



NEW YORK WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 2021

I am grateful for all of the work that our NYWBA Committees and Board of Directors have done so far this fall. The NYWBA has already hosted a number of informative programs. On September 21, 2021, we explored the issue of how widespread access to images of sexual violence have created a public health crisis of the digital age and discussed strategies for building resilience and resistance in young people to hypersexualized media and pornography with a powerful presentation by **Gail Dines**, Professor Emerita of Sociology and Women's Studies, and President of Culture Reframed. For Domestic Violence Awareness Month, on October 18, 2021, the Domestic Violence Committee and the Students and New Lawyers Committee hosted a CLE to help attorneys in a variety of different practice areas recognize and address domestic violence in their cases. For Breast Cancer Awareness Month, on October 26, 2021, we educated our members about breast cancer and ovarian cancer, including risks factors, symptoms, and treatment experiences from the perspective of survivors. On October 22, 2021, we co-sponsored a conference with the Institute for Contemporary Psychology, which addressed the issue of how the legal system and the court process unwittingly can create or exacerbate psychological trauma in family dissolution and how racism, sexism and other forms of bias contribute to psychological stress and trauma in family members before and during family dissolution. The conference featured interdisciplinary panels of mental health and legal professionals. On October 16, 2021, our Events Committee hosted its first in-person event since March 2020 with a private tour at the Brooklyn Museum exhibit on "Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams," tracing the groundbreaking history and legacy of the House of Dior led by a museum docent. We hope to be able to offer more in-person small group events in the near future.



Amanda B. Norejko

Many more CLE programs, Zoom with a Judge events, and committee meetings are scheduled in the coming weeks. We hope that you will join us for these opportunities to network, keep up to date on developments in the law, and receive support and encouragement from colleagues in your practice area.

The NYWBA Judiciary Committee, led by co-chairs **Shani Adess, S. Yan Sin**, and **Tuozhi Lorna Zhen**, screened judicial candidates for Supreme Court and Civil Court who will appear on the ballot in New York County. They once again adeptly carried out this important function through virtual interviews to maintain the safety of committee members

(Continued on Page 2)

The Guardianship Diversity Initiative

The Initiative seeks attorneys of diverse backgrounds for Article 81 Guardianships. Learn about the role of attorneys in these proceedings and how adding Guardianship to your practice could enhance it.

Introduction to the Queens Guardianship Bench

Speakers:

Hon. Chereé Buggs
Hon. Wyatt N. Gibbons
Hon. Lee. A. Mayersohn
Hon. Bernice D. Siegal
Hon. Lisa A. Sokoloff

November 5, 2021

Introduction to the Bronx Guardianship Bench

Speakers:

Hon. Andrew J. Cohen
Hon. Laura G. Douglas
Hon. Lisa A. Sokoloff

December 2, 2021

RSVP: gdi@nywba.org

For more information, see article on page 8.

President's Message (Continued from Page 1)

and candidates. Many thanks to all of the members of the Judiciary Committee who participated in the process this year.

I can hardly believe that it is already November, a month that often brings to mind the Thanksgiving holiday. When we think of Thanksgiving, we often recall all of the things for which we are grateful. Bound up in historical celebration of thanks for what we have is our memory of the not-too-distant times of sickness, scarcity, and loss that precede it. The various historical events to which our modern Thanksgiving is usually traced and the mythology that has developed around them center around coming together to celebrate after a time of great turmoil and difficulty.

The early settlers who came from Europe had suffered great losses from the journey and the hardships they encountered from being ill-equipped for what awaited them in the year prior to a successful harvest. During the Civil War, a declaration by President **Abraham Lincoln** that the last Thursday in November should be recognized as a day of Thanksgiving gave families a chance to celebrate "victories over the enemy, who is of our own household" and "to afford to us reasonable hopes of an ultimate and happy deliverance from all our dangers and afflictions." President **Franklin D. Roosevelt** signed a bill officially establishing the fourth Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day (after attempting to move it to the third Thursday in hopes of boosting the economy with an extra week of Christmas shopping season as the country was still reeling from the Great Depression).

Thanksgiving is also controversial for its whitewashing of the genocide of Native American tribes that came in the years that followed the "first Thanksgiving" in Plymouth, Massachusetts. It is a day of mourning and protest for some tribes since it commemorates the arrival of settlers in North America that led to centuries of oppression and the murder of millions of indigenous people. Other Native Americans embrace the positive messages of the holiday because the idea of giving thanks is also central to their heritage and culture. Many feel that it gives them a chance to appreciate the good things in life like family, community, and the riches of the land.

Ultimately, buried in the history that is generally not taught in schools, we owe the modern concept of Thanksgiving to a woman. **Sarah Josepha Hale**, author of the famous "Mary Had a Little Lamb" nursery rhyme, spent forty years advocating for a national, annual Thanksgiving holiday. In the years leading up to the Civil War, she believed the holiday would provide an opportunity to infuse hope and belief in the nation and the Constitution. For decades, she was largely rebuffed by other leading politicians since beginning her campaign for the national holiday. However, in 1863, she wrote a letter to President Lincoln at a time when Lincoln was searching for a way to bring the nation together. Much like Lincoln was influenced by another woman author, **Harriet Beecher Stowe**, who he credited with having "made this big war" by her work in galvanizing the abolitionist movement, he was also persuaded by Hale to declare "A National Day of Thanksgiving and Praise."

Born in 1788, Hale received more education than most women of her day because her parents were strong advocates for education of girls. When she became widowed with five children to support on her own, she turned to poetry as a form of income and later became editor of Godey's Lady's Book, a magazine that made her one of the most influential voices

NYWBA MEMBERSHIP

If you have already renewed, THANK YOU!

If you haven't, it's time to RENEW your membership for 2021-2022.

The NYWBA fiscal year is June 1 to May 31. Be sure to renew your membership and enjoy all NYWBA benefits, including FREE NYWBA CLE PROGRAMS, networking events and Committee meetings, access to the "Members Only" sections of our website, access to our Newsletters online, and other benefits.

Save paper & mailing costs and expedite your renewal by using our secure online membership form at <http://membership.nywba.org>. You can also email Executive Director Karen Lu (ED@nywba.org) to confirm your member status or request a paper membership form by email.

NYWBA wishes to acknowledge the generous gift from

**FOUNDER AND PAST PRESIDENT
HON. FLORENCE PERLOW SHIENTAG (1908-2009)**

Her financial bequest has helped to underwrite the cost of this Newsletter and many of our CLE programs.

es of the 19th century. Hale was quite conservative, opposing women's suffrage and supporting traditional gender roles in the home, but she did advocate for the education of women, opportunities for women to achieve economic independence in a variety of occupations, and the right of women to own property. She also published many emerging women writers, including the aforementioned Stowe. Much like Thanksgiving, Hale's work comes with its own range of positive and negative attributes and associations.

If you celebrate Thanksgiving this year, remember that it is often the tough times and terrible losses we have experienced that help us fully appreciate the good things in our lives. Please also take the time to reflect upon our nation's history and know that there are stories told and often untold that may shape our understanding of what this holiday means and who we are as a country. However you celebrate (or mourn or protest), I hope that this month gives you a chance to take comfort in the support of your community and find hope for a better future born of the hardships and pain of the past.

Amanda

Give thanks for a little and you will find a lot. - Hausa proverb

NOTES ON MEMBERS



The NYWBA congratulates our Past President **Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin** (Ret.) on the dedication of the Betty Weinberg Ellerin Children's Center at the New York County Civil Court located at 111 Centre Street. For many decades, Judge Ellerin has been a leader in advocating for the protection of women and children in the judicial system and the rights of women in the legal profession. Judge Ellerin's vision to have free educational and supportive child care available to the children of parents who must appear in the New York County Family, Criminal, and Housing Courts has finally come to fruition.



The NYWBA ADR Committee and Family and Divorce Mediation Council of Greater New York

co-present

***A Presumptive ADR Update:
What Practitioners Need to Know***

Event Chair: **Michele Kern-Rappy**, Senior Mediator and Senior Settlement Coordinator of MEDNJ Mediation Program NY County

Moderator: **Lisa M. Courtney**, Statewide ADR Coordinator, NYS Unified Court System

Panelists:

Lauren Jones, ADR Coordinator for NYC Surrogate's Courts

Sharon Matthie, ADR Coordinator, 9th Judicial District

Jean Norton, ADR Coordinator, Supreme Court-NY County, Civil Branch

Bridget O'Connell, ADR Coordinator for the 5th-8th Judicial Districts and Court of Claims, Office of Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Courts outside NYC

Natasha Pasternack, Mediation Coordinator for Kings County, Supreme Court-Matrimonial

Virginia Torres-Villegas, NYC Family Court's Mediation Coordinator

Date: **November 3, 2021**, 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Place: Zoom Webinar

Cost: FREE – NYWBA/WBASNY and FDMCGNY members
\$40.00 – Non-members

RSVP: PADR Update (fdmcgny.org)

Info: If you have any questions, please contact adr@nywba.org.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Melissa Cefalu
Keri Ann Christ
Salihah Denman
Margaret M. Donohoe
Lindsey Savage

as of 10/26/2021

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

With their generous contributions, our sustaining members make it possible for us to accomplish so much more. We honor and thank them for their support.

Elkan Abramowitz
Dawn M. Cardi
Lissett Ferreira
Damon P. Howard
Sophie Jacobi-Parisi
Joanna C. Kahan
Phyllis S. Koffman
Charlotte C. Lee
Sabrina E. Morrissey
Jessica L. Toelstedt

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10% discount for NYWBA members

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“Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams”

By Myra L. Freed, NYWBA Past President

On October 16th, a gorgeous Fall Saturday, NYWBA members, their guests and friends met at the Brooklyn Museum for a guided tour of the new exhibit ***“Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams.”*** The exhibition's stop in New York is part of an international tour with each venue collaborating with the original Parisian curators to contribute its own spin and emphasis. The exhibit started at the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris commemorating the 70th anniversary of the House of Dior, stopping next at the V & A in London before coming to New York. Upon entering the exhibit, visitors are greeted by a giant photo of Dior's iconic black and white “Bar Suit” which would go on to inspire updated versions by the successive designers for Dior. It was most recently reinterpreted into a very contemporary suit by Dior's first female designer, Maria Garcia Chiuri. Her white jacket was open to a wonderful T-shirt that read “We Should All Be Feminists.” The Bar Suit and Dior's other creations were products of the early post WWII years, when designers and the women they designed for craved a respite from years of sorrow and deprivation during the long war. Exquisite gowns from the Parisian collections were paired with similarly inspired works of art from the Brooklyn Museum's own collections, including sculptures and paintings. A collection of sleek black cocktail dresses were paired with a midcentury black stone slab sculpture and an undulating black Eames screen. The exhibit contains 200 items of clothing including many couture creations, put together by the legions of

skilled artisan pattern makers, sample makers, bead workers, fabric painters and hand embroiderers working in the Dior atelier. Also included is the still fresh and modern fashion photography of those who depicted Dior's work, such as Richard Avedon, Irving Penn and Lillian Bassman, who changed the style of stilted show room shots to the lively streets of Paris and its environs. The photography collection included the famous Avedon shots of the Dior-clad model Dovima in front of circus elephants. Also included are fabulous accessories made to be worn and carried with the fashion ware (Mr. Dior's rule: no more than two of one color at a time, please). And finally on exhibit are the photographs and gowns of the celebrities who helped bring fame and popularity to Dior, such as Marlene Dietrich, Elizabeth Taylor and Natalie Portman. The legendary actress Dietrich insisted on her movie costumes being all made by Dior. When her director complained of the cost, she reportedly demanded, “no Dior, no Dietrich”. Also on display was a Dior gown worn to the Oscars by Natalie Portman, embroidered with the names of all the women directors that year who were not nominated for Oscars. Following the breathtaking Exhibit, we all gathered for lunch and a chance to chat at the museum's restaurant, the Norm. The exhibit, which will continue until February 20, 2022 should not be missed, neither should any of our Events Committee's future activities. With special thanks to our events committee chairs, ***Diana Browne*** and ***Kay Marmorek***.



“Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams”



The Family Law Section of the Metropolitan Black Bar Association in conjunction with the NYWBA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee present a CLE Program:

Representing the Special Needs Client in Family Court

Co-sponsored by the Appellate Division, Second Department and the Office of Attorneys for Children

Speakers:

Carole Boccumini, Esq., Douglas Reiniger, Esq., Michelle F.P. Roberts, Esq., and Maria F. Galante, Esq.

Date: November 3, 2021, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Place: Via Zoom

CLE: 1 Diversity & Inclusion credit to be issued by the Appellate Division, 2nd Dept.

Cost: No cost to attendees

RSVP: Before November 2, 2021

<https://www.nywba.org/events/cle-representing-the-special-needs-client-in-family-court/>

Info: Materials, Link and Passcode to attend will be sent via email after receipt of RSVP.

The Matrimonial and Family Law Committee presents a CLE Program:

Understanding Divorce from a Different Perspective: A discussion on the intersection between divorce in Civil and Rabbinical Court

Speakers:

Adina T. Glass, Esq., Joel Yacoob, Esq., and Yael Braun, Superior Family Liaison Services

Date: November 9, 2021, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Place: Zoom Webinar - invitation to follow upon RSVP

CLE: 1.0 Professional Practice*
1.0 Ethics

Cost: Free – NYWBA/WBASNY Members**
\$25 – Non-members

RSVP: Before November 8, 2021 to:
mfchairs@nywba.org

*CLE Credits: 2.0 hours (1.0 in Professional Practice and 1.0 in Ethics). The NYWBA is an accredited CLE provider. Approval of CLE credit is pending in accordance with the requirements of the NYS CLE Board for the above-listed credit hours for established attorneys and as transitional credit hours for newly admitted attorneys.

** Free NYWBA and WBASNY members, \$25, non-member: Full and partial scholarships based on financial need are available. For info on the guidelines and to apply, contact CLE Co-Chairs at cle@nywba.org or 212-216-1135. All requests are confidential.

New Year, New Practices: Process of Electronic Monitoring in 2021

By Molly Kalmus with Jessica Horani



At the first NYWBA Criminal Law Committee meeting of the Fall season, New York City Sheriff **Joseph Fucito** updated members of the Committee on the procedures for the use of electronic monitoring in lieu of monetary bail in NYC courts. Sheriff Fucito has been Sheriff of New York City since 2014. In addition to serving in a number of capacities within

the New York City's Sheriff's Office for over 20 years, he has also worked at the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the New York State Department of Transportation. Upon entering the New York City Sheriff's Office at the age of 18, then-Deputy Sheriff Fucito was the youngest deputy sheriff in New York City history.

Sheriff Fucito shed light on the practicalities of the newly enacted provisions of the Bail Reform statutes that govern pre-trial electronic monitoring for criminally-charged defendants. Placing the administration of the Electronic Monitoring (EM) Program within a larger context of the historical and current roles of the New York City Sheriff's Office – tracing its history to 1635 and informing that the Sheriff's mandate includes carrying out mandates from both the civil court and the criminal court – Sheriff Fucito provided the “meat and potatoes” of the program which has now been in effect since April 20, 2020.

As to the two main threshold matters, EM became codified under the Bail Reform laws in 2020. Further, the administration of the EM Program by the New York City Sheriff's Office comes directly from a number of statutes, including CPL §§ 500.10(4) and (5), 510.40(4), CPLR Rule 2223, and Judiciary Law §§ 400 and 401.

In order to be eligible for Electronic Monitoring, the defendant must be charged with a “qualifying offense” – one for which monetary bail could be set. Qualifying offenses include, but are not limited to: violent felonies, domestic violence misdemeanors, and misdemeanor sex offenses (CPL § 510.10[4]). Sheriff Fucito noted that juveniles charged as adults in supreme court were initially excluded from eligibility, but are now deemed eligible for consideration. Juvenile Offender cases present logistical challenges, as it may not be appropriate for the Sheriff to communicate directly with these minors even to set up and trouble-shoot technical issues without involving their adult guardians.

Even if an offense is eligible, the New York City Sheriff's Office is unable to monitor a person who has been mandated to the EM Program unless they have some form of stable housing within the borders of New York City. The residence must have access to a telephone or wifi for the device to communicate with the monitoring base, and electricity to keep the device charged; and all other residents of the household must consent to the individual residing therein while on electronic monitoring.

Assessing whether someone is a suitable candidate for the EM Program includes an investigation by the Sheriff's Office. The investigation includes reviewing the defendant's history: Are they a fugitive from another jurisdiction? Have they ever been held for contempt of court?

Has the defendant ever had a warrant for their arrest for failure to appear in court? Has the defendant succeeded in court-mandated programs in the past?

If a person is deemed suitable for the EM Program, and the court grants it as part of the securing order, the Program limits the defendant's movements by curfew, travel restrictions, or even home detention. These conditions would be set with the input and approval of the court and are carried out by the Sheriff's office. All violations of the EM Program are registered as alerts. If there are any violations of the EM Program, such as tampering with the device or curfew violation, there will be a preliminary investigation to determine if it was a true alert or a false alert. If it is a false alert, then the Sheriff's Office will document it and take no further action. If, on the other hand, it is a true alert, then the Sheriff's Office will make a determination whether or not there is an immediate risk of flight. If there is no immediate risk of flight, the Sheriff's Office documents the issue and informs the court. If there is a risk of flight, they will pursue the defendant and inform the court.

Anecdotally, Sheriff Fucito informed that from the program's participants to date it appears that the more serious the charge, the more the participating defendant is compliant with EM conditions. To demonstrate this point, he shared that 48% of the defendants who are currently in the EM Program are charged with a homicide; 14% of them are charged with drug-related offenses; 11% are charged with weapons-related offenses; and 11% with assault. Further, Sheriff Fucito highlighted that though there were over two thousand alerts, very few of them were real violations.

The current Mayoral administration has encouraged the closure of Rikers and migration to a Borough-Based Jail System. In line with the current political climate, questions on how to address the needs of the community and the collateral consequences associated with pre-trial detention have been revisited. Electronic Monitoring, supervised by the New York City Sheriff's Office, may provide a viable alternative to pre-trial detention.

Sheriff Fucito has made himself available to anyone who has any inquiries on the program or any questions regarding being assessed for Electronic Monitoring. He can best be reached at: 718-707-2001 or 516-903-2943. Alternatively, the Sheriff's Office has an Operations Desk that can be reached 24 hours a day: 718-707-2020 or **SheriffOps@finance.nyc.gov**. The EM Office can be reached at: 718-707-2006 or **SheriffEM@finance.nyc.gov**.

The New York Women's Bar Association thanks Sheriff Fucito for his time and dedication to the service of the people of the City of New York.

Molly Kalmus is a trial attorney at New York County Defender Services and a member of the NYWBA Criminal Law Committee. Jessica Horani is a senior trial attorney in the Homicide/Major Case Defense Unit of New York County Defender Services and a co-chair of the NYWBA Criminal Law Committee.

Meet the Committee Chairs

Judiciary Committee



Shani Adess is the Associate Director of NYLAG's Domestic Violence Law, and the Project Director of Project RISE. Shani works with survivors of domestic violence, abuse, and sexual assault, both adults and immigrant youth. In addition to her own practice, Shani supervises staff who serve these populations through direct representation in matrimonial, family law, immigration law matters. Shani leads trainings and participates in panels in related substantive law; working with survivors of trauma and abuse; trauma's psychological, physical, and physiological impacts; and provision of client-centered trauma-informed representation. She is a Co-Chair of the Domestic Violence Committee and Judiciary Committee with the New York Women's Bar Association, and a member of the Lawyer's Committee Against Domestic Violence, the New York City Bar Association, and the ICE out of Courts Coalition. Previously, Shani was the Senior Supervising Attorney for Safe Horizon's Immigration Law Project (Dec 2015 – August 2017), and an Advocacy and Communications officer with Jesuit Refugee Services in the Southern Africa Region (2009-2010). Shani has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in International Relations from Emory University and a JD from Georgetown University Law School in 2009.



S. Yan Sin is an associate attorney at Schwartz Sladkus Reich Greenberg Atlas, LLP. She is a part of its Matrimonial, Family & Reproductive Law Group. Yan was the associate law clerk for the Hon. Ellen F. Gesmer, Associate Justice, Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of New York, First Department, when Justice Gesmer was a judge in the Matrimonial Part of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, New York County. Subsequent to her clerkship, Yan practiced family law in a boutique matrimonial law firm. Yan has experience litigating divorce, custody, and support matters in Family Court and Supreme Court. She also has a background in immigration law with experience in family-based petitions and the naturalization process. Yan serves on the Board of Directors of the New York Women's Bar Association (NYWBA) where she is also co-chair of the Judiciary Committee. Yan represented NYWBA on the Democratic Party Independent Judicial Screening Panel. Yan is an active member of the Asian American Bar Association of New York (AABANY). She enjoys volunteering her time at AABANY's pro bono clinics and Justice for Our Neighbors' immigration legal clinics. A graduate of the University of Virginia and New York Law School, Yan lives in Manhattan and is active in the Chinatown community. She is conversant in Cantonese and loves yoga. Yan is admitted to practice law in New York and New Jersey.



Tuozhi Lorna Zhen is a Supervising Attorney with the New York Legal Assistance Group's Domestic Violence Law Unit. Lorna works with survivors of intimate partner violence and sexual assault, representing them in matrimonial, family law, and immigration cases, and working primarily with survivors in NYC's immigrant communities. Lorna also supervises staff who serve these populations through direct representation, community trainings, and partnerships with community-based service organizations. Prior to NYLAG, Lorna served as a Family Court Legal Services attorney with the Administration for Children's Services Bronx Office (April 2012 – September 2014). Lorna has a JD from the Boston University School of Law in 2010 and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and Economics from University of Virginia in 2007.

Immigration Committee

Marcella B. Marucci received her J.D. from the City University of New York School of Law. She has an M.S. in International Law and Global Affairs from New York University and a B.A. in Political Science from Rutgers University. Ms. Marucci is admitted to practice law in New York and New Jersey and is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, the New York City Bar Association and serves as a Co-Chair of the Immigration Law Committee of the New York Women's Bar Association. She has over 12 years of immigration law experience, focusing on employment and family-based immigration, including consular practice and naturalization. Ms. Marucci was born in Italy to Italian and Brazilian parents who immigrated to the U.S. and is passionate about advocating for the rights of immigrants. She speaks Portuguese, Italian, and Spanish and is an avid animal welfare advocate, volunteering on the Animal Law Committees of the NYCBA and the NYWBA.



Zara Watkins is an appellate attorney handling appeals in federal, state, and immigration cases. She is admitted to practice before the state and federal courts in New York, the Second Circuit, and the U.S. Supreme Court. She created a virtual law practice in 2007 called On Point Expertise, through which she offers brief-writing and oral argument services on an Of Counsel basis to lawyers and small law firms all across the country. In addition to co-chairing the NYWBA Immigration Committee, Zara is currently the Vice President of the Federal Bar Association, SDNY Chapter. She graduated from Tulane University, with a degree in Political Economy, and Georgetown Law Center. In law school, Zara completed a clinic in International Women's Human Rights and interned for a women's rights NGO in Accra, Ghana. Zara is an avid world traveler, having lived in four different countries and visited more than fifty others.



Committee to Advance the Status of Women

Noelle Block Lubin is currently an Associate Court Attorney to the Hon. Eileen A. Rakower in Supreme Court, New York County. Prior to that position, Noelle Block Lubin was an Assistant Court Attorney to the Hon. Eileen A. Rakower. Noelle Block Lubin also serves as a Co-Chair for Advance the Status of Women in the Profession. Noelle Block Lubin received her J.D. in 2018 from Brooklyn Law School, and her B.S. from the Fashion Institute of Technology in 2014. She is licensed to practice law in New York.



Dyan Gershman is a partner at Gershman Law, PLLC, a boutique corporate law firm in New York City that Dyan founded in 2014. Dyan provides a wide range of corporate and commercial legal services to her US and international clients. Prior to starting her own firm, Dyan was a senior corporate and M&A attorney at General Electric Company, and prior to that at Bristol-Myers Squibb. She began her legal career as a corporate associate at the global law firm Jones Day in its New York City office. Dyan is also fluent in French. She earned her JD from Boston College Law School, cum laude, where she was an Executive Editor of the Boston College Law Review. Dyan earned her B.A. from Colorado College, cum laude, where she majored in Liberal Arts and Sciences with a specialization in Comparative Literature. She is licensed to practice law in New York and Florida.



The Guardianship Diversity Initiative

By Lissett Ferreira

Co-Chair of the NYWBA Elder Law & Disabilities Committee

The Guardianship Diversity Initiative ("GDI") aims to increase and promote diversity in the practice of Article 81 guardianships of incapacitated persons. The initiative was conceived by **Hon. Lisa A. Sokoloff**, Justice of the Supreme Court, New York County, and launched in December 2020, with the assistance of the New York County guardianship judges, the New York Women's Bar Association, and the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission.

In guardianship proceedings governed by Article 81 of the Mental Hygiene Law, the courts appoint court evaluators, attorneys for Alleged Incapacitated Persons and guardians from lists of individuals certified to serve in those capacities. GDI is committed to diversifying the pool of eligible court appointees in guardianships to include more people of color, bilingual individuals, members of the LGBTQ+ and disability communities, and practitioners of diverse ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Being eligible for court appointments in guardianships offers attorneys an opportunity to make a tangible difference in the lives of elderly and disabled New Yorkers, as well as to expand into a rapidly growing practice area during these uncertain times. GDI is planning a series of workshops and trainings for members (including free CLEs). In addition, attorneys new to this practice area will be paired with experienced guardianship attorneys who will serve as volunteer mentors.

GDI is hosting two virtual events to which all NYWBA/WBASNY members are invited:

- November 5, 1-2:15 pm: Introduction to the Queens Guardianship Bench.
- December 2, 1-2:15 pm: Introduction to the Bronx Guardianship Bench.

We are also planning events to introduce the Brooklyn and Staten Island guardianship judges. GDI is incredibly fortunate that the speakers will include the following guardianship judges:

- Hon. Chereé Buggs (Queens event)
- Hon. Andrew Cohen (Bronx event)
- Hon. Laura G. Douglas (Bronx event)
- Hon. Wyatt N. Gibbons (Queens event)
- Hon. Lee A. Mayersohn (Queens event)
- Hon. Bernice D. Siegal (Queens event)
- Hon. Lisa A. Sokoloff (both events)

Other speakers include experienced court evaluators, attorneys for AIPs and guardians who will explain their respective roles. These events are a wonderful opportunity to learn about GDI and court appointments in guardianships, and to meet and hear from our distinguished guardianship bench. There is no CLE credit; however, attendees will receive informational materials.

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

• Nov. 4, 6:00 PM - **Animal Rights Committee** meeting via Zoom. RSVP AnimalLaw@nywba.org.

• Nov. 9, 6:00 PM – **Diversity and Inclusion Committee** Meeting, in-person (with COVID-19 safety protocols in place) at Blank Rome, LLP, 1271 Ave of the Americas, New York, NY 10020 (16th Floor), and also via Zoom, RSVP to Diversitychairs@nywba.org by Nov. 7, 2021.

• Nov. 17, 6:00 PM - **Programs & Events Committee** meeting by Zoom. RSVP events@nywba.org.

Save-the-Date

Matrimonial & Family Law Committee presentation on Financial Planning in Divorce Litigation

December 7, 2021 6:00 pm

Oops! We just learned that the email address for the **Animal Rights Committee** was not working properly. If you sent an email expressing interest to be a committee member, please try again.

animallaw@nywba.org

GDI welcomes co-sponsorship from bar associations and other organizations interested in helping with our goal of increasing diversity in guardianship matters. There is no cost to co-sponsoring, which entails an organization promoting the program and its events to its membership. GDI is honored to have the following co-sponsors:

- Arab American Bar Association
- Armenian Bar Association
- Asian American Bar Association of New York
- Asian American Judges Association of New York
- Brehon Law Society of New York
- Bronx Bar Association
- Bronx County Women's Bar Association
- Caribbean Attorneys Network
- Columbian Lawyers Association
- Dominican Bar Association
- Hispanic National Bar Association
- Korean American Lawyer Association
- LeGal
- Macon B. Allen Black Bar Association
- Metropolitan Black Bar Association
- Queens County Bar Association
- Queens County Women's Bar Association
- South Asian & Indo-Caribbean Bar Association of Queens
- Women's Bar Association of the State of New York

To learn more about the GDI, RSVP to one of our events, or become a co-sponsor, please contact us at gdi@nywba.org.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK
October 28, 2021

New York Women's Bar Association Rates the Following Judicial Candidates for the Civil Court in New York County

The New York Women's Bar Association today announced the results of its review of the qualifications of the following judicial candidates seeking a position as a judge of the New York City Civil Court in New York County.

New York Civil Court, New York County

Christopher Chin* – Approved

Hon. Paul A. Goetz – Approved

Hon. Barbara Jaffe* – Approved

Hasa Kingo* – Previously Approved

Betty Lugo* – Not Rated

Kim Parker* – Not Rated

Jeffrey Zellan* – Not Rated

Founded in 1934, the New York Women's Bar Association is a non-profit, non-partisan bar association devoted to promoting the fair and equal administration of justice.

For further information, contact:

Amanda Norejko, President,
New York Women's Bar Association
president@nywba.org

Note 1: Pursuant to NYWBA protocols, members of the NYWBA Board who are judges, who are employed by the New York State court system, or who are candidates for judicial office, did not participate in the consideration, review, ratings or votes on any potential judiciary candidates.

Note 2: An asterisk (*) after a candidate's name indicates that the person is a current or past member of the New York Women's Bar Association. Members are reviewed in the same manner and with the same criteria as non-members.



**FREE Instructional Webinar for
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**November 15, 2021
5:00 pm Eastern / 2:00 pm Pacific**

Panelists

- ❖ **Elizabeth A. Bryson** – Vice President, National Conference of Women's Bar Associations; Past President, New York Women's Bar Assn; long-time civil rights & commercial litigator and appellate attorney; past in-house counsel and corporate executive for Fortune 100 company.
- ❖ **Martha E. Gifford** – antitrust attorney in private practice; former co-chair of the Antitrust Practice Group at Proskauer Rose LLP; Past President, Women's Bar Association of the State of New York & New York Women's Bar Association; co-founder, NYWBA Foundation, Inc.
- ❖ **Crystal Villaseñor** – solo practitioner in landlord & tenant law, matrimonial & family law, and civil & real estate litigation; member of NYWBA Board of Directors and Co-Chair of NYWBA Civil Courts Committee; pro bono volunteer for immigrant projects in NYS & TX.
- ❖ **Ernestine Mings** – senior associate at Blank Rome LLP and named a "Top 40 Under 40" family law practitioner by the National Black Lawyers Association; co-chair of NYWBA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee and other bar association committees.
- ❖ **Melissa Glassman** – a former attorney for New York City's Administration For Children's Services, where she handled child abuse and neglect cases, she is now a matrimonial and family law attorney at Advocate, LLP; mentor & career counsel for Cardozo Law students.

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