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THE NEW YORK WOMEN'S BAR  
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NETWORKING RECEPTION

**Honoring  
Justice PHYLLIS GANGEL-JACOB**

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Please put "Commerce  
Reception" in subject line

**Space is limited**

Sylvia E. Di Pietro  
Co-Chair

Kelly O'Neill Levy  
Co-Chair

Tuesday, February 27, 2007  
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

*The NYWBA warmly thanks Commerce Bank  
for its generosity in sponsoring this event.*

***Save the Date***

**WBASNY Convention 2007**

May 31 - June 4, 2007

*Westin Rio Mar Beach Golf Resort & Spa  
Rio Grande, Puerto Rico*

**For the latest news and information on programs and  
events, check NYWBA online at [www.nywba.org](http://www.nywba.org).**

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

FEBRUARY 2007

***Lessons in Humility***



Teresa Schiller

An employee, Nicom Buakhao, was recently honored for thirty years of service at my firm. He took the opportunity to describe his efforts over the years: "It is not an easy job like most people think because I have to be in the front line taking care of partners and associates who come from different backgrounds. Some attorneys are kind persons while others are unfriendly. I have to be flexible with regard to whatever task they request of me such as making copies, sending out faxes, sending out PDFs, performing messenger duties, or moving cartons and furniture. I have to make sure that every document I handle doesn't get lost. Attorneys frequently ask me to do rush jobs as well as last minute jobs making copies for them. Under these circumstances, I have to honor their requests and would often go home late after staying late to finish their jobs. During my last thirty years with the firm, I have served partners and associates alike and have seen more than one thousand of them come and go. . . . I look back to when I started working for the Firm in 1975. I have made friends with partners and associates of the Firm. I made copies for them - some hard jobs, some easy jobs -- and delivered telephone messages to them from the receptionists without any complaints. I did so even during my personal lunch time without putting in for overtime. They saw that I was loyal to them and the Firm. Friendships developed between them and staff persons like myself. Whenever they saw me in or out of the office, they were glad to see me and I have always respected them. . . . I would like to continue working for the Firm in my same position. I never ask for more money or overtime pay. However, every year when I get my raise, whether big or small, I am very grateful to receive it. I never call in sick or absent and I never come to work late." Nicom concluded, "I am a Buddhist living a simple life." His honest and unforgettable message was distributed to approximately thirty partners and administrators at the Firm.

Mindful of our mission to advance the status of women in the legal profession, I take away two lessons relating to humility from Nicom's message: (1) we should not avoid opportunities to step forward and describe our accomplishments; and (2) we should practice respect for those with whom we work.

Regarding the first lesson, it seems clear that we as women lawyers should take opportunities to tout our accomplishments, both in day-to-day conversations with our supervisors and during

*Continued on page 2*



## REPORT OF THE NYWBA COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

The Committee on Nominations met in January 2007 and has nominated the following candidates to serve during 2007-08 and for other terms as stated. The elections will be held at the Association's Annual Membership Meeting on **April 23, 2007**.

### OFFICERS (2007-2008)

President:	Lisa A. Sokoloff
Vice Presidents:	Jo Ann Douglas
	Lisa A. Bauer
	Sylvia E. Di Pietro
Treasurer:	Gretchen Beall Schumann
Recording Secretary:	Donna M. Praiss
Corresponding Secretary:	Kelly O'Neill Levy

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<u>Class of 2007-2010</u>	<u>Class of 2006-2009</u>
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Randi S. Isaacs	<u>Class of 2005-2008</u>
Cassandra Porter	Bonnie R. Cohen-Gallet*
Amy Saltzman	
Teresa Schiller	(*Nominees to Fill
Andrea Vacca	Unexpired Terms)

### COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS (2007-2009)

Elizabeth A. Bryson	Myra L. Freed
Janet I. Cord	Teresa Schiller

### NOTICE TO MEMBERS

**The Annual Meeting of the Association will be held on April 23, 2007.** Article XIV, Section 1 of the NYWBA By-Laws provides that only members of the Association who are in good standing and whose 2006-2007 dues have been received by **January 31, 2007** may vote at the Annual Meeting. Article XVII, Section 10 further provides that any fifty members eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting may, by a writing delivered to the Corresponding Secretary not less than forty days prior to the Annual Meeting, propose candidates for the officer or director positions to be voted on at the Annual Meeting. Any petition for a candidate must be sent to Corresponding Secretary Kay Marmorek, c/o New York Women's Bar Association, 5009 Broadway, Suite 604, New York, NY 10034, and received by no later than **March 14, 2007**.

### *President's Message continued from page 1*

annual reviews. We should not be shy about opportunities to speak out about how we reacted to the latest contingency, how we took the time to read up on a relevant topic, how the client seemed pleased with a draft contract, or how we worked through the weekend on an important brief. We can do so humbly, without bravado. Sometimes, it seems easier to concentrate on our goals. Yet, it is those stories of our hard work and dedication that will be recalled at bonus time, and even at partnership review time. Basically, we should not be too "humble" about our production on the job. Talk about one's record of accomplishment is both appropriate and genuine humility.

A couple of years ago, I accepted a new position at my firm, that of pro bono coordinator. The transition to the new role had been ongoing since the aftermath of 9/11, and no set of responsibilities was formally drafted. Although I no longer had "billable" responsibilities, I was advised by a senior partner to continue to keep a record - a daily record -- of my time, perhaps in recognition of the relative fluidity of the new role. At the end of a very time-intensive first year, I took the annual self-evaluation assignment very seriously, combing through my daily diary and creating a report that described all of my responsibilities and achievements in detail, as well as the amount of time I had contributed. I was pleased to have that document become part of my personnel file at the Firm, and it was well-received. Just as I looked at Nicom in a new light after I read his message, I felt that my supervisors looked at me in a new light after I submitted my report. Such behavior is not without humility.

Nicom's message also teaches us to be supportive of those who support us in the workplace. Although it sounded as if Nicom has provided the same level of service to "unfriendly" lawyers as to "kind" ones during his time at the firm, we know that everyone is not the same as he. Perhaps we can all remember times that we simply would not have made a filing deadline if a secretary had not missed her train to work on a document, or if a junior associate had not performed some last-minute research. Common courtesy, favorable or constructive reviews, and even the occasional small gift, can go a long way.

I have also found that the more I challenge those who work with me, the more some of them have been pleased to pitch in. During the last few years, due to reorganizations, I have worked with many secretaries. This has involved many instances of secretaries "handing me off" to one another, explaining -- and inevitably evaluating -- the way that I do things. Some have told me that the day goes by more quickly when working with me because I tend to hand out complex, multi-task assignments. From their perspective, it is a sign of respect and confidence that I trust them to follow through on certain projects. They see that I am not proud and cocky, which I do not intend to be.

Like Nicom, we each have a job to do that is challenging. As reticent as we may be to parade our accomplishments, we have a duty to ourselves to speak out about our accomplishments while respecting those with whom we work. Although Nicom claims to lead a simple life, his life is full of a richness that I hope for after practicing thirty years. Don't you?

*Teresa Schiller*



## REMEMBERING MILAGROS MATOS

On December 26, 2006, our former Board Member, the Honorable Milagros A. Matos, passed away after an undisclosed illness. She is survived by her two children of whom she was a very proud single parent: Dr. Alexander Feliz and Gabriela Hunter. She is also survived by her two other blessings, her grandchildren Lucas and Olivia; her mother, Leah Gomez Matos, and her brother Albert Tio; as well as her daughter-in-law Leslie, her sister-in-law Doris, and many nieces and nephews. Her passing is also mourned by her many friends in the legal profession, both on and off the bench, as well as many in this organization and the other bar associations in which she participated.

Judge Matos was born in the Dominican Republic and came to the United States at the age of nine. She realized at an early age how important it was for her to learn to speak English and to gain an education in order to improve both her life and that of her family. She worked hard and received a Bachelor of Science degree from the City College of the City of New York with majors in Biology and Chemistry and a Master of Science degree in Health-Education and Administration from Hunter College. She later became a supervisor of the Cardio-Pulmonary Laboratory at Harlem Hospital, where she worked from 1972 to 1979.

Judge Matos left her position at Harlem Hospital to attend Brooklyn Law School, from which she graduated in 1982. She began her legal career in the public sector as an Assistant Corporation Counsel for the Law Department in the City of New York, Torts Division. After leaving the Law Department, she joined the law firm of Wilson, Elser, Moskowitz, Edelman & Dicker as an Associate. Five years later, she became a member of the firm with a specialty in medical malpractice. The last five years she practiced law, she served as Trial Counsel at the firm of Turner & Owen. She was elected to the bench in November 2004 and took office in January 2005.

Millie, as she was known to her many friends, served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Black Women Attorneys, the New York Women's Bar Association (2000-2005) and the Dominican Bar Association. She was also a member of the American Bar Association, the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, New York County Lawyers, the Black Bar Association of Bronx County, and the Puerto Rican Bar Association. She gave generously of her time, mentoring numerous minority and female attorneys, and annually speaking to high school students to encourage them to stay in school and to explore law-related careers.

Franc Perry, Court Attorney to Civil Court Judge Peter Moulton, first met Millie Matos in 1986, when she was his Supervising Attorney at Wilson Elser. He writes: "from our initial meeting until her untimely death, she remained a grace-filled, thoughtful and warm person. I could recount numerous stories of how she elegantly extracted important testimony from hostile witnesses who attempted to intimidate

### *Women's Bar Association of the State of New York Children's Rights Committee*

*presents*

## **ASSESSING SPECIAL EDUCATION FROM REFERRAL TO HEARING**

**Thursday, March 1, 2007**

**6:00 to 8:00 p.m.**

*(registration at 5:30 p.m.)*

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver and Jacobson  
One New York Plaza, 29th Floor  
New York, NY 10004

*Reception Immediately Following Program  
from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m.*

**RSVP by February 23, 2007**

***(Space is Limited)***

to [mollie.smith@friedfrank.com](mailto:mollie.smith@friedfrank.com)

(phone (212) 859-8698)

*The Women's Bar Association Wishes to Thank  
Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver and Jacobson  
for Hosting This Program*

### **PRESENTERS:**

**Cara Chambers, Esq.**

Supervising Attorney, Kathryn A. McDonald  
Education Advocacy Project, The Legal Aid Society

**Patricia Miller Latzman, Esq.**

Attorney, Private Practice

**Neal Howard Rosenberg, Esq.**

Attorney, Private Practice

### **CLE CREDITS:**

1 hour, professional practice; 1 hours, skills

her... Many times she found the winning strategy in cases that others thought were indefensible. [There were] countless clients who were made to feel that their voices were heard because of her devoted passion for advocacy." Mr. Perry notes that because of her actions, not merely her words, he gained "a deeper respect for the profession to which he has dedicated his life."

Milagros Matos, a woman known for her dignity, integrity, and fairness, will be missed by all of those whose lives she touched. For those who wish to make donations in her memory, contributions may be made to Sisters Network, Inc. ([www.sistersnetworkinc.org](http://www.sistersnetworkinc.org)) or Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation ([www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org)). For those who wish to post condolences to the family, go to <http://www.legacy.com/NYTimes/DeathNotices.asp> Page = Life Story & Person ID = 85869445. (The Association thanks the Hon. Wavny Toussaint and Franc Perry for their assistance with this tribute.)



F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 7

## Judges' Reception Draws Large Crowd

The Women's Bar was pleased to honor the newly-elected and appointed judges of New York County at a reception at Nicole's in Manhattan on January 18, 2007. The event was well-attended, with a turnout of more than 60 people. President Teresa Schiller welcomed those present, including Justice Betty Weinberg Ellerin. She thanked Signature Bank

for its sponsorship of the successful event. The NYWBA appreciates the hard work of Lisa Bauer, Diana Browne, Jo Ann Douglas, Myra Freed, Bonnie Gallet, Christina Kallas, Kay Marmorek, Teresa Schiller, and Lisa Sokoloff in coordinating the event.









## From Hopeless Case to Tremendous Victory

by *Nina Kressner Cobb*

"It was a tremendous victory," Tony Giacobbe, a former Assistant District Attorney in Staten Island and now in private practice, told those gathered at the Legal Advisory Committee of Sanctuary For Families (Sanctuary) Center for Battered Women's Legal Services on November 7. Judge Leonard Rienzi, known to be "tough on crime" in conservative Staten Island, sentenced 31 year old Sung-Ann to 5 years, the lightest term possible under a plea agreement for slaying her husband and batterer, Matthew Lee. With a 15% reduction off the 5 years, plus credit for the 2-1/3 years served, it is likely that she has less than 2 more years in prison.

When Steps to End Family Violence, first brought the case to the attention of Dorchen Leidholdt, Sanctuary's dedicated and tenacious director of Legal Services, it seemed to be a hopeless case. Sung-Ann, a Korean immigrant who had met her husband in church, was charged with Murder in the Second Degree and faced a sentence of 25 years to life for brutally stabbing him after years of horrendous physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. On the evening of the slaying, June 30, 2004, she called 911 to say that she had killed her husband. She then slashed her wrists vertically and horizontally in a serious suicide attempt. (As part of his pattern of abuse, her husband had instructed her how to kill herself.) She was rushed to a hospital where she gave birth to a boy whom she has never seen again.

The reports by forensic psychologists on both sides of the case as well as extensive advocacy on her behalf by domestic violence advocates and representatives of other service organizations were critical in encouraging the Staten Island D.A. first to reduce Sung-Ann's charges from murder to manslaughter and then not to take a position about the judge's sentence within the minimum 5-15 sentence range, a very unusual departure. Experts on both sides of the case found that Sung-Ann was a victim of severe and unrelenting sexual, physical, and psychological abuse and isolation and suffered from severe depression. Both also concurred that Ms. Choi suffered from "extreme emotional distress" at the time of the crime, which made it possible for the D.A. to support a charge of reduced culpability, from murder to manslaughter.

Another influential factor was a meeting with the Staten Island D.A., organized by Sanctuary's Legal Center and bringing together leaders of more than a dozen other organizations, including the Korean American Family Service Center, the Seaman's Society of Staten Island, the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault, Steps to End Family Violence, InMotion, New York Asian Women's Center, and Bellevue Hospital's Program for Survivors of Torture.

Lee had repeatedly attacked his wife after he learned that she had been the victim of a rape that had occurred in Korea before they had met. He had subjected her to extreme physical abuse, which included repeated rapes, kicking, pulling her hair, and slamming her head against a wall, accompanied by psychological abuse. Her efforts to seek help from her church

and a counseling service were in vain. When she called the police one night, her mother-in-law intervened and forced her to withdraw her complaint. On the night that she stabbed her husband, she was in her ninth month of pregnancy, and he had raped her.

Judge Rienzi took all these factors into account when he handed down a five-year sentence for Sung-Ann. He described the sentence as neither harsh nor lenient, but "just," citing advocacy by SFF, Steps, Korean American Family Service Center, as well as the hundreds of letters he and the DA had received from attorneys, doctors, and psychiatrists that recommended leniency. He lamented that had Sung-Ann reached out to domestic violence experts, her husband might be alive today and hoped that the case would bring more attention to domestic violence and the work of domestic violence agencies.

For her part, Sung Ann, a profoundly religious young woman, is filled with the deepest remorse. Cathy Seline, an attorney from Steps to End Family Violence which works with women in prison, told the court that Sung-Ann was glad her son -- the son she has never seen since his birth -- looks like his father because it would cause his paternal grandparents who are bringing him up too much pain if the boy looked like her. "I'm so sorry. I'm sorry. So sorry for the family I've caused them pain." Sung-Ann who does not have legal residency in the United States still faces deportation when she leaves prison.

*Sanctuary for Families and the women and children it fights to help need more volunteer attorneys and support from our community. If you are interested in pro bono work and would like to help in the fight against domestic violence, please contact Dorchen Leidholdt, Sanctuary's Legal Director, at [dorchen@sffny.org](mailto:dorchen@sffny.org).*





## JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Staff Attorney:** Lawyers Alliance for New York is the leading provider of business and transactional legal services to nonprofit organizations that are working to improve the quality of life in New York City's low-income and disadvantaged communities. Our clients are stimulating economic development, creating affordable housing, and delivering other vital social services to new immigrants, youth, the elderly, and other low-income New Yorkers. We are seeking a staff attorney to work on our expanding legal and educational programs. Major responsibilities of this position includes: serving the transactional and nonprofit law needs of a substantial client base of community-based and nonprofit groups; coordinating Lawyers Alliance's work in one or more initiatives including nonprofit accountability, economic development, elder services, children and youth services, and immigrant communities; conducting client outreach and client development to expand the provision of business law services to new and existing clients; serving as liaison to top law firms and corporate legal departments that participate in Lawyers Alliance's pro bono program; supporting the work of pro bono attorneys; organizing and teaching seminars for clients and attorneys; and writing and publishing legal manuals and other materials for clients and pro bono attorneys. Lawyers Alliance offers a collegial work environment, generous benefits, and a chance to be involved in interesting public interest work. The successful candidate will have at least 3-5 years experience as a practicing attorney. Prior experience in corporate, real estate, nonprofit, and/or tax law is essential. If you want to work with a terrific group of people who enjoy what they do and are making a difference, this opportunity is for you. Salary is \$50,000 + DOE. Interested applicants should submit resumes in confidence to Lawyers Alliance for New York, 330 Seventh Avenue, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10001. Attn: 2006 Attorney Search. Email: attysearch06@lawyersalliance.org. No phone inquiries, please.

Queens Legal Services Corporation (QLSC) is seeking an attorney for a temporary position in its Housing Law Program. The position will be available immediately and will end on August 10, 2007. The attorney will represent clients in housing matters and will handle appeals and complex litigation. To ensure that the Housing Law Project is addressing community needs, the attorney also will work closely with neighborhood-based organizations, participate in borough-wide outreach and off-site intake initiatives, and conduct community education workshops and trainings. Experience in housing law or related legal or clinical experience is necessary. Bilingualism is required. Fluency in Spanish or an Asian dialect is necessary. Salary and benefits are governed by our Collective Bargaining Agreement. Only candidates selected for interview will be contacted. To apply for the position, send your resume and a recent writing sample to Carl O. Callender, Executive Director, Queens Legal Services Corporation, 89-00 Sutphin Boulevard, Suite 206, Jamaica, NY 11435.

Legal Services for NYC Staten Island seeks a staff attorney to assist and represent domestic violence survivors in cases involving orders of protection, custody and visitation, child support, and divorce. The position involves opportunities for substantial litigation, working as a team with a social worker to provide comprehensive services, and community outreach, particularly in the immigrant community. The position is temporary – for 6 months – with the possibility of extension depending on funding. We are flexible with regard to a full or part-time schedule. Experience handling family law cases is required. Ability to speak Spanish and experience with domestic violence are strongly preferred. Interested individuals should send a resume and cover letter to Nancy Goldhill, Project Director, LSNY Staten Island, 36 Richmond Terrace, Suite 205, Staten Island, NY 10301, or e-mail ngoldhill@lsny.org (Please put RESUME in subject line).

The New Orleans Public Library is asking for any and all hardcover and paperback books for people of all ages in an effort to restock the shelves after Katrina. The staff will assess which titles will be designated for its collections. The rest will be distributed to destitute families or sold for library fundraising.

Please send your books to:

Rica A. Trigs, Public Relations  
New Orleans Public Library  
219 Loyola Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70112

If you tell the post office that they are for the library in New Orleans, they will give you the library rate, which is slightly less than the book rate.

### GET MORE INVOLVED IN THE NYWBA!

We are looking for attorneys from all backgrounds and all disciplines to get more involved with projects such as the following:

helping to host CLE programs,  
working on committees,  
helping to boost membership,  
and joining our board.

Please e-mail NYWBA President Teresa Schiller  
at [president@nywba.org](mailto:president@nywba.org)  
about your interests and availability.

*We're always looking for new talent and ideas!*



## Newsletter Deadline and Contact Information

Submissions must be sent to the Newsletter Committee by the **10th** of the month for publication in the following month's newsletter. Please email articles, notes on members, committee calendars, and any other announcements to **Diana Ceccacci, Esq.**, tel. no. 718-229-4932, email [newsletter@nywba.org](mailto:newsletter@nywba.org).

## NYWBA List Serve

The NYWBA List Serve provides up-to-the-moment information concerning events, programs, and job announcements through email. Please email us at [info@nywba.org](mailto:info@nywba.org) if you have an announcement you would like to post on the list serve or if you would like to be added to the list serve.

Have you changed your address, firm, phone number, or other information? Please call 212-490-8202 or send an email to "[info@nywba.org](mailto:info@nywba.org)" with the updated information. This will help us keep you informed and our records up-to-date.

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Diana Ceccacci

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