

NYWBA

NEW YORK WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 2023

Fall is here! I love the cooler weather and transition into winter. This newsletter edition is a true "Welcome Back" from summer.

As we go into Fall, October is symbolic of two very important causes. It is **Breast Cancer Awareness Month** and **Domestic Violence Month**.



Sabrina E. Morrissey

According to the **American Cancer Society** ("ACS"), breast cancer accounts for about 30% of all new female cancers each year. It is the second most common kind of cancer in women (behind some skin cancers). The ACS estimates that in 2023, about 297,790 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women. What can we do? First and foremost, we can all keep current with breast examinations and do our own regular self-examinations. We can encourage our family members and friends to do the same. Next, we can support the **Judges and Lawyers Breast Cancer Alert** ("JALBCA"), of which the NYWBA is a founding member. JALBCA has a monthly support meeting on the first Thursday of every month, hosted by our own immediate Past President, **Magnolia D. Levy, Esq.**, who is a Vice President of JALBCA. If you need help, or know someone who does, don't stay silent. Reach out for help.

Domestic Violence is a tragic epidemic. According to nyc.gov, the majority of domestic violence deaths are female. In 2022, these were the statistics for Manhattan (deaths not included):

| | | Female Victim | Male Victim | Total | Other Family Victim | Total |
|----------|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|
| New York | Felony Assault | 645 | 272 | 917 | 422 | 1,339 |
| | Assault 3 & Related Offenses | 1,205 | 459 | 1,664 | 712 | 2,376 |
| | Sex Offenses | 157 | 12 | 169 | 162 | 331 |
| | Violation of Protective Order | 1,171 | 288 | 1,459 | 445 | 1,904 |
| | TOTAL | 3,178 | 1,031 | 4,209 | 1,741 | 5,950 |

See www.criminaljustice.ny.gov.

From 2010 through 2020, in New York City there were 672 domestic violence homicide incidents; these victims accounted for 17.2% of all homicides (721 of 4,198) that occurred in that time frame. During that 11-year period, the average count of domestic violence homicides was 66 per year.

See www.nyc.gov (Fatality Review Committee 2021 Annual Report).

Again, what can we do? As lawyers, we can learn to recognize the signs in our clients, co-workers, families,

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2023 NYWBA Membership Reception

GUEST SPEAKER:

Elizabeth Dembrowsky, Esq.

Chief Resource and Advocacy Officer for Elevated Access

The NYWBA wants to THANK YOU, our members, for your work and commitment to the NYWBA, by joining us, as our guests, at the NYWBA's Annual Membership Reception on October 5, 2023 at 6PM at Blank Rome, LLP. New Members and Attorneys Interested in Joining are Welcome to Attend.

Special guest speaker will be **Elizabeth Dembrowsky, Esq.**, Chief Resource and Advocacy Officer for **Elevated Access**, a non profit organization launched in 2022 in response to health care bans around the United States and the mission of which is to connect people seeking access to reproductive and gender affirming healthcare to volunteer pilots and to provide those people with flights on private planes across the United States at no cost.

The Membership Reception will also feature the NYWBA's **Annual Period Poverty Drive** to help eliminate period poverty. A reminder to those attending the reception to please bring feminine hygiene products or drug store gift cards. Donations will be given to the **Manhattan Family Justice Center** which works with victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Date: *Thursday, October 5, 2023*

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Place: **Blank Rome LLP**

1271 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

Cost: FREE

RSVP: <https://bit.ly/NYWBAMembership2023>

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neighbors and friends and report domestic violence when it is suspected. We can volunteer our time and increase our financial support to organizations like **Sanctuary for Families**, <https://sanctuaryforfamilies.org/>, whose mission is to support those suffering from gender violence through counseling, intervention, legal help and training. Be aware of the National Domestic Violence Helpline at 800-799-7233. New York City also has a hotline at 1-800-621-HOPE, and New York State has an Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence with a hotline at 800-942-6906, or by text to 844-997-2121.

We are doing so much good work, but to continue, we need members. If you have not renewed your membership for this year, I ask that you do it now.

We are excited to host our Membership Reception at **Blank Rome LLP** on October 5th. The guest speaker for this event, **Elizabeth Dembrowsky, Esq.**, is the Chief Resource and Advocacy Officer for **Elevated Access**, a non-profit organization launched in 2022 in response to health care bans in the United States, whose mission is to connect people seeking access to reproductive and gender affirming healthcare to volunteer pilots so that flights may take place across the United States at no cost.

At our Membership Reception, we also collect products and gift cards for our **Annual Period Poverty Drive** to help eliminate period poverty. The recipient of our donations this year is the **Manhattan Family Justice Center**, which works with victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. If you cannot attend but still want to donate to this very worthy cause, please contact events@nywba.org.

In preparing for this newsletter and our Board Meeting in September, I counted 13 events that were scheduled for September and October. I am so proud of our Committee Co-Chairs and our Officer and Directors for the work they are doing to provide such wonderful, quality programs for our members. Several of these events will provide CLE credits, which are free to our members and WBASNY members. It would take too much space to list all of the events here, but I will mention three of the September CLE programs: on September 13th, the Immigration Committee held a program on Employment Based Immigration, and on September 28th, the Litigation Committee and Civil Courts Committee presented a program on Cybersecurity and Data Privacy, featuring **Hon. Saliann Scarpulla**. On September 20th, we had a panel discussion on Diversity and Hiring, with **Dean Treanor** of **Georgetown Law School** as one of our panelists.

Two of our upcoming events are on October 13th, when the ADR Committee is holding a virtual program scheduled from 12:30 – 1:30 on Mediation Tips for PI Practitioners, and on October 30th, from 6-8PM, when we will have the Plaintiff's attorneys in **Chen Oster v. Goldman Sachs** talk to us about this important case and the settlement that resulted. Our Elder Law & Disability Committee continues to have its twice monthly Lunch and Learn programs on a variety of timely and relevant topics. We are still having most of our programs virtual, to make it easier for our members to participate, as COVID numbers tick up again and a new variant has emerged. Please look for information on these and the other excellent events that are on the way, in our weekly e-blasts and at our nywba.org website. I urge you to join in as many as you can.

At our October Board Meeting, we will hear a presentation on the status of women in the legal profession, by our Employment and Equal Opportunity for Women Committee. Look for a summary of their report on our website and in our November newsletter.

As I emphasized in my inaugural address, we have much to do. We are in a battle for choice, adequate health care and equal pay and promotions for women. We cannot give up or even slow down. October is the month to renew our commitment to solving women's health care and domestic violence problems. As **Hillary Clinton** said, "If fighting for women's health care and paid family leave and equal pay is playing the women's card, then deal me in."

Sabrina

Have you added your name to the SignERA petition? Click here to make history!!

did you know

we have writers and commentators in our group?

here are a few

Leona Beane and Lissett Ferreira, [Guardianship, 2022-23](#)

Catherine A Christian, MSNBC Commentator

Patricia Fersch, Fortune Contributing Writer

Andrea Vacca, A Better Divorce podcast



Make Your Voice Heard

The Office of Court Administration is seeking comment from interested members of the public and the legal profession on the following proposals:

August 21, 2023: Request for Public Comment on Amending 22 NYCRR § 202.12 Concerning Preliminary Conferences
Email to: rulecomments@nycourts.gov
by October 31, 2023

August 17, 2023: Request for Public Comment on Adopting a New Rule to Facilitate Requests for Judicial Accommodations under the ADA
Email to: rulecomments@nycourts.gov
by October 2, 2023

For a copy of the proposals, go to:
<https://ww2.nycourts.gov/rules/comments/index.shtml>

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.

Gail I. Bader
Virginia A. LoPreto
Kathy M. Lynch

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Samantha B. Caraballo
Laura P. S. Carrocci
Alexa Dantona
Alyssa N. DiBenedetto
Danalee F. Elie
Jennifer L. Karnes
Joy Karugu

Michelle J. Katz
Sandy Li
Anne Meredith
Racquel N. Palmer
Armine Parmakszyan
Rona C. Racareanu

as of Sept. 15, 2023

NOTES ON MEMBERS

CONGRATULATIONS TO

Deborah G. Rosenthal

PAST PRESIDENT WBASNY AND NYWBA



RECOGNIZED AS A "DISTINGUISHED LEADER"
BY THE NEW YORK LAW JOURNAL 2023

2023 T.E.A.L. Walk

The 15th Annual Brooklyn T.E.A.L. Walk/Run to benefit the Ovarian Cancer Foundation was held on Saturday, September 9th at Prospect Park. Walking for Team NYWBA were Elizabeth Saylor, Lissett Ferreira, Sabrina E. Morrissey and Olivia Sohmer. It was a warm and sunny morning, and the Team was proud to represent the NYWBA and honor our Past President Amanda Norejko, who lost her battle to Ovarian Cancer on August 2nd of this year. Hundreds showed up for the event, which was lively, with music playing, local cheerleaders encouraging the walkers and runners, and signs showing support for survivors and those whose memory was being honored. Donations may still be made in honor of Amanda by using the attached QR code.

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

The next **Animal Rights Committee** meeting is scheduled for **October 10** at 12:15 by Zoom and will feature two amazing speakers from Mayor Adams' office: **Rachel Atcheson**, Mayor Eric Adams' Deputy Director for Food Policy and **Alexander Silver**, Director of the Mayor's Office of Animal Welfare. Do not miss this opportunity to hear about what the Mayor's office is doing to promote animal welfare in NYC! If you are interested in attending, please email animallaw@nywba.org to RSVP and join the committee.

Elder Law Lunch & Learn will take place on the second (**October 10**) and fourth (**October 24**) Tuesdays of the month from 1:00 - 2:00 PM. For zoom link, email elderlawchairs@nywba.org.

Have You Renewed Your Membership?

If you haven't, it's time to RENEW your membership for **2023-2024**.

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, our award-winning Mentoring Circles, networking events and Committee meetings, access to our Newsletters online, and other benefits.

Renew online using our secure online membership form at www.nywba.org/membership. You can also email Executive Director **Karen Lu** (ED@nywba.org) to confirm your member status or request a paper membership form by email.



QR Code for donations to
Ovarian Cancer Foundation



Lissett, Sabrina, Olivia and Elizabeth with 2 Survivor Leaders from Sanctuary for Families, all walking in honor of Amanda.

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.

**Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee
presents a CLE Program:**

***Mediation Tips for Personal
Injury Practitioners***

*Speaker: Tania Pagan, Esq.
Moderator: Marcy Einhorn, Esq.*

Date: October 13, 2023
Time: 12:30 – 1:30 pm
Location: Zoom Webinar
CLE: 1 professional practice credit (pending)
Cost: Free – NYWBA and WBASNY
Members**
\$25 – Non-members
RSVP: Before October 1, 2023 to:
adr@nywba.org
Info: If you have any questions, please contact
cle@nywba.org

RSVP BEFORE October 1, 2023

*CLE Credits: 1 professional practice credit. The New York Women's Bar Association is an accredited CLE provider. Approval of CLE credit is pending in accordance with the requirements of the New York State CLE Board for the above-listed credit hours for experienced attorneys (those admitted to the New York Bar for more than 2 years) and as transitional credit hours for newly admitted attorneys. Please be advised that, in accordance with the New York State CLE Board Regulations and Guidance, while newly admitted attorneys are encouraged to participate in diversity programs, only experienced attorneys may earn credit in the Diversity, Inclusion and Elimination of Bias category of CLE credit.

** 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 Amy B. Goldsmith or Stacey Better Phillips at cle@nywba.org or 212-216-1135. All requests are confidential.



**The Honorable
Dakota D.
Ramseur, J.S.C.**

**NYWBA DIVERSITY, EQUITY
& INCLUSION COMMITTEE**

PRESENT

**"EQUITY IN ACTION"
SPEAKER SERIES**

The Equity In Action Speaker Series provides an opportunity for NYWBA members to learn and engage in topics around equity, inclusion and action with local Judges.

THE HONORABLE
DAKOTA D. RAMSEUR, J.S.C.
SUPREME COURT, NEW YORK COUNTY

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 25, 2023
6:00PM

BLANKROME
1271 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS
NY, NY

RSVP: DIVERSITYCHAIRS@NYWBA.ORG



**GIVE
GIVE
GIVE**



**Make a gift to the NYWBA
Foundation**

**Doing so helps us to provide the
stipends to deserving students who
work with deserving institutions that
support the mission of the NYWBA.**

Use the QR code here to donate now.

*OCTOBER IS BREAST
CANCER AWARENESS
MONTH*

THE NYWBA IS A FOUNDING
MEMBER OF JALBCA.

JALBCA HAS A SUPPORT
GROUP THAT MEETS
VIRTUALLY ON THE FIRST
THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH.
NEED HELP? REACH OUT.



Mental Health Legal Toolkit: Part 1 – Remedies for Stabilization and Safety

By Carolyn Reinach Wolf, Esq. and Sarah A. Chussler, Esq.

Issues relating to mental health are appearing more and more in the news, but the concerns faced by families and efforts to assist the individual suffering are not always reported. Families are faced with the challenges of their loved ones when they suffer from a serious mental illness, substance abuse, or both, and attorneys should be aware of the legal tools available to help the individual and their families during these times. It is important when counseling a client in this area to discuss the options available and formulate a plan which may include treatment in a hospital or outpatient setting, protective measures for the family, or supportive measures for the individual.

This article is the first in a two-part series which will explore the Mental Hygiene Law (“MHL”)¹ and other legal tools that aide the individual suffering and their family. This first part of the series discusses the treatment focused remedies including interventions, mental hygiene warrants, inpatient hospitalizations, treatment over objection, and protective measures for the family that provide for the stabilization and safety of the individual as well as the safety of their family members. Part Two of this series will discuss the legal tools available to provide support to ensure the individual’s on-going safety and well-being in the community.

Interventions

Often an individual who suffers from a serious mental illness or substance abuse issue does not recognize the need for treatment. In these situations, an intervention might be appropriate to encourage treatment. During an intervention, a team consisting of a psychiatrist, a case manager, security personnel, family members, and an attorney meet with the individual with the goal of bringing them to a hospital or obtaining their agreement for voluntary outpatient services including consultations and examinations by a mental health professional, or case management services. An individual’s agreement to mental health services following an intervention is on a voluntary basis.

Mental Hygiene Warrants

When an individual is not in agreement with mental health services and poses a danger to their self or others, it may be appropriate for family members to pursue a Mental Hygiene Warrant, which is a civil proceeding pursuant to MHL § 9.43. The goal of a Mental Hygiene Warrant is to obtain a psychiatric evaluation and hospitalization. The application process starts with a family member or other statutorily authorized party filing

an ex parte petition to the court to issue a warrant. During this stage in the proceeding, if it is shown that the subject individual “is apparently mentally ill and is conducting himself in a manner which a person who is not mentally ill would be deemed disorderly conduct or is likely to result in serious harm to himself or others...”,² the Court will issue a warrant to have an individual brought before the Court. The Court will then hold a hearing at which time the subject individual is represented by Mental Hygiene Legal Service (“MHLS”), a government agency whose attorneys represent individuals in MHL proceedings. If the Court determines that the individual poses a danger to themselves or others, they will be remanded to a psychiatric emergency department for an evaluation not to exceed 72 hours. Thereafter, the hospital clinicians will determine whether a release from the hospital or an involuntary admission is appropriate.

Inpatient Psychiatric Hospitalization

Civil commitments or involuntary psychiatric hospitalizations in New York are governed by MHL Article 9, which contains the standards and procedures for commitment and sets forth the patients’ rights to release. Involuntary admissions start as either an emergency admission pursuant to MHL § 9.39 which provides for a 15-day hospitalization period, or a general admission pursuant to MHL § 9.27 which provides for a 60-day hospitalization period. Both require a clinical determination that the individual poses a substantial risk of harm to self or others, as defined by statute, and expanded upon by case law.³

Involuntarily admitted patients have the right to request a hearing before a Justice of the Supreme Court to determine whether their discharge from a hospital is appropriate and have the right to representation by counsel at such hearing, with free legal advocacy by MHLS. At the ensuing hearings, in addition to the hospital’s medical expert, it may be appropriate for family members to testify regarding their observations and concerns for safety of the family, community, and their loved one. Hospitalization can provide safety for the individual and the community by ensuring that the individual receives an evaluation of their mental health issues and stabilization of their symptoms in the controlled environment of a hospital with trained clinical staff available 24-hours a day.

Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment

While in a hospital, treatment by psychotropic

medications may be appropriate; however, an individual retains the right to object to or refuse treatment, notwithstanding their legal status as either a voluntary or an involuntary patient.⁴ In those instances, if it is not an emergency situation, then a hospital must request court authorization to treat a patient over their objection.⁵ A court hearing to treat a patient over objection is commonly referred to as a Rivers hearing, so-named after the seminal decision of the Court of Appeals in Rivers v. Katz, 67 N.Y.2d 485, 504 N.Y.S.2d 74 (1986). As with commitment hearings, the subject individual is entitled to representation by counsel at a Rivers hearing, MHLS provides free legal representation in these proceedings, and testimony by family members may also be appropriate. The goal of treatment by psychotropic medications is to hasten the individual’s return to their psychiatric baseline and provide for the best chance of continued stability once discharged from the hospital.

Protective Measures

In situations where a loved one in the community is suffering from a mental health crisis or engaging in dangerous behavior which poses an immediate risk, 911 emergency services and/or the mobile crisis team should be contacted.⁶ In situations where the dangerous behavior would result in serious harm to themselves or others, protections afforded by New York’s Red Flag Law, Civil Practice Law and Rules (“CPLR”) Article 63-a, may be appropriate. The applicant in a proceeding for a temporary or final Extreme Risk Protection Order (“ERPO”) pursuant to CPLR Article 63-a seeks to prohibit the subject individual from purchasing, possessing or attempting to purchase or possess a firearm, rifle or shotgun, by filing a verified petition with the Supreme Court in the county where the individual resides.⁷ Practitioners should be aware that New York’s Red Flag Law has been declared unconstitutional in certain counties, while having been found not violative of the Constitution in others.⁸

While an ERPO application can address a mentally ill individual’s access to weapons, it may still be appropriate for the safety of the family to obtain further protections in the form of an Order of Protection pursuant to the Family Court Act (“FCA”). A “Family Offense Petition” is a civil proceeding commenced in the Family Court to stop verbal or physical threats or abuse, end the family disruption, and obtain protection.⁹ The protection available under the FCA may come in the

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form of a “stay away” order which directs the individual to stay away from a person, house, school, and/or place of business, to refrain from communication and/or refrain from committing a family offense, or in the form of an “exclusion order” wherein the police will remove an individual from the household for a period of time.¹⁰


Conclusion

The foregoing legal remedies can be utilized in response to a mental health crisis in order to help stabilize the individual and to protect their family and the community, as appropriate. Once an individual who was suffering from a mental health crisis is stabilized and returns to the community, supportive measures can be put in place to ensure their continued safety and well-being. Part Two of this series will discuss those supportive legal tools which include Assisted Outpatient Treatment pursuant to MHL § 9.60, case management services, and legal planning documents including Advance Directives, trusts, or guardianship so that family members have the legal authority to assist their loved ones. Clients should be counseled on the mental health legal tools discussed in this series on a case-by-case basis.

1. MHL § 9.01 et. seq.
2. MHL § 9.43(a).
3. e.g., MHL § 9.01; MHL § 9.39; MHL § 9.27; MHL § 9.33; Matter of Carl C., 126 A.D.2d 640, 511 N.Y.S.2d 144 (2d Dept. 1987).
4. 14 N.Y.C.R.R. § 527.8(c).
5. 14 N.Y.C.R.R. § 527.8(c).
6. MHL § 31.27(a)(3).
7. CPLR Article 63-a.
8. See, *R.M. v. C.M.*, 189 N.Y.S.3d 425, 79 Misc.3d 250 (Sup. Ct. Orange County, April 4, 2023) (“Absent from New York’s Red Flag Law is any provision whatsoever requiring even a single medical or mental health expert opinion ... as currently written, lacks sufficient statutory guardrails to protect a citizen’s Second Amendment Constitutional right to bear arms.”); compare, *J.B. v. K.S.G.*, 189 N.Y.S.3d 888, 79 Misc.3d 296 (Sup. Ct. Cortland County, April 6, 2023) (“Notably, however, the extreme risk protection statute does not require findings that respondent is mentally ill, or that the likelihood of serious harm result from mental illness, as conditions to entry of either a temporary or final extreme risk protection order...”); declining to follow, *G.W. v. C.N.*, 181 N.Y.S.3d 432, 78 Misc.3d 289 (Sup. Ct. Monroe County, December 22, 2022) (ERPO statute unconstitutional); compare, *Haverstraw Town Police v. C.G.*, 190 N.Y.S.3d 588, 79 Misc.3d 1005 (Sup. Ct. Ulster County, April 20, 2023) (ERPO statute constitutional).
9. FCA § 812.
10. FCA § 842.

Carolyn Reinach Wolf is an Executive Partner at Abrams, Fensterman LLP and Director of the firm’s unique Mental Health Law practice dedicated to serving individuals and families struggling with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder. She also represents institutions, mental health, healthcare higher education and related professionals. Ms. Wolf is a regular contributor to *Psychology Today* and was profiled by *The New York Times* in a 2013 story entitled, “A Guide in the Darkness,” which ran on the front page of the *Sunday Edition Metro* section. She has been selected to *New York Super Lawyers®* list since 2013 and the *Best Lawyers of America®* since 2018. This year Ms. Wolf is being recognized as *Lawyer of the Year for Health Care Law* by *The Best Lawyers in America®*. She can be reached at cwolf@abramslaw.com or at (516) 592-5857.

Sarah A. Chussler is a Partner at Abrams, Fensterman, LLP. Ms. Chussler handles Mental Hygiene Law Article 81 guardianship proceedings and Article 9 mental health commitment and treatment proceedings. Ms. Chussler is a member of the NYSBA Elder Law and Special Needs Section, currently serving as the Vice Chair of the Elder



October 30, 2023
6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
via Zoom

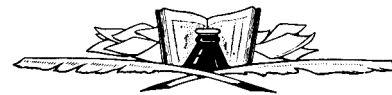
CHEN-OSTER V. GOLDMAN SACHS, INC.
Case No. 10-6950 (S.D.N.Y.)

The Chen-Oster case challenges Goldman Sachs’ alleged systemic and pervasive discrimination in pay, promotions, and performance violations under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the New York City Human Rights Law.

The NYWBA invites you to a discussion with the Co-Lead Counsel for Plaintiffs, Chen-Oster, in the gender discrimination class action lawsuit against Goldman Sachs.

Speakers:
Cara E. Greene, Esq., OuttenGolden
Kelly M. Dermody, Esq., Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein

RSVP to nywbapres@nywba.org
by October 20, 2023



Thank you!

We appreciate our Platinum Sponsors of the July 18th program, What It’s Really Like to Practice Law as a Woman.

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New York, NY 10005

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New York, NY 10038

Abuse Committee. Ms. Chussler was designated as a "Rising Star" in New York Elder Law by "Super Lawyers®" from 2019 through 2021, and has been selected as a Best Lawyers "Ones to Watch"® for Elder Law and for Health Care Law since 2021. She can be reached at schussler@abramslaw.com or at (516) 592-5857.

Why I Joined the NYWBA

Some of you have heard the story of why I initially joined the NYWBA. For those who haven't, I will repeat it here. Hon. Sherry Klein Heitler was the first Judge who appointed me as an Article 81 Guardian. I did not know her before I met her in Court. I was very impressed by her. Later, I went to look up her biography, and I saw several organizations of which she was a member. I joined them all. One was the New York Women's Bar Association. I thought, "If Judge Klein Heitler is a member, then I should be a member, too." That is why I joined.

Why I stayed is another story. After I joined, I immediately joined the Solo and Small Firm Committee. I thought the programs were terrific, and I felt a kinship with the group. I was a member of a two person firm, so I appreciated getting to know other women in small firms. A while later, Deborah Rosenthal, Esq. reached out to me and asked me if I would consider being on the Board of Directors. I said yes. I had no idea what it entailed or how rewarding an experience it would be. It took the concept of "meeting other women," to another level. I have also told some of you that I distinctly remember attending one of my first board meetings, where Amanda Norejko, Esq. was speaking, and I was both impressed and intimidated by her self-assured presence and knowledge. I continued as a member of the Board. I grew to respect my sister board members. I was a Co-Chair of the Elder Law & Disabilities Committee. I was asked to be the Recording Secretary, then Treasurer and a Vice President. Last year, I was asked to be the President. Throughout my time in the NYWBA, it has been a humbling and exhilarating experience.

I am so glad I joined. I am so glad I stayed. I have met many wonderful people who are a part of our local association, and others throughout the state. I have made friends for life. I have learned so much, not only through the variety of programs that I have attended, but through meeting with like-minded women who share both triumphs and disappointments. I am extremely proud of the accomplishments of our association and of the support we give to so many other organizations who embody our goals of promoting justice and advancing the cause of women in the law.

If you are new to NYWBA, I encourage you to get involved. Immerse yourself in committee work, reach out to our Co-Chairs, Officers and Directors for mentorship and friendship, and participate fully in this association. I assure you, that you (and we) will be enriched if you do.

Sabrina E. Morrissey
NYWBA President, 2023-2024

In 2006, I was introduced to Hon. Lisa Sokoloff by the judge for whom I was clerking. I had recently moved to New York City and needed to establish myself professionally as a newly practicing lawyer.

She encouraged me to join the New York Women's Bar Association (the NYWBA or the Association), a founding chapter of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York.

What immediately drew me in is how welcoming and nurturing NYWBA members are. Whether they are attorneys or judges, they make it a point to put you at ease and include you in their circles.

The NYWBA gave me unique opportunities to get meaningfully involved by trusting me with various projects, including planning CLE programs.

Through serendipity I was able to help conduct a CLE program to acquaint newly-admitted New York bar practitioners as well as attorneys new to the practice in New York with the Civil Court of the City of New York.

I climbed up the proverbial bar association ladder by chairing Committees and ultimately joining the Board of Directors and becoming an Officer.

Less than ten years after joining the NYWBA, I became President of the Association in 2014. I credit my NYWBA mentors and friends for helping me excel in the various roles I took on in the Association leading up to my presidency.

More importantly, I developed a great circle of friends with whom I've celebrated milestones, including but certainly not limited to a bridal shower, a wedding and a baby shower. Since moving to New York City, I gained and kept some of my closest friends through the NYWBA.

The Association helped me advance professionally, as well as find sisterhood in a new city. I never miss its Annual Dinner and I look forward to attending many more programs and events with my dear colleagues and friends.

Yacine Barry-Wun
NYWBA President, 2014-2015

Your Opinion Matters

NYWBA is seeking monthly opinions on legal matters. Please send your op-ed piece to opinions@nywba.org.

PRESIDENT

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NEW YORK WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION

A Founding Chapter of THE WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

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Submissions must be sent to the Newsletter Committee (Chairs **Olivia Sohmer & Isiris Isaac**) by the 10th of the month for publication in the following month's Newsletter. Please submit articles, announcements, upcoming event programming, photos, committee news, member news, and ads to newsletter@nywba.org. Submissions should be proofed and cite-checked, and NYWBA retains the usual editorial discretion to omit or edit all contributions. Send an email to newsletter@nywba.org if you have questions or are interested in joining the Newsletter Committee.

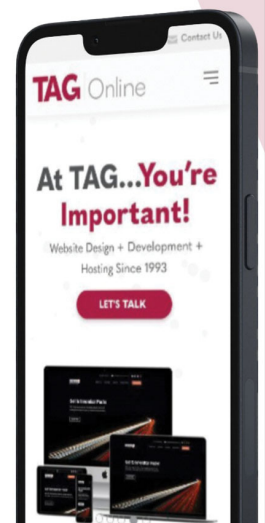
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