer before the 2011 Commission on Judicial Compensation calling for a raise in judicial compensation together with cost-of-living increases for New York Supreme Court judges. During my testimony, I expressed NYCLA’s full endorsement of the Office of Court Administration’s submission supporting a salary increase for the judges. As you know, the Commission voted in favor of boosting the pay of state trial judges, which we are hopeful will begin to take effect this year.

Also last year, NYCLA’s Task Force on Judicial Independence, which is co-chaired by Justice Betty Ellerin and NYCLA past President Norman Reimer, issued a
report, which was subsequently adopted by the New York State Bar Association, regarding the Commission on Judicial Conduct. The Task Force made several recommendations regarding operation of the Commission, many of which already have been adopted.

Most recently, our Task Force on Judicial Budget Cuts, which is co-chaired by Justice Stephen Crane and past NYCLA President Michael Miller, released a Public Hearing Report on the Effects of Judicial Budget Cuts on the New York State and Federal Courts. The report, which was the result of an all day public hearing that brought together leaders from the New York legal community to testify on the impact of state and federal budget cuts, provided revealing data and first-hand observations into the impact of budget cuts.

As a result of the budget cuts, many of the court personnel have been going above and beyond to ensure justice for all so we’re celebrating these unsung heroes of the court system at our upcoming Annual Meeting in May. If you know distinguished non-judicial personnel from the New York State Courts in Manhattan or distinguished non-judicial personnel from the Federal District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York, who personify a commitment of service to the courts and the justice system, please submit a nomination by April 13. A nomination form can be found on our website, nycla.org

NYCLA is very blessed to have a Judicial Section that is co-chaired by Justice Helen Freedman and Justice Joan Madden. NYCLA of course welcomes all of the judges present tonight to join NYCLA (if you are not members already) and to participate in the Judicial Section’s meetings and activities. And for those of you who are practicing lawyers (if you are not already members), we welcome you to join NYCLA and work with us on our important projects and initiative. For those of you who are on Twitter, you can follow me at my moniker, NYCLAPres.

Now I would like to introduce the Honorable Carmen Beauchamp Ciparick, Senior Associate Judge of the New York Court of Appeals. Judge Ciparick graduated from Hunter College in 1963 and received her J.D. from St. John’s University School of
Law in 1967. She served as a staff attorney with the Legal Aid Society in New York City from 1967 to 1969 when she became an Assistant Counsel for the Judicial Conference of the State of New York; in 1972, Chief Law Assistant of the Criminal Court of the City of New York; and in 1974, Counsel in the Office of the New York City Administrative Judge. In 1978, she was appointed Judge of the Criminal Court of the City of New York, and in 1982 was elected to the New York State Supreme Court. She was appointed to the Court of Appeals on December 1, 1993 by Governor Mario M. Cuomo. She was re-appointed by Governor Eliot Spitzer in November 2007 to serve until December 2012. It is my honor to call up to the podium Judge Ciparick.