



2023 | VOL. 4 | NO. 2

WILS Connect

A publication of the Women in Law Section
of the New York State Bar Association



Achieving Financial Health: Empowering Women To Take Control

Finding Time To Build a Legal Practice

From *Roe* to *Dobbs*: Where Do We Go From Here?

WILS Probes Broad Negative Impact of the Perpetual Gender Pay Gap

WILS Connect

Co-Editors

Terri A. Mazur
tmazur575@gmail.com

Linda A. Redlisky
redlisky@randrlegal.com

For information and submissions please contact
Terri A. Mazur
tmazur575@gmail.com

Submission Guidelines

WILS Connect welcomes the submission of articles of timely interest to members of the Section in addition to comments and suggestions for future issues. For ease of publication, articles should be submitted via e-mail to tmazur575@gmail.com. Accepted articles fall generally in the range of 1-10 typewritten, double-spaced pages. Please use endnotes in lieu of footnotes. All submissions for consideration to be published in *WILS Connect* should use gender-neutral terms where appropriate or, alternatively, the masculine and feminine forms may both be used. Please contact Terri Mazur, Chair of the Reports, Surveys & Publications Committee, regarding further requirements for the submission of articles. Information on submission of articles can also be found online at nysba.org/womeninlaw.

Unless stated to the contrary, all published articles represent the viewpoint of the author and should not be regarded as representing the views of the Co-Editors or the Section or substantive approval of the contents therein.

Reprint requests can be made to reprint@nysba.org. Please include the purpose and manner of redistribution.

Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities:

NYSBA welcomes participation by individuals with disabilities. NYSBA is committed to complying with all applicable laws that prohibit discrimination against individuals on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of its goods, services, programs, activities, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations. To request auxiliary aids or services or if you have any questions regarding accessibility, please contact the Bar Center at 518-463-3200

Publication Date: December 2023

© 2023 by the New York State Bar Association.
ISSN 2690-2001 (print) ISSN 2690-201X (online)

Women in Law Section

Section Officers

Chair

Kim Wolf Price
Bond Schoeneck & King PLLC
Syracuse, NY
kwolfprice@bsk.com

Chair-Elect

Frettra de Silva
Standard Chartered Bank
New York, NY
frettra.desilva@sc.com

Secretary

Erica S. Youngerman
Katten Muchin Rosenman
New York, NY
erica.youngerman@katten.com

Treasurer

Denise Bricker
National Audobon Society
New York, NY
dbricker@audobon.org

Delegate, House of Delegates

Sheryl B. Galler
Book Law LLP
New York, NY
sgaller@booklawllp.com

Alternate Delegate, House of Delegates

Terri A. Mazur
tmazur575@gmail.com

Members at Large

Laurie S. Coles (Upstate)
lcoles1@paychex.com

Sarah Simpson (Downstate)
ssimpson83@gmail.com

Margaret Sowah
msowah@nycourts.gov

Kaylin Whittingham
klw@whittinghamlaw.com

NYSBA.ORG/WOMENINLAW

Contents

Feature Articles

- 12** U.S. Senate Votes Against the ERA and Equality for Women
Kaelyn Gustafson
- 13** NYSBA President Richard Lewis Is Focused on Improving the Legal Profession
Kim Wolf Price
- 14** Time Blocking To Support Professional Health
Mary Walsh Fitzpatrick
- 15** Achieving Financial Health: Empowering Women To Take Control
Roxana McKinney
- 17** The Foundational 5: Essential Nutrients of Well-Being
Ashleigh Frankel and Amy Johnston
- 19** Commercial and Federal Litigation and Dispute Resolution Sections Tackle the Impact of Well-Being on Professional Satisfaction
Kim Wolf Price
- 20** Finding Time To Build a Legal Practice
Randi Rosenblatt
- 22** WILS Current and Past Chairs Participate in WBASNY's 'From Roe to Dobbs: Where Do We Go From Here?'
Sheryl B. Galler
- 23** Chronic Illness, Women and Divorce
Morgha Leia Richardson
- 24** Committing To You: The Most Important Meeting You'll Ever Make—the Meeting With Yourself
Susan L. Harper
- 25** Pets and Custody Disputes: The Best Interests of Your Pet
Debra Vey Voda-Hamilton
- 27** The Importance of Estate Planning
Linda A. Redlisky and Wendy Hoey Sheinberg
- 30** Breast Cancer Awareness Month: Let's Talk Screenings With Dr. Allison DePersia
Erica S. Youngerman
- 32** Breast Cancer Awareness Month: An Attorney's Story of Survival
Erica S. Youngerman
- 34** CDC Adds Uterine and Endometrial Cancers to the List of 9/11-Related Cancers: Now Begins the Work of Reaching Victims and Their Families
Dana Cohen
- 40** WILS Members in the News
Terri A. Mazur
- 44** Justice Dianne T. Renwick's Historic Appointment as Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division
Linda A. Redlisky



WILS Connect

2023 | Vol. 4 | No. 2

3

Message From the Chair
Kim Wolf Price

4

Message From the Co-Editors
*Terri A. Mazur and
Linda A. Redlisky*

6

WILS Past, Present & Future, Part I:
Remarks of Outgoing Chair Sheryl B.
Galler
*Excerpted and introduced by
Kim Wolf Price*

8

WILS Past, Present & Future, Part
II: A Conversation With Incoming
Chair Kim Wolf Price
Terri A. Mazur

10

Pathways to Leadership: From a Meet
& Greet Attendee to a Leadership
Role: Women in Law Section Secretary
Erica Youngerman
Kim Wolf Price

37

Section Event Photos

74

Section Committees and
Chairs

45

Hon. Deborah H. Karalunas: First Female
Administrative Judge for the Fifth Judicial
District
Terri A. Mazur

46

Celebrating Juneteenth
Catherine Christian

47

Nigeria, the Connection Continues!
Linda A. Redlisky

Section Events

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|--|
| 49 | Women in Law Section Probes Broad Negative Impact of the Perpetual Gender Pay Gap During 2023 Annual Meeting
<i>Laura Sulem</i> | 65 | WILS Co-Sponsors the Fourth Annual International Conference on the Status of Women
<i>Linda A. Redlisky</i> |
| 51 | Women in Law Section Bestows Prestigious Awards to Pioneering Lawyers
<i>David Alexander</i> | 65 | WILS Celebrates NJWLA Platinum Gala Honorees
<i>Terri A. Mazur</i> |
| 53 | How To Manage Time, Set Priorities and Reduce Anxiety
<i>Rebecca Melnitsky</i> | 66 | Champion for Women's and Children's Rights Receives Ruth Bader Ginsburg Memorial Scholarship
<i>Jennifer Andrus</i> |
| 55 | Reclaim Your Calendar: Productivity and Time Management Tactics for Lawyers
<i>Laura Sulem</i> | 67 | Medication Abortion in the Post-Dobbs World
<i>Josephine A. Reina</i> |
| 56 | Women on the Move 2023: Navigating the Path to Your Success
<i>Erica S. Youngerman</i> | 69 | Abortion Pills Face Uncertain Future After Dobbs
<i>Rebecca Melnitsky</i> |
| 58 | Meet the New Co-Chairs of the WILS Legislative Affairs Committee
<i>Terri A. Mazur</i> | 71 | WILS Partner's Committee Inaugural Quarterly Breakfast Meeting Is a Success
<i>Jennifer Fiorica Delgado</i> |
| 60 | WILS Legislative Affairs Committee's Recap of the New York Legislature 2023 Session and 2024 Preview
<i>Kaelyn Gustafson and Robin A. Kramer</i> | 72 | WILS Book Club Series
<i>Laura Sulem</i> |
| 64 | New Legal Technology Brings Both Promise and Pitfalls
<i>Rebecca Melnitsky</i> | | |

Don't miss any of the latest news, announcements, publications, and info from NYSBA. Please take a moment to check and update your contact information to help us serve you better.

Please perform the following steps to update your profile information

- Step 1: Login to your account at **NYSBA.ORG**
- Step 2: Select "View Profile" under your name
- Step 3: Click on "Edit Information"



Message From the Chair

As I write this message, I am sitting on a plane heading to a conference. Packages are arriving at our house, readying our oldest for his first semester of college. I am reviewing emails about future programs as I am now finishing my first few weeks as chair of the Women in Law Section (WILS).

In between all of this, Supreme Court decisions have been released. States have continued to react to the *Dobbs* ruling from last year and Canadian wildfires are bringing intermittent haze and poor air quality to New York. And, of course, there is work to do, dinner to make, and family to check on.

Now back to the plane. The flight attendant reminded us that in the event of an emergency, we are to put our own oxygen masks on first before we help others. A simple and prudent request. Yet one we often forget in our day-to-day lives.

It makes me realize that this is why groups like WILS are necessary. In our professional lives, we often forget to put our oxygen masks on first. We worry about others first, often to our detriment. WILS provides opportunities, like this journal, for women attorneys to focus on their own professional and personal success. It also allows us to discuss issues of physical and mental well-being along with topics to assist with career success without apologizing for taking the time to do so.

It may not make immediate sense to those who don't know me, but my sons are a driving force behind why I am active in the Women in Law Section and why I care about issues of equity and equality. Like most parents, I have spent the last 18 years talking with my husband and mindfully considering how we would raise our kids. We have also spent time thinking about our responsibility in raising men, particularly white men with two lawyers as parents, today.

Issues of equity and equality do not just impact the group being discussed. Advances for women, women of color, the LGBTQIA+ community, and more have positive impacts on society at large. Did you know that the Institute for Women's Policy Research found that the poverty rate of working women would be cut in half if women earned as much as men? The study also found that equal pay would add half a trillion dollars to the U.S. economy.¹ The Council on Foreign Relations says closing the gender gap in the global workforce could add \$28 trillion to the global economy.²

This edition of *WILS Connect* focuses on women's health, in all forms. It came about from conversations surround-



Kim Wolf Price

ing body autonomy, mental health, economic well-being, and professional goals. The authors provide us with myriad excellent advice and food for thought.

I hope you grant yourself the time to read through this issue. It has been edited with outstanding skill, patience, and grace by WILS Executive Committee members Terri A. Mazur and Linda A. Redlisky with the assistance of the members of the Reports, Surveys and Publication Committee. Many thanks to them and to all our authors who so generously shared their time and talents.

As our Immediate Past Chair Sheryl Galler explains in her remarks, this Section has been hard at work on issues supporting women's health and success. And the NYSBA Women in Law Section shows no signs of slowing down.

The Programming Committee successfully organized the 2023 Women on the Move's flagship program titled, "Navigating the Path to Your Success." We look forward to bringing you more news about the event in the next installment. We are also planning numerous book clubs, partnerships with non-U.S. women's groups, conversations on cyber security, and much more. We are already planning for the NYSBA Annual Meeting and our 19th Annual Edith K. Spivak Symposium. The 2024 symposium, along with a great deal of our programming in the next year, will focus on the New York State ERA, which in November 2024 will be brought to the ballot for a vote of the people of New York. Our Legislative Committee, along with others, is discussing ways to educate New York's voters on this critical referendum.

In the meantime, text messages circulate between WILS Executive Committee members as we process new legal developments. Emails are sent to check in on each other's health. Sometimes crowns are passed on for inspiration (thanks Morghan Richardson). We remind each other to put our oxygen masks on. We work together on issues of importance to women attorneys and all women. Because together, we can make a difference, and we will have an impact. I encourage you to reach out if you are interested in joining the Women in Law Section.

**Warm regards,
Kim**

Endnotes

1. See <https://iwpr.org/not-just-equal-pay-the-u-s-womens-national-teams-fight-underscores-how-an-equitable-economy-can-work-for-everyone/>.
2. <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-global-economy/>.

Message From the Editors



Terri A. Mazur



Linda A. Redlisky

The theme of this edition of WILS Connect, Women's Health, was the collective brainchild of the WILS' Executive Committee. After a dizzying 2022, which included an assault against women's reproductive rights, banning books, anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation, and perpetual gender pay gap issues, it is no wonder finding happiness, success, and joy in both our personal and professional lives seemed more urgent. We need, both individually and collectively, to re-center ourselves in order to continue our effective advocacy for women's issues about which our section cares so deeply.

With this collection, we endeavored to spark a journey in the pursuit of self and professional health. Articles range from professional health strategies such as time blocking, building your law practice and achieving financial health, to personal health insights on the importance of exercise and other essential foundations of well-being. Also included are perspectives and issues that might not have been considered in one's path to fiscal health. For example, "Chronic Illness, Women and Divorce" by Morghan Leia Richardson warns that the rate of divorce skyrockets when it is the woman who suffers from a chronic illness or disease. We are also grateful to have a candid conversation with Erica Youngerman and Dr. Allison DePersia about the importance of breast cancer screening.

This issue also continues to report on important legal developments of particular interest to women. Not surprisingly, there has been tremendous fallout relating to reproductive rights issues after the *Dobbs* decision. We delve into medication abortion, examining the current litigation and its effect on access to medication abortion, and the future of avail-

ability of abortion pills after *Dobbs*. "The U.S. Senate Votes Against the ERA and Equality for Women" expresses WILS' deep disappointment that the U.S. Senate has failed, once again, to recognize women as equal under the law. We are reminded of the importance of the New York Equal Rights Amendment, up for vote in November of 2024.

Advocacy efforts to advance women's issues continue to make gains. We share the hard-fought victory of the Center for Disease Control finally adding uterine and endometrial cancers to the list of 9/11-related cancers, so victims and their families can now apply for the compensation to which they are entitled.

We feature articles by contributing authors on the historic election of two judges: the Hon. Dianne T. Renwick as the first woman of color appointed as presiding justice of the Appellate Division, First Department, and the Hon. Deborah H. Karalunas as the first female administrative judge appointed for the Fifth Judicial District.

Finally, we share highlights and photos from WILS' many cutting-edge webinars, programs and networking events over the past six months, including our invitation to speak at the Nigerian Women's Bar Association event during Women's History Month. If you missed any of our CLE programs, we invite you to access them on demand from the NYSBA website.

We would like to thank Chair Kim Wolf Price, Member-at-Large Laura Sulem, and past chairs Sheryl Galler and Susan Harper for writing articles, along with our featured mem-

ber authors and contributors. We also thank the members of WILS' Reports, Surveys and Publications Committee—Laurie Coles, Wendy Hoey Sheinberg, Margaret Sowah, Elizabeth Usinger, and Adriana Volterra—for all their work editing and proofreading. We especially thank NYSBA's professional staff members, Alyssa Colton, Section Publications Coordinator, and Lori Herzing, Publications Design Manager, for their invaluable work producing and publishing this issue.

We hope you enjoy reading these articles about subjects and events that are important to advancing women in the legal profession and women generally. As always, we welcome your suggestions and feedback and invite and encourage you to take an active role in our section! Please contact Section Liaison Ernesto Guerrero (eguerrero@nysba.org) if you are interested in working on or contributing to future issues of WILS Connect or joining WILS or any of our committees.

Warm regards,

Terri A. Mazur

Linda A. Redlisky

Terri A. Mazur is a past chair of the Women in Law Section and co-editor of *WILS Connect*. Her practice has focused on complex financial services, securities and antitrust litigation. She was a partner in Mayer Brown's commercial litigation practice for most of her career and founded and chaired the firm's Women's Initiatives Committee. She was also a partner at Arnold Porter Kaye Scholer and Greenberg Traurig.

Linda A. Redlisky is a partner at Rafferty & Redlisky in Pelham, New York, focusing on elder law and guardianship matters. She is the Co-Editor of *WILS Connect*. She is a member of the Executive Committee of WILS and of the Elder Law and Special Needs Section and is Vice Chair of the Guardianship Committee.



NEW YORK STATE
BAR ASSOCIATION

If you have written an article you would like considered for publication in *WILS Connect*, or have an idea for one, please contact the Chair of the Reports, Surveys, and Publications Committee:

Terri A. Mazur
tmazur575@gmail.com

Articles should be submitted in electronic document format (pdfs are NOT acceptable), along with biographical information.

REQUEST FOR ARTICLES

WILS Past, Present and Future, Part I:

Remarks of Outgoing Chair Sheryl B. Galler

Excerpted and introduced by Kim Wolf Price

The following excerpt is from the remarks made by Immediate Past Section Chair Sheryl B. Galler at the June 2023 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Women in Law Section held in New York City at the offices of Katten Muchin Rosenman. These remarks are reprinted here to acknowledge and celebrate her term as chair.

Sheryl B. Galler, immediate past chair of NYSBA's Women in Law Section, concluded her two-year term on May 31, 2023. She has been an active member of WILS and its predecessor, NYSBA's Committee on Women in the Law (CWIL), since 2012, and in addition to being immediate past chair, serves as WILS's Delegate to NYSBA's House of Delegates. Sheryl served as co-chair of the Annual Meeting Committee from 2019 through 2021. Sheryl is also an active member of NYSBA's Labor and Employment Law Section, having served as its treasurer and, upon concluding her term as chair of WILS, Sheryl immediately began her term as chair of the Labor and Employment Law Section (LELS) on June 1, 2023. She is a partner at Book Law, where she advises employers and employees on federal, state, and local employment laws. Sheryl also conducts sexual harassment prevention training for law firms, nonprofits and commercial entities, investigates discrimination and harassment claims, and counsels clients on a wide range of employment law and compliance matters. She has moderated and presented continuing legal education courses on employment law and professional practice for the New York State Office of the Attorney General, NYSBA, and the Women's Leadership Initiative at Albany Law School.



Sheryl B. Galler

It has been really an incredible, wonderful two years, four if you count the two as chair-elect and even more if you count all the time on CWIL [the Committee on Women in the Law], prior to WILS becoming a section.

Working with this Section and getting to know and work with all of you, has been an incredible and wonderful experience that I don't expect to have going forward in anything else I ever do. Thank you all for that. I do want to take a couple of minutes just to mention some of the things that we've accomplished. It's not me. It's not what I've accomplished. It's what this group has accomplished.

In a recent chair's message in *WILS Connect*, I mentioned that I bumped into an old law school friend. We talked about this group and he asked, "What are you accomplishing?" Admittedly, that was just frustrating because I wanted to keep him there for an hour, telling him everything we've done! And just this week on LinkedIn, an attorney who practices abroad posted a very similar story about bumping into a friend who asked her, "Why are you doing all of this women's work?" The attorney tried to explain that, yes, we've come a long way, we've done a lot and we've accomplished so much. But there is still so much more that needs to be done, and so much more focus that needs to be placed on issues women face in the workplace and society. That's why I want to list some of what WILS has done in the last several years.

1. We got through the pandemic together and are stronger as a section than we were when we started. We are an extremely strong section. We have amazing programs. The amazing journal (*WILS Connect*), amazing sponsors, amazing, dedicated committee chairs. I mean, that is very much due to Terri's [Mazur's] leadership during the worst of the pandemic. And so much is due to the foundation Susan [Harper] laid for us as well. And what so many of you do. For instance, Laura [Sulem] keeps us all organized and on top of things, and just does everything for programming. This group is truly amazing.

2. We worked together to get the NYSBA policy on reproductive health and the ERA approved by the Executive Committee of NYSBA and the House of Delegates in November 2022. That was a major accomplishment. It's

I wrote a long list of things to say, but the most important thing I want to say is thank you to everybody on the WILS Executive Committee. Everybody who is so dedicated and so hard working and so passionate, and to especially Ernesto [Guerro, the NYSBA liaison to WILS] without whom we could not do the work we do.

If you've been reading my Messages From the Chair in the *WILS Connect* journal, you know what makes me cry, and it's teamwork. This is something this group has always had. Time and time again. No matter the project, that is what WILS does.

one of those things that, like the pandemic, you wish it didn't have to happen. But so many put in their time and effort to get the reports done, crafted the arguments and networked with other groups and sections to gain support [for the resolution]. This effort was incredible. [Adopting this policy enables NYSBA to advocate for laws affecting reproductive health care rights, to take a stand and adopt support for reproductive health care rights, as well as for the state equal rights amendment, among its federal and state legislative priorities.]

3. This section came through with incredible programs post-*Dobbs*. We gave people a place to grieve. We brought in Amy Johnston, a therapist, to give women a place to speak and grieve. We talked about the legal interpretations, the constitutional implications, and then we gave everybody a practical way to deal with the changes. It was powerful.

4. And, of course, the ERA [Equal Rights Amendment to the New York State Constitution, up for referendum by the people of New York State in November 2024]. I know we're going to focus on the ERA in the next year and a half, as we approach the referendum. Here, Kaelyn Gustafson [co-chair of WILS Legislative Affairs Committee,] is really taking the lead on this, and is a go-to person on the topic. That's inspiring.

5. We also have a long list of other programs. Everything from Juneteenth programs to the Book Club, to Women's History Month to what all the committees are doing, such as the RBG [Ruth Bader Ginsburg] scholarship, the mentorship program, and establishing really great relationships with the other sections. The reason we have good relationships with sections, the leadership, staff and the general counsel's office is because we deal with everyone respectfully. It makes a huge difference. And they are noticing the work we do. I get comments all the time about the programs that we run, and the journal. We get incredible comments on *WILS Connect* for its content.

6. International groups have reached out to us. The relationship with the Nigerian Women's Bar [Association] has been sustained for several years. Now, we welcome ties with the women [attorneys] of Ukraine. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to focus on that because of the war. We've heard from the Women's Bar Association in Italy, and a women lawyer's group in Serbia [both groups would like to work with us]. We're really doing things that are getting attention.

7. We are also an amazing pipeline for leadership both within the section and the Bar Association. Several chairs of the Committee [on Women in Law, the predecessor of the Women in Law Section], way back when . . . [went]

on to become presidents of NYSBA, and we're still doing that. Susan [Harper] is the treasurer for the entire Bar Association, and Kaelyn [Gustafson] is taking the lead on the ERA, and I, while I can't mention everybody, because it's impossible, I do want to mention Erica [Youngerman], because she started on [the WILS] Programming [Committee] and proofreading *WILS Connect* and she's now our secretary. She's an officer and fully involved [in WILS]. Her firm hosted our June meeting [thanks to Katten Muchin!]. Those stories get told around the Bar Association about how we are welcoming new leaders [to this section] and helping mentor new talent, which is amazing.

8. And we really do celebrate each other's successes that include awards, promotions, case victories, family milestones, leadership roles, [promotions, new jobs] and more. It is wonderful.

There are many more accomplishments. Many more achievements. Another I am proud of is how we have grown. In June of 2022 we were at 626 members [following the pandemic], and we are now over 1,000 members strong. Our LinkedIn page added 383 followers over the past year. And we're getting great sponsorships for our programs.

There is so much more I could say, but I will end by saying, thank you. Thank you to the Executive Committee and to the members of WILS.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you, to get to know you, and to be your friends. Thank you for everything. And I'm very comfortable sleeping at night knowing that Kim [Wolf Price] and Frettra [de Silva] are taking over. I am moving on to chair the [Labor and Employment Law Section], but not to worry—I am here if there's anything anybody ever needs.

Thank you all so much.

From all of us in WILS and on the WILS Executive Committee, thank you, Sheryl. Thank you for your excellent Messages From the Chair in WILS Connect throughout your term, for your moving outgoing chair remarks (reprinted above) and so much more. Your dedication, your hard work, your intellect, your focus, and your leadership have been critical to all of us here, to the work we have done, and all we have accomplished. You are a big part of the great work and excellent reputation of this Section. Thank you so much. You are a tough act to follow.
—KWP

WILS Past, Present, and Future, Part II:

A Conversation With Incoming Chair Kim Wolf Price

By Terri A. Mazur

Kim Wolf Price is the new chair of NYSBA's Women in Law Section. She started her term as WILS chair on June 1, 2023. She has been an active member of NYSBA since 2003 and a member of WILS and its predecessor CWIL since 2014. She also is a member of NYSBA's Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and is the former chair of NYSBA's Lawyers in Transition Committee. Kim is the chief strategy & diversity officer of Bond Schoeneck & King, PLLC, working with firm management and administration in implementing its strategic initiatives. She focuses on areas such as strategic planning, attorney professional development, diversity and inclusion, innovation and growth, firm culture development, and strategic talent acquisition.



Kim Wolf Price

Q: We know you are a lawyer and a WILS leader, but tell us a bit about yourself outside of the law.

A: Outside of the law, I am married and have two sons. We live outside of Syracuse, New York. Therefore, I have the honor of being WILS's first "upstate" chair. My husband Fred and I – who met in law school and now work together at Bond, Schoeneck & King – just celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary. Our oldest son began college in the fall and our youngest son will start high school. Our dog, Perry, completes the all-male home in which I live!

Beyond my work in the law, I find myself drawn to issues surrounding inclusion and well-being (which I also focus on within the legal profession). As I think about it, it is quite difficult to separate the law from much of what I do.

Q: What led you to join WILS? How long have you been a member of NYSBA?

A: I'll take the second question first. I have been a member of NYSBA since my third year of law school. A decision that has profoundly impacted my career in an incredibly positive way.

As for WILS, I was appointed to the Committee on Women in the Law a few years before CWIL became a section of the NYSBA. I had been active with the Committee on Lawyers in Transition for several years and was in line to become chair. I saw the great work CWIL was doing – and I'll admit, it was the annual Women on the Move program that really inspired me to become more active. I spoke with David Miranda, then president-elect, now general counsel of NYSBA, and let him know I was interested in becoming more

involved. He then appointed me to CWIL at the start of his term. I started working with the wonderful Linda Redlisky and Debra Hamilton, current members of the WILS Executive Committee, who were chairing the program. The warmth and collegiality of the group were amazing from the start. That was topped off by truly meaningful programming and policy work. I have been all in ever since and was proud to work with the committee as it became a section of NYSBA.

Q: What inspires you about WILS?

A: The WILS Executive Committee members inspire me. This is a talented, brilliant group of attorneys who lead with both passion and compassion.

We all have the privilege of these juris doctor degrees and law licenses. Yes, we earned them. But this is a group of attorneys who consciously and proactively believe that with this law degree comes responsibility. I can say that to a person, the members of WILS whom I have had the honor to work with want to leave this profession and the law more inclusive and fairer than it was when we first entered law school.

Q: Why is WILS so important for NYSBA and the legal community at large?

A: Within NYSBA, WILS serves as a voice for women attorneys as well as women throughout New York State. It would be wonderful if we could say "equality has been reached" and that issues pertaining to women and childbearing persons were resolved. We know that isn't the case. And it becomes even less true for women with intersectional identities, such as women of color, women from the LGBTQIA+ communities, and women with disabilities.

A significant majority of the sections and committees of NYSBA focus on areas of practice, which is fantastic. As lawyers, we need those sections to collaborate and teach each other about new developments in law and practice. WILS has the added responsibility of reviewing changes in law, policy, and practice to see how they particularly impact women attorneys and the women of New York State. WILS has done this in areas from family law matters to equal pay. In the area of health care and body autonomy for women and childbearing persons, WILS has been a critical voice within the bar which resulted in important legislative priorities on these issues (please see Resolution and Report of the New York State Bar Association Women in Law Section¹).

Q: Has the section somehow enhanced your practice/career/enthusiasm for the law? If so, how?

A: I won't lie, the divisiveness on issues, particularly at the national level, over the last few years is disheartening at best. In New York, when we are sworn in as attorneys, we promise to uphold the constitution of the State of New York and of the United States. It is humbling. The text of the oath is set forth in the New York State constitution:

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the constitution of the United States, and the constitution of the State of New York, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of [attorney and counselor-at-law], according to the best of my ability.²

As I was thinking about how I would describe that, I found the following from the Appellate Division, Second Department, which says it so well:

The deceptively simple 47 words of the attorney's oath contain a pledge of such gravity and importance that the Legislature has seen fit to require that it be administered orally in a public court proceeding and to provide that the taking of the oath and the assumption of its obligations be evidenced by the newly admitted attorney's signature in a book specially kept for that purpose. The administration of the oath takes less than one minute, but its obligations endure for the life of the attorney's career at the bar.³

What does this have to do with how the Women in Law Section has "enhanced your practice/career/enthusiasm for the law"? In short, everything. From six-hour-plus phone calls discussing our response strategy after the *Dobbs* decision to programming and Zoom social events during the height of the pandemic, WILS has helped me stay engaged in the law. WILS has helped me stay hopeful for the future. WILS has helped me remember that oath and that the law is powerful. I have learned from excellent leaders such as Susan Harper, Terri Mazur, and Sheryl Galler. I am inspired by the time, thought, and creativity colleagues such as Laura Sulem and Frettra de Silva put into programming. And I am hopeful for new leaders such as Erica Youngerman who will continue to shape this section. There are too many wonderful attorneys to mention. It is their drive, their tenacity, their compassion, and their intelligence that continue to help fuel my enthusiasm for the law and this profession.

Q: What current issues pertaining to women in the law are you following or most concerned about?

A: I strive to make our profession more equitable. To break down barriers to practice. To make sure that children from all

communities learn about legal professions and are given the opportunity to pursue the same. Issues of equality and human rights, such as body autonomy, remain at the forefront of my thinking. I am concerned about the erosion of individual rights. Equity is different from equality. Equity involves acknowledging inequality and working to level the playing field.

Q: As you take on the role of section chair, what in your view are the section's priorities for the upcoming year?

A: The New York Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) passed its second legislative session in January of this year. That means it will be brought to a vote by the people in a ballot referendum in November 2024. Thanks to the work of WILS, the New York ERA is a legislative priority for NYSBA. It will be no surprise then that this is a significant priority for my year as Section Chair. Educating voters on this vote is critical. Many in New York State believe we already have an equal rights amendment. WILS has a Legislative Affairs Committee with a long history of success, which is now chaired by the talented Kaelyn Gustafson and Robin Kramer. Chair-Elect Frettra de Silva and I will work with that committee and many others on programming and educational opportunities.

Additionally, a focus on individual success plays a role in the year ahead. Our 2023 Women on the Move program was titled "Navigating the Path to Your Success." The half-day webinar was held on October 18, 2023 from 1:00 – 5:00 pm. This program and others, from cyber security careers to international collaborations, book clubs, and beyond focus on empowering women to define success on their own terms.

I do need to say here that behind all of this WILS programming and activity is our amazing NYSBA liaison, Ernesto Guerrero. He is a critical member of our team. We are very grateful for the work he and the entire professional staff at NYSBA do every day.

Q: What would you say to an attorney who is on the fence about joining the section?

A: This one is simple. I'd say, "what are you waiting for?" Join. Attend programming. Get to know the amazing attorneys involved and then, of course, reach out to me or another member of the EC and get involved. You will gain so much.

Endnotes

1. Supporting Abortion Rights and the New York State Equal Rights Amendment. November 2022, https://nysba.org/app/uploads/2023/02/Resolution-and-reports-of-the-Women-in-Law-Section_RC_PRINT_White-Border-WIL.pdf).
2. § 1 of Article XIII of the New York State Constitution.
3. <https://www.nycourts.gov/courts/ad2/forms/law%20guardian%20handbook/orientationtotheprofessionprogrammaterials.pdf>.

Pathways to Leadership

From a Meet & Great Attendee to a Leadership Role: Women in Law Section Secretary Erica Youngerman

By Kim Wolf Price

Erica Youngerman is an associate at Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP, where she helps clients as they navigate today's complex health law and health care business transactions landscape. She advises a wide range of health care entities, including physician and other provider practices, hospitals and other health systems, pharmacies and hospice and home care companies, and other participants in the health care industry, including private equity backed management services organizations. Erica advises clients from the beginning to the end of health care transactions and on more pure regulatory analyses. She is active in professional and public service communities. She also serves as a mentor for aspiring attorneys and other young professionals at Katten, as well as at Emory, where she obtained her undergraduate degree, and Brooklyn Law, where she received her J.D. degree. WILS Section Chair Kim Wolf Price recently sat down with Erica to discuss Erica's involvement in the Women in Law Section.



Kim Wolf Price

Ask any member of the Women in Law Section Executive Committee why bar associations matter and they will respond with an answer about building networks, camaraderie, and support. Those who are more experienced will also talk about the importance of developing the next generation of leaders. Erica Youngerman is part of that next generation. I asked Erica to speak with me about the how and the why of her involvement with the NYSBA Women in Law Section.

Q: Please share some background information about yourself, your legal practice and community engagement.

A: I graduated from Emory University in 2008 and Brooklyn Law School in 2011. Professionally, I am a senior associate in the health care department of the New York City office of Katten Muchin Rosenman, where I work on a variety of transactions in the health care space and advise clients regarding regulatory compliance.

I enjoy serving as a mentor, which I do at Katten, Emory and Brooklyn Law. I also informally advise a number of undergraduate and law students. For the New York State Bar Association's Women in Law Section, I am a member of the Executive Committee and an officer, serving as Secretary of the Section. I also am the chair of the 2023 Women on the Move program and a member of the Programming Committee, which offers me more opportunities to tap into my longtime desire to give back and to help others.



Erica S. Youngerman

Giving back is an important part of my life. Outside of the legal space, I also volunteer for several community organizations, including as the president of the Emory University Alumni Association's New York chapter, as a member of the Board of Directors for Barrier Free Living, and as part of the Volunteer Engagement Committee for the New York City chapter of the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation. Further, I am the national director of standards and a lead chapter advisor for Alpha Epsilon Phi National Sorority, and a team captain for a Cycle for Survival team, where I fundraise to support research for rare forms of cancer.

Q: What prompted you to first attend a WILS event and what event was it?

A: My first event with WILS was a virtual meet and greet in spring 2021 where I had the pleasure of meeting many WILS leaders and members. Everyone was incredibly welcoming to me, even as a first-time WILS participant. I decided to sign up for that event as I greatly enjoy meeting new people and was excited about the opportunity to network with other female attorneys practicing in New York.

Q: Were there certain things about WILS that prompted you to join the section?

A: Since the time of my introduction to WILS, it has been evident to me that this Section is made up of a diverse group

of women who are interested in supporting each other personally and professionally. I thoroughly enjoy working with and befriending so many incredible women with various specialties and career paths.

Q: And how did you first get involved?

A: During the virtual meet and greet, I indicated that I would be interested in supporting WILS. The section's leadership was proactive in following up and offering opportunities for me to volunteer. My first tasks were to review and edit program materials for the Annual Meeting and to review submissions for the section's magazine, *WILS Connect*. I enjoyed working on these projects with other WILS members and supporting these important WILS initiatives. I am grateful that the WILS leadership continued to reach out to solicit my feedback and determine where else I could assist. My interest in working on WILS events aligned with the section's needs, and I was able to join the Programming Committee, where I had the opportunity to help plan various events and to moderate a panel for last year's Women on the Move program. I am excited to continue my involvement with WILS by taking on the role of the Section's Secretary and chairing this year's Women on the Move event on October 18. Working with the collaborative, supportive, and welcoming team at WILS has been a great experience; everyone has been open to and excited about new members and ideas.

Q: What is the value of bar association work to attorneys like you as they are building their careers?

A: Bar association work is an incredible opportunity to network with other attorneys, learn from those with additional or different experiences, give back to the legal community and mentor others, contribute to important initiatives, and participate in informative programming.

Q: You have plenty to do in your legal work and other volunteer activities—why did you say yes when I first talked to you about taking on an officer role in WILS? (And by the way, thank you!)

A: I greatly enjoy volunteering for various community organizations where I have the opportunity to give back while also building my personal and professional networks. I am honored and excited to take on this officer role and in it, to contribute to the mission of WILS and support my fellow section leaders in their work.

Q: Would you encourage junior attorneys to get involved? Any advice on taking that first step?

A: Absolutely. I would encourage attorneys of all ages and experience levels to consider becoming involved, in whatever way is comfortable and meaningful to them; whether by at-

tending an event, volunteering on a committee, or offering to support a specific program or initiative.

Q: And, since this is our health issue of *WILS Connect*, do you have any health activities or tips—physical/mental/well-being/financial, etc.—that you rely on?

A: Truly prioritize your well-being and utilize the resources available to you from your employers, bar associations and communities. I am fortunate to be at a firm that truly prioritizes well-being in all areas. Katten offers remote flexibility, mentorship and training, and a "Well-Being 360" program with various resources made available to help us take a break from the rigors of the industry. Katten also offers an annual well-being stipend and various other initiatives focused on prioritizing all areas of health.

Kim Wolf Price is the current chair of NYSBA's Women in Law Section and a member of the Executive Committee of WILS. She is also a member of NYSBA's Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and a former chair of the Lawyers in Transition Committee. Wolf Price is the chief strategy & diversity officer at Bond Schoeneck & King.

U.S. Senate Votes Against the ERA and Equality for Women

By Kaelyn Gustafson

The Women in Law Section of the New York State Bar Association is deeply disappointed that the U.S. Senate has failed, once again, to recognize women as equal under the supreme law of our land. On Thursday, April 27, 2023, 47 senators voted against a measure that could have guaranteed equality for women under the U.S. Constitution—a guarantee that is not only long overdue but also increasingly under threat. It is extremely troubling that this group of senators—85% of whom are men—insist on relegating women to second-class citizenship. Fifty-one senators voted in favor of the procedural measure to remove the expired deadline for the states to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, but 60 votes in favor were needed for the Senate to take up the measure.

WILS commends New York Senator Chuck Schumer for championing women's rights by bringing the ERA to a vote.¹ The events of April 27 only underscore how critical is for New Yorkers to ensure equal protection for women and other protected classes under our own state constitution. The Women in Law Section supports the New York Equal Rights Amendment, which will be put to a public vote on New York State's November 2024 ballots. The New York ERA would prohibit discrimination based on ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender or expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive health care and autonomy, in addition to the already protected categories of race, color, creed, and religion. If voters approve, the ERA will guarantee these rights in our state constitution, protecting the state's residents from the whims of politics.

At a time when personal freedom and autonomy are under attack, the NYSBA Women in Law Section stands resolute in defending women's rights.



Kaelyn Gustafson is a litigation attorney at Friedman Kaplan Seiler Adelman & Robbins, where she focuses on complex commercial litigation and white collar criminal defense. Prior to joining Friedman Kaplan, she was a litigation associate at Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson. She clerked for the Honorable James Orenstein of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, and the Honorable Rebecca Freyre of the Colorado

Court of Appeals. Gustafson is admitted to the bars of Colorado and New York, and became a member of the New York State Bar Association before she moved to New York. Gustafson co-chairs the WILS Legislative Affairs Committee. She is also a member of the White Collar Criminal Litigation Committee of NYSBA's Commercial and Federal Litigation Section.

Endnote

1. It should be noted that under Rule XIII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, Senator Schumer had to vote "no" in order to preserve his ability to bring the ERA up for reconsideration at a later date.

NYSBA President Richard Lewis Is Focused on Improving the Legal Profession

By Kim Wolf Price

When Richard (Dick) C. Lewis assumed the role of president of the New York State Bar Association in June, he had already thought out the priorities, task forces, and agenda for his presidential year. His plans are ambitious and cover a variety of topics. When speaking with him, one theme becomes clear: “The focus is on our profession, on lawyers,” Lewis said.

A native of New York’s Southern Tier, Lewis serves as special counsel at the Binghamton firm of Hinman, Howard & Kattell. His practice focuses on litigation and business law.

Focus on the Profession

President Lewis, who took over the role at the beginning of June from now Immediate Past President Sherry Levin Wallach, said “the centerpiece [of his term] is to focus on our profession.”

“If we can put lawyers in a position where we can do our jobs with fewer impediments, we can improve attorney well-being, increase service to our clients, and leave time for pro bono,” said Lewis.

Lewis highlighted a few issues that are impacting lawyers in New York including the need to increase 18b rates (the rate paid to private attorneys for representing indigent clients charged with a criminal offense); the recording-keeping requirements surrounding notary public officiating; and Judicial Law 470 (requiring lawyers admitted to practice in New York—but residing in other states—to have a law office in the state).

Bar Service

Service to other attorneys and focusing on assisting lawyers to navigate the stresses of legal practice have long been part of Lewis’s work. Lewis has served on the NYSBA House of Delegates since 2001. He first got involved with the New York State Bar Association through his local bar, the Broome County Bar Association. During his terms as Broome County Bar Association president, Lewis was invited to speak at the Bar Center. Walking around, he was impressed by NYSBA’s programs, including the lawyer assistance program. As he learned more about the ways NYSBA served attorneys, Lewis was eager to get involved.

When asked why he stays involved in bar service, and particularly with NYSBA, Lewis said, “we do a lot of good things. Good for society. Good for lawyers. We stand up for people’s rights. We speak up for lawyers. And we do all of that while listening with respect. Listening to people we some-



times don’t agree with—that is after all a large part of being a lawyer.” NYSBA is important to lawyers’ careers, Lewis added, and when working with NYSBA, one can “meet a lot of smart people and accomplish great things that impact our communities and our profession.”

The Year Ahead

The new NYSBA president has already created several task forces that support his belief that bar associations can accomplish great things. The issues Lewis has focused on when creating task forces include medical aid to the dying; homelessness; antisemitic and anti-Asian hate; and a task force to help lawyers in responding to the Supreme Court’s recent decision regarding affirmative action.

Lewis is eager to work with a variety of NYSBA committees and sections during his presidency, including the Women in Law Section. “What’s good for women lawyers is good for all lawyers,” Lewis said. Recalling that his law school class had only three female students, Lewis agreed that the Women in Law Section has a critical role within the association. He remembered fondly being at the House of Delegates when the Women in Law Section was created.

The issue of women in the law has become a family issue for Lewis. His younger daughter, Anna, is a legal assistant at Hinman Howard and Kattell, the same firm where he practices. Additionally his older daughter, Emily, was recently admitted to practice in New York and is a first-year associate in Washington, D.C.

When asked what advice he might give to a first-time NYSBA section chair, Lewis offered the following: “Listen and be transparent. Be very clear that you want to hear what folks have to say. Work together and you will accomplish great things.”

Time Blocking To Support Professional Health

By Mary Walsh Fitzpatrick

Staying focused is difficult these days. There are too many distractions pulling me away from the work at hand, fragmenting my attention, and rewarding me with quick dopamine hits. A distracted 10 minutes of my morning might, hypothetically, unravel like this: I open my email and begin to respond to a colleague's question that requires a bit of research, but there is a text notification from my phone to which I immediately attend and, while doing so, I notice a LinkedIn notification. I open LinkedIn and an interesting article catches my eye so I spend a few minutes skimming it. I return to my email, but wait, where was I? If you are thinking that my morning has devolved into something like *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, you wouldn't be far off.

The lack of productivity causes my mind to swirl, and I find myself running through my mental "to-do" list with no clear direction. As a result, I feel less competent than I am. And competence is one of the key indicators of happiness at work. In an interview with *Fast Company*, University of California Irvine Professor Gloria Mark states it takes about 23 minutes and 15 seconds to recover from distractions.¹ But the real cost is far greater. These distractions undermine our professional health, more specifically, our identities as focused, organized, goal-oriented professionals.

Time Blocking

One habit I have adopted to steel myself for the inevitable distractions of the day is time blocking. The practice of time blocking isn't novel or complicated. It does, however, require some planning and commitment. Effective time blocking requires us to identify top priorities for the day, week, or weeks ahead and assign specific tasks to each block of time—realistically assessing the amount of time each task will take. For example, a writing assignment might require a two-hour block, whereas responding to email may require a half-hour block.

Transitioning

I also include a small window of time for transitioning after each time block. Task switching can be counterproductive without allowing time to transition. Moving from task to task without time in between leads to brain fatigue, which makes us more susceptible to distraction. Whenever possible, I try to include a 10- to 15-minute time boundary in between tasks. During this time, I might take a walk around the office, refill my water, or reward myself with a cup of coffee.



When I get back to my work, I am ready to reorient myself to the new task in front of me. The practice of mindfulness, deep breathing or meditation can also be great tools for reducing the strain of task switching and improving cognitive function. No matter how you use the time in between tasks, it is important that your ritual signals to your brain that you are moving on to something new. You may think you don't have the time to create these boundaries, but I suggest the cost of not building them into your calendar is far greater.

Building Healthy Habits

Of course, no amount of time blocking will work effectively without the discipline required to stay focused on the assigned task. Eliminating the possible frictions between your focus and the work is the easiest way to stay the course. I find turning off notifications, phone and email, and limiting other distractions, to the extent possible, is the best way to set myself up for success. I also try to plan the work that requires deeper focus for the early morning when my mind is clear. Of course, not every day goes as planned, even with a well-planned, appropriately time-blocked calendar. But it certainly helps. At the end of a productive day, I feel competent and aligned with my professional identity, which is to say, I am professionally healthy.



Mary Walsh Fitzpatrick is the assistant dean of Albany Law School's Career and Professional Development Center. Prior to her current position, she worked for seven years as an associate director of the Office of Career and Professional Development at Brooklyn Law School. Mary received her B.A. from Binghamton University and her J.D. from Brooklyn Law School. She spent five years as a litigation associate with a firm in New York City, where

she represented commercial building owners in commercial leasing and litigation matters. She has since dedicated her career to coaching and professional development. She earned her certificate in personal development coaching from the Coaching and Positive Psychology Institute in 2022.

Endnote

1. Kermit Pattison, *Worker, Interrupted: The Cost of Task Switching*, *Fast Company* (July 28, 2008), <https://www.fastcompany.com/944128/worker-interrupted-cost-task-switching>.

Achieving Financial Health: Empowering Women To Take Control

By Roxana McKinney

As women, we face unique challenges and opportunities when it comes to managing our finances. Managing our financial health is a vital aspect of overall well-being and plays a crucial role in empowering women to lead fulfilling lives. In this article, we explore the significance of financial health, offering practical advice and guidance to help women take control of their financial futures. By understanding and actively managing our finances, we can pave the way for greater independence, security, and personal growth. Being confident around personal finances means having the opportunity to live life with peace of mind.

What comes to mind when you think of wellness? Physical wellness? Mental wellness? What about financial well-being? We all have experienced money anxiety, and anxiety finds its way into our lives more than we can imagine. Our relationship with money can significantly impact our overall wellness and quality of life.

The Importance of Financial Health

Financial health encompasses more than just having a stable bank account; it involves having a clear understanding of our financial goals, being able to meet our needs, and making informed decisions about money. Achieving financial health is crucial for women to have control over their lives, pursue their aspirations, and build a solid foundation for the future. The following includes actionable steps toward some well-deserved financial self-care.

Develop a Strong Financial Mindset

To cultivate financial health, women must first develop a strong mindset that embraces their financial worth and capabilities. Recognizing our own value and the skills we bring to the table allows us to advocate for ourselves in financial matters. By boosting our confidence and embracing a growth-oriented mindset, we can overcome financial obstacles and make sound decisions about saving, investing, and earning more.

Write down your top money goals for the next six months. Having short term money goals allows you to check in with yourself and stay on track. Take 10 minutes to write down your money goals for the next six months and what you want to accomplish. Try free writing as much as possible and don't think about it too much. Write down everything that comes to mind, such as how much money you want to

earn, how to budget for vacations, and include anything that would help further your career or help you find a new career opportunity, and consider working with a financial coach to get on the fast-track to financial security.

Budget and Save

Creating and maintaining a budget is a fundamental step toward financial health. By tracking income and expenses, we gain clarity on our overall financial situation and can identify areas where adjustments may be needed. Saving should be an integral part of our budget, ensuring we have a safety net for emergencies and investment or other opportunities. Even small, consistent contributions to savings (outside of your 401(k)) can lead to significant long-term benefits.

Take a five-day challenge. Consider going on a temporary spending hold for five days. This is one of those things I like to do a few times a year, like a dry January challenge or going on a seven-day juice cleanse. Think of a spending hold as a cleanse for your money. Did you know that impulse spending carries a lifetime price tag of over \$300,000 for the average American? We don't even realize how much we spend on the daily things, so take five days to a week or more to pause your spending. This means not spending money on anything extra like eating out, shopping, entertainment or online impulse buying. Removing the temptation to spend can be surprisingly freeing. You simply don't have any extra decisions to make in that area of your life. Most of my clients discover (or rediscover) that some of the things they enjoy doing are free, like reading a book or taking a stroll in the park. And many have reported an improvement in mental health, happiness, and relationships. Look at this as a chance to reset your financial health and spending habits. How many days will you commit to?

Debt Management

Debt can significantly impact our financial well-being. It is essential to understand the difference between "good debt," such as investments in education or a home, and "bad debt," which may result from overspending or carrying high-interest credit card debt. Managing debt wisely, through strategies such as debt consolidation and prioritizing repayment, can alleviate financial stress and create a path to financial freedom. Debt holds many of us back and weighs on us emotionally as well, but it's not until you finally get fed up enough and

realize you can do better than you actually make the changes needed to become debt free.

Calculate Your Consumer Debt

The first step in becoming debt free is knowing where you stand. Most people don't know how much debt they actually have. Take 30 minutes to an hour to look up and write out how much total consumer debt you have. This includes everything you make payments on, except for your mortgage. It should include credit cards, store cards, student loans, car payments, personal loans, cell phones and anyone to whom you owe money. We suggest writing down your minimum payments and your interest rate on each item to help you get crystal clear on what you owe.

List your debts smallest to largest, then work the debt snowball method, paying off the smallest debt first (paying minimums on everything else) until the biggest debt is gone. We have used this method to help hundreds of women pay off hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt, including student loan debt.

Net Worth Management

Now that you've looked up all your debt, you can calculate your net worth. If you're unsure what your net worth is or haven't calculated it in a while, I encourage you to do so today. Your net worth is everything you own, minus what you owe. For example, if you own a home that has \$100,000 equity, you have \$20,000 in cash, and have \$80,000 in retirement, you "own" \$200,000. But if you have \$30,000 in credit debt or student loans, you would subtract \$30,000 from the \$200,000 (the total of what you own) and arrive at a net worth of \$170,000.

Calculate Your Net Worth

This may take you an hour or so if you have a lot of accounts, but add up everything you own in assets, then subtract what you owe. If your net worth is negative, do not let that discourage you, especially if student loans are the reason. Focus on paying off your debts as soon as you can while also saving to accomplish your competing financial goals.

Invest and Plan for the Future

Investing is a powerful tool for building long-term wealth and achieving financial goals. Women often face unique challenges in the investment world, such as the gender investment gap and unequal access to opportunities. Educating ourselves about investment options, seeking professional advice, and exploring diverse investment avenues can help bridge these gaps and secure our financial futures.

Advocate for Equal Pay and Workplace Benefits

Gender pay gaps persist in many industries, hindering women's financial progress. As advocates for equal pay and workplace benefits, we can actively participate in creating change. Negotiating fair compensation, seeking out promotions, and raising awareness about pay equity can contribute to a more equitable and inclusive work environment for women.

Financial Planning for Life Transitions

Women experience various life transitions, such as marriage, childbirth, divorce, and other caregiving responsibilities. Planning ahead for these transitions can help us navigate potential financial challenges effectively. Consulting professionals, understanding legal and financial implications, and creating contingency plans empower us to make informed decisions during these critical moments.

Financial health is an essential component of overall well-being for women. By actively engaging with our finances, we can take control of our present circumstances and shape a prosperous future. Building a strong financial mindset, budgeting, saving, managing debt, investing wisely, advocating for equal pay, and planning for life transitions are all key steps toward achieving financial health. Let us empower ourselves and each other to embrace financial independence, security, and the ability to pursue our dreams with confidence. Together, we can break down barriers and create a brighter financial future for all women.

Remember that financial wellness is an ongoing process, and it's never too late to prioritize your financial health. Let's continue this journey together, supporting and uplifting one another on the path to financial success.



Roxana McKinney is the founder of Women Wealth & Worth (women-wealthandworth.com), a financial education firm, where she helps women with financial management. She also is a speaker on women's wealth empowerment, financial education and salary negotiation. She serves on the board for the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, a national social justice organization.

The Foundational 5: Essential Nutrients of Well-Being

By Ashleigh Frankel and Amy Johnston

In the seemingly elusive pursuit of success and fulfillment, we often focus on reaching external milestones and meeting personal and professional expectations. Given the pace at which those milestones are created and how high those expectations have become in our “always on” society, how realistic is it to rely on these as our benchmark for thriving?

As the recent Deloitte Well-being at Work Survey¹ reveals, there is a profound need to expand our perspective of success, fulfillment, and well-being to encompass the support and sustainability of our very essence as human beings. Just as we recognize the importance of specific nutrients for our physical selves, it can be really helpful to consider the nutrients we need to support our whole selves - body, mind, heart, and spirit.

Introducing **The Foundational 5**: Connection, Joy, Movement, Rest, and Gratitude—a collection of essential, science-backed nutrients that nourish our internal operating system, fostering our mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being and ultimately optimizing our personal and professional outcomes.

1. Connection: As humans, we’re hard wired to connect. Research tells us that lawyers are among the loneliest professionals, but also that we really struggle to admit that we’re lonely. Connection is the antidote. When was the last time you felt connected to someone? What did it feel like?

2. Joy: We tend to treat joy and pleasure as a reward for completing all the work. But the reality is, there’s always more work, and joy and pleasure can in fact HELP us to be more productive. Joy can be cultivated at any moment, and it’s contagious! Can you think of a time you witnessed someone else experiencing a truly joyful moment? What was that like for you? I wonder if, as you think of it now, a smile comes to your lips.

3. Movement: Movement plays an important role in our mental and physical well-being. We know it’s good for the body, but let’s consider how movement is good for the mind. A walk to clear the mind. Lifting weights to let go of frustration. Yoga to ground yourself. You already know the benefits. How do you incorporate movement into your daily routine?

4. Rest: Rest is essential for growth. To facilitate growth, we need to prioritize rest that is restorative; it may be passive or active; and it goes beyond physical rest, to include men-

tal, emotional, and spiritual recovery. When we take time to restore, we can see the impacts in increased creativity, better problem solving, higher productivity and decreased risk of burnout. What are your beliefs about rest? How do they impact your ability to restore?

5. Gratitude: It has been said that gratitude is the antidote to stress, and science has established that it directly and positively impacts our well-being. The practice of gratitude is not about putting a silver lining on a truly hard situation, or glossing over the very real challenges we’re facing. Gratitude is about holding more than one thing at a time or shifting our focus from “what’s wrong” to “what’s possible.” It’s keeping perspective on the many things that work out for us, the people who support us, and ways in which we can show up in appreciation of others each day. How does gratitude show up in your life?

Much like a multivitamin, these nutrients – when dosed daily – build up in our internal operating system over time, fortifying our well-being. These foundational nutrients are not mere luxuries; they are vital ingredients for a life of fulfillment and true thriving. We can also create opportunities for well-being in our teams, weaving Foundational 5 practices into the rhythms of our work, our communication, and our culture.

It is time we broadened our perspective on human thriving to encompass our whole selves. As we begin to embrace the power of elements like the Foundational 5, we discover the transformative impact they can have on our journey towards personal and professional excellence.

If you need support in co-creating these well-work cultures, we can help.

Endnote

1. Jen Fisher, Paul H. Silverglate, Colleen Bordeaux, and Michael Gilmartin, *As workforce well-being dips, leaders ask: What will it take to move the needle?*, *Deloitte Insights* (June 20, 2023), <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/insights/topics/talent/workplace-well-being-research.html>.



Ashleigh Frankel is a leadership + well-being coach, consultant and changemaker. Once upon a time she practiced securities law. For the past decade, Ashleigh has been working with courageous leaders to produce well work cultures where individuals, teams and business flourish.



Amy Johnston is a licensed clinical social worker with extensive experience working in mental health, trauma and burnout. She is dedicated to supporting a culture of thriving, even in the hardest of jobs. She works with leaders to take a clear and honest inventory of their strengths and challenges and to cultivate an atmosphere of growth and authenticity.

About the All Rise Initiative...

Ashleigh Frankel and Amy Johnston launched the All Rise Initiative to raise the bar on collective well-being in law. Their second series for the New York State Bar Association, “All Rise: Well-Being for Lawyers,” is a science-backed, human-centered program that will guide participants beyond information to insight + inspired action. Participants cultivate a set of inner strengths and a sense of collective care that expands capacity for well-being, ease and impact in law, leadership and life. This program started Sept. 20, 2023 and ran every other Wednesday for 5 sessions. The program was open to lawyers, staff, students, or anyone in the legal profession. Cohorts were limited to 24 people so that everyone had the opportunity to really connect with and support each other. NYSBA membership is not required. For general information and updates on the All Rise Initiative, go to: <https://nysba.org/events/all-rise-well-being-for-lawyers-4/>.



**Lawyer Assistance
Program**



**THE NEW YORK
BAR FOUNDATION**

The Lawyer Assistance Program Hotline

Provided to members seeking assistance with depression, anxiety, burnout, alcohol or drug related concerns, and other mental health issues

- Free confidential service
- Up to four free counseling sessions a year

Call 877.772.8835

NYSBA.ORG/LAP

Commercial and Federal Litigation and Dispute Resolution Sections Tackle the Impact of Well-Being on Professional Satisfaction

By Kim Wolf Price

When dealing with issues of health, well-being certainly cannot be overlooked. Thanks to the work of the NYSBA Task Force on Attorney Well-Being and now the Committee on Attorney Well-Being, NYSBA is seeing more open dialogue and conversations pertaining to this critical topic.

On May 6, 2023, the Commercial and Federal Litigation and Dispute Resolution sections tackled that conversation at their joint spring meeting.

The program, titled, “There Has To Be a Better Way: Changing How We Practice To Obtain Professional Satisfaction,” was moderated by WILS Chair Kim Wolf Price. The panelists were Associate Justice Angela G. Iannacci, New York Appellate Division, Second Department; Rachel Gupta, Gupta Dispute Resolutions; Viktoriya Liberchuk, Robert & Robert; and Kevin Schlosser, Meyer & Suozzi.

Numerous factors in the legal profession can cause stress and even drive attorneys to leave the practice of law. These can include demanding familial situations, caring for an aging parent or a young child, frequent travel, lengthy trials or arbitrations, the demands of business development, long hours, and relentless stress.

This panel held a candid conversation on how attorneys at all levels of practice can create a working atmosphere that embraces diversity of all kinds and promotes workplace integrity

and professional satisfaction. The panel discussed some of the structural and cultural changes legal employers can make to keep more practitioners engaged and productive, as well as ways managers and leaders can re-think common practices to improve communication and reduce stress.

The topics and ideas discussed ranged from bigger conversations such as creating well-being programs for attorneys and legal staff to alternate billing arrangements. The panel also provided ideas for small changes that can make a big impact. A simple suggestion was to use the delay delivery option for non-urgent emails sent during off hours. This simple practice, particularly when implemented by senior attorneys, can reduce stress levels for junior attorneys. Additionally, the panel discussed the importance of modeling healthy practices such as planning and taking time off. Engaging professional speakers to provide workshops on burnout and continuing to have open conversations as a profession surrounding issues of well-being were also important points raised by the panelists.

The program was well-received by attendees who had numerous questions and comments following the discussion, including a request that the topic be continued at the 2024 Spring Meeting.



Finding Time To Build a Legal Practice

By Randi Rosenblatt

The daily demands on lawyers in private practice are plentiful—billing hours, managing clients, keeping up on changes in the law and CLEs, to name a few. The list goes on . . . and on . . . and on . . .

On top of all those demands is the expectation that lawyers in private practice also originate business—after all, the lights need to stay on. While not all firms talk about this necessity up front, it's surely a reality for most. And, even if it's not, it's the only way for a law firm lawyer to truly own their career. The biggest problem is that lawyers often feel that they simply can't find the time.

Business development does not always require trading time with family and friends, time exercising, or a healthy meal, for a baseball game, industry conferences or a hearty steak dinner. For private practice attorneys working to create healthy, actionable habits in relation to business development, below are four ways to scale a practice.

1. Leveraging Hobbies

We often insist that our activities be separated into professional activities and personal activities. Why not blur those lines? Consider activities in which you already engage and brainstorm around how you can leverage them into business development opportunities. The rationale is that you are already spending time doing something you enjoy – is it possible for you to include others?

- If you take a daily walk, invite a client or prospect.
- If you head out of the office to grab a snack, invite a colleague to join.
- If you play chess, invite a contact who you know has a similar interest to spend a late afternoon playing chess over coffee or drinks.
- If you are a movie buff, invite a contact to join for a screening.

Work to engage your professional contacts in activities in which you already participate. In addition to not needing to find additional time to engage, you'll also find that your engagement is more meaningful.

2. Have a 3x Mentality

For every marketing activity on which you spend time, aim for three times the amount of impact. For example:

- If you sit on a panel, can you turn that content into an article, a webinar and/or a lunch and learn?
- If you write an article, can you create a plan of targeted distribution to various contacts, generate a series of LinkedIn posts, create a related blog post to go out through your own distribution channel and/or have it posted on your law firm's website?
- If you attend a conference, can you create opportunities for one-on-one follow up meetings, foster introductions and/or share relevant information with those new contacts?

Marketing activities should not exist on their own. The return is greatest when they are part of a larger plan.

3. Establishing a Social Media Presence

In 2024, a social media presence is essential. Your clients and prospects are engaging digitally (even if you are convinced they aren't) so you must show up too. Your presence can and should, in many ways, be calendared and prepared in advance. LinkedIn is a smart place to start given the likelihood that your professional audience will be present.

As you prepare to show up on LinkedIn, ensure you have a solid profile. That should include:

- A professional picture
- A headline that is nuanced and engaging, rather than just "Attorney" or "Litigator"
- An About section that provides your reader with a peek behind the curtain as to who you are and what you're about
- Connections with contacts from various times in your life—childhood, college, law school, colleagues, co-counsel, opposing counsel, etc.
- A minimum of 501 meaningful connections (to show your LinkedIn community that you are present on the platform)

Once you create your profile, create a plan for engagement. Schedule 10 minutes per day to Like, Comment and Share other people's content. This enables you to build relationships through support of and engagement with others. When choosing those specific 10 minutes, consider times when you are best suited to multi-task – commuting via public transit, waiting in line to order coffee, waiting for an appointment or riding in the elevator. Use the time you already have in a better way.

Once you establish this presence, prepare to create and deliver concise, relevant, fresh content on LinkedIn at pre-scheduled times. (Platforms like Buffer enable you to pre-load your content for later delivery days/times.) Start with the goal of two LinkedIn posts per week. As you continue producing content and expanding distribution channels, use a content calendar to keep a schedule of when and where you plan to publish upcoming content to keep you organized. Keeping lists of content ideas helps speed the process of creating fresh content—this way, you avoid having to repeatedly go through the process of coming up with new ideas.

Creating a solid framework and process will facilitate both an efficient habit along with an impactful presence.

4. Get To Know Your Colleagues

Your law firm colleagues, with whom you already spend lots of time, are great sources of opportunity. Spending time understanding their practices and sharing about yours is time well spent. Can you loop them in on deals/cases you're handling? Is their expertise interesting to your contacts? Is their knowledge something that you can leverage as you pitch new clients?

There is truly opportunity sitting among colleagues and it slips through the cracks daily. The pie is surely bigger when you take the opportunity to pitch bigger and win bigger.

When considered in efficient ways, business development can become part of time you're already spending. Continue to commute by train, ride the elevator, pursue a black belt in karate, attend interesting events, and speak on panels that strengthen your reputation. As you do all those things, just consider how they can be simply incorporated into something larger, something that brings you one step closer to achieving your business development goals.



Randi Rosenblatt is the founder and CEO of Upward Stride, a business development training, coaching and consulting firm that works with attorneys and law firms to bring their business to the next level. Prior to founding Upward Stride, Randi was the vice president of business development at Bliss Lawyers, a secondment firm that placed high-caliber attorneys at companies and law firms. Randi was instrumental in successfully growing Bliss Law-

yers' business, resulting in its acquisition by the industry leader, Axiom. She was previously senior counsel, director at Heineken USA in New York and also practiced law as a corporate attorney at the law firms of Schiff Hardin and Watson Farley and Williams. Randi earned her J.D. and MBA from Tulane and her B.A. from the University of Michigan. She can be reached at randi@upwardstride.com.



WILS Current and Past Chairs Participate in WBASNY's 'From Roe to Dobbs: Where Do We Go From Here?'

By Sheryl B. Galler

On March 22, 2023, Susan Harper, founder and past chair of WILS, and Sheryl Galler, (then) chair of WILS, participated in a webinar presented by the Women Judges Committee of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York (WBASNY) entitled "From *Roe* to *Dobbs*: Where Do We Go From Here?" This program focused on women's rights and the aftermath of the *Dobbs* decision.¹



Susan Harper

The first presenter, Bill Baird, captivated the audience with his personal stories of how he became a leading advocate for women's rights and named plaintiff in the landmark 1972 U.S. Supreme Court case *Baird v. Eisenstad*,² which established the right to privacy and legalized birth control for unmarried individuals.

Lucinda M. Finley, Raichle Professor of Law at the University at Buffalo Law School, provided a clear and concise analysis of the reasoning in the *Dobbs* decision and its potential impact on other reproductive rights, plus an update on the many federal and state legal initiatives taken in response to *Dobbs*.

Harper and Galler then discussed how WILS quickly responded to *Dobbs* by offering within days of the decision an interactive webinar on managing trauma and grief, followed quickly by a webinar on what the decision meant and its implications, and a presentation by the Attorney General's Pro Bono Task Force on Reproductive Health. The section also wrote "The Resolution and Report of WILS Supporting Reproductive Health-Care Rights and Reproductive Autonomy and NYS Equality Amendment," which was adopted as policy by the New York State Bar Association's Executive Committee and House of Delegates in November 2022. Galler and Harper also reviewed the history of reproductive rights under New York State laws, highlighted the New York State Equal Protection of Law Amendment ("New York Equality

Amendment") that will be on the ballot in November 2024, and noted legislative efforts underway nationwide to limit the ability of corporations to support reproductive rights. They shared a list of leadership, education and advocacy steps the audience members can take to protect reproductive rights in New York and help ratify the New York Equality Amendment.



Sheryl B. Galler

Participating members of the WBASNY Women Judges Committee included, in order of their scheduled appearance, the Hon. Joanne D. Quiñones, Judge of the Court of Claims, Supreme Court, Kings County; the Hon. Sally E. Unger, Acting Supreme Court Justice, Supreme Court, Queens County; the Hon. Karen B. Wolff, Family Court Judge, Richmond County; and the Hon. Lucy Billings, Supreme Court Justice, Supreme Court, New York County.

The NYSBA Women in Law Section thanks WBASNY for inviting Susan Harper and Sheryl Galler to join their program as speakers. We look forward to more opportunities to work together to promote women's rights.

Sheryl B. Galler is the immediate past chair of the Women in Law Section. She has been a member of NYSBA since 1994 and a member of WILS and its predecessor, CWIL, since 2012. Galler is the current Chair of NYSBA's Labor and Employment Law Section (LELS) and a member of the LELS Executive Committee. She practices employment law in New York City where she is a partner at Book Law, LLP.

Endnotes

1. *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, 597 U.S. ___, 142 S. Ct. 2228, 2022 WL 2276808 (2022).
2. 405 U.S. 438 (1972).

Chronic Illness, Women and Divorce

By Morghan Leia Richardson

In sickness or health? **No, not really.** While the divorce rate hovers just under 50%, marriages involving one chronically ill spouse have an increased likelihood of ending in divorce. In fact, marriages where one spouse has a serious or chronic illness have a 75% chance of ending, according to statisticians.

But worse than that, if the wife has the diagnosis the likelihood of divorce skyrockets further.

Studies have shown that in marriages where the wife is the one who becomes ill, the couple is six times more likely to divorce.¹ And researchers at Seattle's Cancer Care Alliance reported in the journal *Cancer*, noticed the divorce rate appeared to increase when the wife was the patient, calling it a phenomenon that the healthy partner tends to abandon the patient. The study confirms that the divorce is six times more likely to take place after a cancer diagnosis or diagnosis of multiple sclerosis. The study also examined the divorce rates in couples where a partner had a brain tumor, finding an equally disturbing increase for women who suffered such diagnoses.²

There are a number of theories as to why a relationship would be more likely to fail due to a chronic or serious illness diagnosis, particularly when it impacts the female spouse. Dealing with a chronic or serious illness or disease may add additional stress to a relationship that already had problems, and historically, wives have been the primary caretakers in the family – so who takes care of them (and the family) when they need that support? The heartbreaking reality is that such difficult illnesses are making wives more likely to face abandonment by their partners.

Awareness of these trends is important for women, so that planning and preparedness can be had in the face of any diagnosis. Here are some tips for women to consider:

1. **Get financials in order.** Having access to the joint tax returns for the last three years, the bank accounts and other important financial information is critical in any divorce, and it is no less important for women who may feel overwhelmed dealing with health issues. Don't give up understanding the finances or knowing what is happening with the budget, but maybe enlist support of an accountant or financial planner to help keep on top of these issues.

2. **Additional self-care.** Make a few appointments with a therapist, start a new routine, or set free or creative times for a mental break. Understand your limits: divorce is an emotional roller-coaster, and fighting a chronic or serious illness is an extra challenge. Divorce fights feel like no other. Have your close friends and/or family on stand-by for support, or join a support group.
3. **Estate planning and insurance coverage.** Make an appointment with your trusts and estates attorney to discuss wills and other medical advanced directives that you may want to put into place if your spouse is leaving the marriage, because you may not want them to be the decision-maker for you. Also consider obtaining a disability insurance policy that would provide financial coverage in the event a serious or chronic illness prevents you from working, and a long-term care policy that would help pay for long-term care whether it takes place at a hospital, a rehabilitation facility or at home.



Morghan Leia Richardson is a partner at Tarter Krinsky & Drogin, LLP, where she co-chairs the Matrimonial and Family Law department. Richardson focuses her practice on divorce and family law, and regularly handles cases that involve complex divorce litigation, alimony, child support, prenuptials, parent coordination, separation agreements, visitation, property division, asset protection and LGBTQIA+ family law issues. She has fought complex di-

vorice cases for clients that include a Nobel-Prize winning economist, a prominent music magazine editor, and one of the spouses from the hit television show *The Real Housewives of New York*.

Endnotes

1. See A. Pawlowski, *When a Medical Crisis Strikes, Divorce Can Follow – Especially if the Wife Is Sick*, Today (Apr. 14, 2022), <https://www.today.com/health/health/illness-divorce-risk-rcna24083>.
2. Michael J. Glantz M.D., Marc C. Chamberlain M.D., Qin Liu Ph.D., Chung-Cheng Hsieh Sc.D., Keith R. Edwards M.D., Alixis Van Horn R.N., Lawrence Recht M.D., *Gender Disparity in the Rate of Partner Abandonment in Patients With Serious Medical Illness*, *Cancer* 5237-5242, ACS Journals Vol 115, Issue 22 (Nov. 15, 2009), <https://acsjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/cnrc.24577>.

Committing to You: The Most Important Meeting You'll Ever Make—the Meeting With Yourself

By Susan L. Harper

I have been a member of a gym for almost two decades now and go there three or four times each week. When I share this, I often receive the following reply, “I don’t know how you do it.” It often follows, “I don’t know how you find the time, or the drive to go to the gym or work out.”

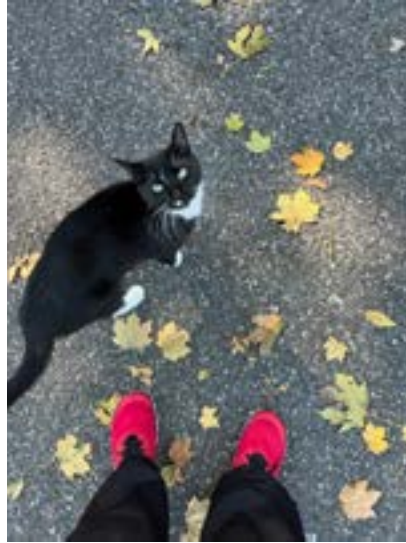
So here is the secret: I pencil it in. I block the time on my calendar and make a “meeting with myself.” No one is allowed to come to my meeting unless I invite them. No one is allowed to schedule over my meeting unless I permit it. Unless there is a true personal or work emergency, nothing may take precedence over my meeting. That’s how important this meeting is for me.

At my meeting, I set the agenda. I go to the park or to an exercise class that makes me happy. I like high impact water aerobics. There is the Russian instructor who plays crazy 70s music and works you out like a strict gymnastic coach. There is another instructor who loves to sing while pushing our limits. When she smiles, I smile, and I feel joy. Finally, there is an instructor who focuses on your form and works on muscles you did not know you even had.

Listening to the music and working out, I let go of daily stress. Often, pool mates greet each other with a splash for a little youthful fun. There is a lot of laughing and smiling at my meeting, and when I’m done my entire body is relaxed, feels strong, and my spirit is refreshed. I can think clearly and creatively. The brain fog lifts. Ideas are brewing and I am bursting with energy and positivity.

When I am not in the pool, I walk outside. At this meeting with myself, I listen to the music I want to listen to or not. I marvel at nature’s beauty in the park. I listen closely to birds and animal sounds and watch their movements. I move fast or slow. I stretch and dance in the sun. I am in charge because it is my meeting. It is very empowering and even liberating. But most importantly, it is very uplifting. I feel happy when I am done.

Many people over the years have said to me that when I leave the gym that I look like a different person from the one who arrived, and I do. The person who arrives is often tense and way too serious because of life’s burdens. The stress, coupled with long hours hovering over a computer screen,



often makes me glum and feel decrepit. After a few splashes and smiles, walking in the park marveling at the beautiful trees, and drinking in the air and oxygen, it all fades away. I relax and the negative energy dissipates. I can take on the world again with a great big smile.

Life is always that much better after my meeting with myself.

When was the last time you made a meeting with yourself? As high-achieving professionals, we often juggle so much: work, family, and volunteer commitments. We are all good people and try to put our best foot forward; however, in the middle of managing so much, we let go or fail to

prioritize the one person that matters—ourselves.

If you want to try a new approach, then it starts with a simple step: open your calendar on your phone or laptop and book a meeting with yourself. Begin with one or two meetings in a week and gradually increase as you’re ready.

You don’t need to buy a gym membership if that is not your thing. Start by incorporating pockets of time in your day to walk outside, get off a few bus or train stops earlier before your destination (if you can), walk in a local park and drink in the green cheer, or put some music on and take a step forward.

Who knows? After you are done, you might just say to yourself: “Now that was the best meeting yet.”



Susan L. Harper is the NYSBA treasurer and a past chair of the Women in Law Section. She has two children and a black and white cat who likes to take park walks with her. Over the course of 20 years, she has held around 3,500 meetings with herself and has never regretted one.

Both of her children watched her example and embrace the positivity of investing in their own physical and mental well-being. She welcomes comments concerning this article and hearing about your meetings with yourself. sharperny@icloud.com

Pets and Custody Disputes: The Best Interests of Your Pet

By Debra Vey Voda-Hamilton

Until recently, pets were considered property. If disagreements arose over the ownership of a pet, property discussions would ensue and decisions would be made based on property law. Over the past several years, after much nationwide advocacy by pet lovers, laws have been enacted that elevate a pet's status from property to a living creature deserving of consideration.

Pets and the New Law

In 2017, Alaska was the first state to recognize and legislate a requirement for Family Court to look at the “best interest” or “well-being” of a pet in a custody dispute.¹

Six states—Alaska, California, Illinois, Maine, New Hampshire, and New York—have now legislated processes by which judges are required to decide who gets the pet when an ownership disagreement arises in the context of a divorce proceeding or a separation.² Property law, however, is only one indicia of ownership. Judges in these states now decide the outcome of a pet custody case using the best interests or well-being of the pet standard. They review information, provided by the parties, outlining why they should be considered the best owner over the other divorcing spouse. Several courts have followed suit and applied the “best interests” or “well-being” standard to relationship pet disputes in civil matters, which we believe lead to better outcomes for the pet.³

These new domestic relations laws require courts to decide the custody of a pet based on evidence presented by the parties. While we are encouraged that the law requires more than just viewing pets as property, the larger inquiry is what can we do to handle these matters differently? This author encourages practitioners to think proactively and creatively to empower the parties to control their own best outcome for their beloved pet before it is decided for them by a judge. There are various methods attorneys use to support their clients in this difficult position.

Proactive Discussions

What are some proactive steps to support better outcomes for pets in custody disputes? Focus on the following three items to find the best path forward:

- Encourage each party to write down why the pet should go with them.



- Have each party reflect on the pet's connection to their adversary or former partner.
- Explain the resolution that would help the parties get it right for the pet over being right for themselves.

By asking the parties to write down their responses to these three items, you have taken the time to:

- Appreciate and acknowledge their point of view.
- Remind them to reflect on their ex's relationship with the pet.
- Help them regain their pet-focused equilibrium.

In the end, you help them understand that their pet doesn't dislike their former partner, and that there will be consequences for the pet when the pet is separated from the former partner.

Court vs. Mediation

Couples should endeavor to make a decision for the future of their pet outside of court. This new legislation requires the court to evaluate the situation based on information submitted by the parties, usually in discord, and meant to convince

the judge that one side is a better pet owner than the other. The evidence is rarely submitted with a view toward what is truly in the best interests or well-being of the pet.

An example of a judge not knowing what to do in a pet custody case was vividly portrayed by Judge Judy, who brought a dog into court to choose their favorite person. Judge Douglas Mintz (ret.), on my podcast, *Why Do Pets Matter?*, shared his view that that he never understood why a person would trust the future of their pet to a person they don't know and who doesn't know their dog, just because they wore a black robe? Judge Mintz makes the case not only for mediation, but also for proactively planning what to do with your pet in the event of an uncoupling.

Looking at the situation from a pet's point of view is not the way most people or courts address pet custody. Shared ownership is discarded. Allowing for a bit of grace and humility for the benefit of a pet is unavailable. "Mandating a best interests standard to 'pet custody' would add an unnecessary layer to an already overburdened process and is fraught with uncertainty in its application. That the same standard is to be applied to broadly defined 'companion animals' as children, provides for an absurd equivalency."⁴

Mediation, however, helps the parties find what is truly in the pet's best interest. It helps the parties explore and implement shared outcomes. Lawyers have the unique ability to guide their clients into a better forum for discussion and decision-making regarding pets. Mediation may be that better forum by providing the next best step that will help parties carry out the observations gained by asking the three questions above.

With the help of a mediator, your clients will be able to more neutrally administer their three reflections, empowering them to work together to find an outcome that is in the best interest/well-being of all. It is imperative that you *get it* right over *being* right where the pet is concerned. Mediators help parties actively listen, appreciate and acknowledge what each party holds dear about the pet, long and short term, when a divorce or relationship break-up splits custody.

While litigation is necessary in some instances, the Court in *CRS v. TKS*, stated, "the time and money expended litigating this issue could have been used to negotiate and fund a settlement."⁵ Litigation of pet custody decisions preempt or preclude the facilitation of a calm conversation in mediation to address the emotional issues involved with pet custody.

Conclusion

Pets are no longer recognized as mere property: they are now recognized as our family members and companions. They get us out from behind our desks to go on a walk, thus lowering our heart rate and increasing our mental acuity.

They help our well-being by loving us unconditionally. Allowing this energy to help parties choose what is best for their pet by using mediation before courts apply the new legislation will help create outcomes that meet the needs of the pets, parties and the courts as they navigate this new normal. Most importantly, this will help achieve the best outcome for our beloved pets. In exchange for their unconditional love, thoughtful and proactive consideration of what's best for our pets is the least we can do.



Debra Vey Voda-Hamilton is the principal at Hamilton Law and Mediation, PLLC (HLM). HLM uses understanding-based alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methodologies to transform disagreements over animals in divorce and beyond. Debra facilitates neutral discussions between the parties providing them the opportunity to choose peaceful conversation over litigation when deciding who gets the pet. Debra is an international speaker and the

best-selling author of *Nipped in the Bud—Not in the Butt—How To Use Mediation to Resolve Conflicts Over Animals*, and holds an international pet planning community call, The MAAP Plan, every week. The MAAP Plan helps community members navigate the journey their pet takes when they can't care for it. She is the go-to person for information regarding the use of mediation in disagreements involving animals for the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Reuters*, *Huffington Post* and *U.S. News and World Report*. She breeds, owns and shows Irish setters and long-haired standard dachshunds under the prefix Rumraisin.

Endnotes

1. See AS S25.24.160.
2. See Cal.Fam.Code S 2605(West); 750 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/502; Maine LD535; N.H. Rev. Stat. S45816-a; N.Y. DR 236 Part B 5d-14-15.
3. See, e.g., *Mitchell v. Schneider*, 41 N.Y.S. 3d 450 (Civ. Ct. 2016) (applying the "best for all concerned" standard of *Travis v Murray*, 977 N.Y.S.2d 621, 2013 N.Y. Misc. LEXIS 5508, 2013 N.Y. Slip Op. 23405 (N.Y. S.Ct. Nov. 29, 2013)). It should be noted that like *Travis*, and unlike the requirements in the new Domestic Relations Law that a divorce proceeding must be involved to consider the pet, the parties in *Mitchell* were not married or seeking a divorce—they were dissolving a relationship.
4. See <https://nysba.org/best-interests-of-the-hamster-a-false-equivalency-and-absurdity-in-proposed-pet-custody-legislation/>.
5. See *CRS v. TKS*, 192 Misc. 2d 547, 746 N.Y.S.2d 568 (Sup.Ct. N.Y.Co. 2002).

The Importance of Estate Planning

By Linda A. Redlisky and Wendy Hoey Sheinberg

When we think about making plans to secure our future, generally the discussions revolve around education, career, family, and finances. Creating a comprehensive estate plan, including effective advanced directives, can elude even the most organized and diligent people.¹ A survey by Caring.com noted that 1 in 5 people who died during the 2020 pandemic did not have an estate plan.² While post-pandemic there is an upward trend in estate planning among younger adults, an estimated 67% of Americans still have no estate plan.³

Estate plans do much more than just outline how to distribute your assets upon death. Estate plans should include health care instructions, appointment of a trusted agent to manage your financial affairs, note your guardianship wishes for both yourself and/or your children, what happens to your pets and more. While planning in contemplation of death or incapacity is not the easiest topic to tackle, taking steps to make your wishes known and enforceable will reduce the chaos that unfolds without good planning.

What is included in estate planning?

Advanced Directives

Estate planning is not simply drafting a last will and testament or a trust. It also includes advanced directives, which are documents that nominate people to carry out your wishes or to act in your best interest when you cannot. These directives may include a health care proxy, living will, and a (durable) power of attorney, discussed below.

Health Care Proxy

This document (the HCP) allows you to nominate a health care agent—someone who will make health care decisions for

you in the event you cannot. New York State does not allow the appointment of co-agents, meaning only one person can serve as your agent at a time. It is always recommended that you choose both an agent and a successor agent in the event your primary agent predeceases you or cannot act. Your agent should know what your wishes are regarding being kept alive via artificial means, including intubation, nutrition (feeding tube) and hydration, how you feel about the administration of pain medication, even if it shortens your life, and the circumstances under which you would or would not wish to be kept alive. It is imperative that you give your appointed agents copies of the health care proxy appointing them. A copy is just as effective as an original.

Living Will

A living will is a written statement detailing a person's desires about their medical treatment in circumstances in which they are no longer able to express informed consent. More specifically, you can direct your agent under your health care proxy to withhold all life-sustaining measures or you can single out certain measures that you do wish to be taken, including:

- Cardiac resuscitation
- Mechanical respiration
- Dialysis
- Artificial nutrition and hydration (at what point of deterioration you would like food and water removed)
- Antibiotics to treat infection
- Pain medication



New York law does not have a living will statute, and a living will does not appoint a decision maker; it provides additional guidance for your decision makers. Medical professionals will look to your health care proxy (agent) for medical instructions on your behalf when you cannot give informed consent or make decisions. However, your proxy (agent) is required to follow your intentions as expressed in your living will if you cannot express your wishes yourself. New York case law recognizes a living will as clear and convincing evidence of a person's end-of-life wishes, which can help the decision maker enforce your wishes in the face of opposition. As with the HCP, you should provide your agent thereunder with a copy of your living will.

Power of Attorney

Title 15 of Article 5 of New York's General Obligations Law provides for a "statutory short form power of attorney," which by default is not affected by later incapacity. The individual (the principal) making the power of attorney (POA) appoints an agent to act on their behalf in personal (non-medical) and financial matters.⁴ The POA is a critical document without which an incapacitated person has no one authorized to make financial and legal decisions for you. The statute allows the principal to modify the default powers authorized in the POA and can create conditions precedent to its use, and/or to limit its duration by date, or the happening of a specific event. Without a valid POA, an incapacitated person's affairs will typically remain unaddressed until a court appoints a guardian. The principal can modify the statutory POA to meet their wishes and anticipated needs. Among other actions, the modifications can include authority for the agent to make gifts to third parties and/or themselves from the principal's income and/or assets.⁵ The modifications can authorize the agent to make gifts by adding a beneficiary or joint tenant on accounts, gifting of real estate, and creation of trusts. There are specific execution requirements for a statutory POA, including two witnesses and a notary, none of whom can be designated as potential recipients of gifts.

What are Some Traditional Estate Planning Tools?

Last Will and Testament (LWT)

Not all LWT(s) are the same, but generally they direct the disposition of the assets of the maker (testator) upon the testator's death. Often a LWT will:

- Nominate executors and successor executors
- Nominate guardians of the person and/or property of minors
- Create testamentary trusts

- Estate tax reducing trusts
- Generation skipping trusts
- Asset management trusts
- Supplemental Needs Trusts
- Trusts for young beneficiaries
- Trusts for financially unsophisticated or imprudent beneficiaries
- Nominate trustees and successor trustees of testamentary trust
- Override default tax apportionment rules
- Authorize or direct certain tax elections
- Exercise general and limited powers of appointment
- Distribute (pour-over) assets to trusts created outside of the testator's LWT

Not every document purporting to be a testator's LWT is an LWT. Most states, including New York, have statutory requirements that determine if a document is an LWT. During the testator's life the LWT has no legal effect, and if a testator has *testamentary capacity*, they can change their LWT. After the testator's death, the LWT, together with a probate petition and other documents, is submitted to the court of proper jurisdiction, which determines if the document is the valid LWT of the testator. Even if no interested party objects to the LWT's admission to probate, the court can still deny probate if it is not satisfied that the document meets the statutory requirements for a LWT or is otherwise not satisfied that the document is valid.

The fact that most attorneys have taken classes in trusts and estates does not mean that they should be drafting LWT(s) any more than taking an intellectual property class bestows the competence to litigate trademark and copyright issues. Typically, a fatal flaw in an improperly drafted or executed LWT is not discovered until the death of the testator. Like many things, just because you *can* do it yourself does not mean you *should* do it yourself.

Intervivos Trusts

An intervivos trust is a trust created by a person (the grantor/maker/donor) or their authorized agent under a POA, intended to be effective during the grantor's life. The trust can be revocable or irrevocable; the trust can direct that the income and/or assets are for the benefit of the grantor or third parties. Different types of trusts serve different purposes, and one size does not fit all. Inter vivos trusts are sometimes called "living trusts," "family trusts" or "testamentary substitutes."

Regardless of a trust's title, its true nature and effect depends on the terms contained in the trust.

Revocable Living Trusts (RLT)

RLTs typically provide for the management and distribution of trust income and assets for the benefit of the grantor and are included in the grantor's estate for estate tax purposes. RLTs typically direct the distribution of trust assets after the grantor's death, either outright or in continuing trusts for other beneficiaries.

The grantor can be the trustee of their own trust,⁶ and the RLT will typically support successor trustees to take over trust administration on the incapacity, resignation, or death of the grantor.

An RLT can do many of the things a LWT does, but it is not a substitute for an LWT. The grantor of an RLT must also have an LWT. The LWT can direct the executor to distribute testamentary assets to the RLT, or it can direct a completely different distribution. There is nothing about the existence of an RLT that makes the need for a LWT obsolete. A trust can only dispose of income and assets that are titled to the trust. Listing an asset on the trust schedule is different from the asset being titled in the trust. If an intestate grantor dies with assets outside of the trust, and those assets do not have joint owners with rights of survivorship or valid beneficiary designations, those assets will not be distributed according to the trust. An intestate grantor's estate will be subject to the intestate distribution rules.

Irrevocable Trusts (IRT)

IRTs share many characteristics of RLTs, among other differences:

- The grantor cannot unilaterally revoke or amend an IRT; and
- Some IRTs are completed gifts for estate tax purposes and can be excluded from the grantor's taxable estate.

Not all IRTs are the same; different goals typically require distinct types of IRTs. A trust that makes the assets unavailable for the grantor's Medicaid eligibility is vastly different from the trust for leveraged gifting and estate tax excludability.

A one-size fits all estate plan is like a one-size fits all tee shirt: it is something to wear, but it is not quite right. Estate plans are as unique as our individual clients. We urge all to consider how empowering it is to be the author of your life's story, regardless of the obstacles that lie ahead.



Linda A. Redlisky is a partner at Rafferty & Redlisky LLP, focusing on elder law and guardianship matters. She is the Co-Editor of *WILS Connect*. She is a member of the Executive Committee of WILS and of the Elder Law and Special Needs Section and is Vice Chair of the Guardianship Committee.



Wendy Hoey Sheinberg is a partner in Rivkin Radler LLP's trusts and estates practice group. She concentrates her practice in the areas of guardianship, elder law, special needs planning, trust and estate planning and trust and estate administration.

Endnotes

1. The information provided in this article does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all information and content is for general informational purposes only.
2. Daniel Cobb, *2022 Study: The Effect of COVID-19 on Estate Planning*, Caring.com (June 2022).
3. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/04/11/67percent-of-americans-have-no-estate-plan-heres-how-to-get-started-on-one.html>.
4. N.Y. GOL LAW § 5-1513.
5. N.Y. GOL LAW § 5-1509; see also D N.Y. Prac., Trusts and Estates Practice in New York § 1:209.
6. New York abolished the default merger doctrine in 1997 by amending EPTL: 7-1.1.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month: Let's Talk Screenings With Dr. Allison DePersia

By Erica S. Youngerman

In light of Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, health care attorney Erica S. Youngerman from Katten Muchin Rosenman sat down with Allison H. West DePersia, M.D., a medical oncologist specializing in cancer risk assessment, to talk screenings.

Q: Please tell us a little about yourself and your background.

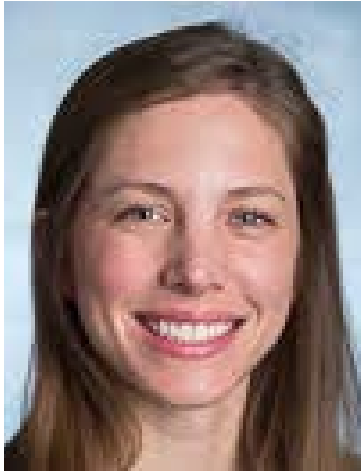
Dr. DePersia: I completed my medical degree at New York University School of Medicine and an internal medicine residency and oncology and hematology fellowship at the University of Chicago. I practice at North-Shore University HealthSystem in Evanston, Illinois and I'm a clinical assistant professor at the University of Chicago. In my clinical practice, I see patients for hereditary cancer genetic testing, cancer screening, and prevention.

Q: What is a breast cancer screening? Are there different types?

A: The goal of breast cancer screening is to detect early breast cancer and minimize breast cancer associated morbidity and mortality. The standard imaging for breast cancer screening is mammogram. Additional screenings may be recommended for women who have dense breast tissue or are at increased risk due to family history or genetics; this includes breast MRI screening and whole breast ultrasound screening.

Q: Are there any risks related to screenings?

A: If breast cancer screening imaging is pursued according to the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) and the United States Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) guidelines, then the benefits of screening are felt to outweigh the harms per expert opinion. Common concerns around screening include financial toxicity and risk of false positives. If the cost of imaging is a concern for a woman, I recommend they talk to their provider regarding expected cost and coverage; most insurance companies will approve screening that is consistent with national guidelines although a woman may still have a cost due to her deductible or specific insurance plan. A false positive is when a woman has an abnormal imaging study and is called back for additional imaging or a biopsy. If that additional work-up is ultimately



Dr. Allison DePersia

negative for cancer, then this is a false positive; false positives can result in patient anxiety and unnecessary procedures.

Q: When should someone have their first screening?

A: Both the USPSTF and the NCCN recommend screening with mammogram begin at age 40 for average risk women. Women who have an inherited pathogenic variant associated with increased risk of cancer or a family history of young onset breast cancer may be recommended to start at a younger age.

Q: How often should someone receive screenings?

A: There is some discrepancy in frequency of screening recommended by the USPSTF and NCCN for average risk women and I recommend that patients speak to their provider regarding which approach is best for their care. In my clinical practice, I follow high risk women for screening for whom annual mammogram and annual breast MRI are recommended.

Q: What does it mean to be high risk and how do you find out if you are?

A: Per NCCN, high risk is defined as a woman whose remaining lifetime risk of breast cancer is 20% or greater based on validated risk models or a woman with an inherited pathogenic variant associated with an increased risk of breast cancer where the lifetime risk is 20% or greater. A woman may also be considered high risk due to history of a prior breast biopsy with a high risk lesion or prior history of chest radiation.

Q: Are there any types of genetic testing that you would recommend?

A: NCCN guidelines recommend genetic testing for women with a personal history of breast cancer or a family history of breast cancer that meet specific criteria. I recommend speaking to a genetics specialist regarding testing recommendations. Examples of a suspicious personal or family history that warrant genetic evaluation and testing include: young onset disease (50 or younger at diagnosis), a woman

with more than one primary breast cancer, or multiple (3+) women on one side of a family with breast cancer. However, there are many other family and personal histories that may warrant genetic testing per guidelines. Additionally, these guidelines are not perfect and we do find inherited pathogenic variants in individuals who do not have a “suspicious” family cancer history; therefore, I recommend that anyone who is interested in cancer risk assessment discuss the option of genetic testing with their health team or a genetics specialist.

Q: Where can someone go for screening?

A: Classically, hereditary cancer genetic testing is offered by genetics professionals; however, many health systems now also have initiatives where testing may be offered by a woman’s primary care doctor or gynecologist. I recommend speaking with your primary care team about options in your health plan.

Q: Are there any signs or symptoms where someone should see a physician in between screenings?

A: If a woman notices a new breast symptom, she should speak with her doctor. Specifically, symptoms such as a new mass or nipple discharge warrant evaluation. Breast pain and tenderness are common and some women experience these symptoms each month with their menstrual cycle; however, if a woman experiences new or different breast pain, she should contact her medical provider to see if a clinical exam or imaging is recommended.

Q: Is there anything you wish more people knew about screenings or breast cancer generally?

A: Individuals with an inherited risk of breast cancer may also have other elevated cancer risks depending on the inherited pathogenic variant identified in the family and family history. For example, pathogenic variants in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes also cause increased risk of male breast cancer, ovarian, prostate and pancreatic cancer and melanoma. Therefore, a comprehensive screening plan is recommended, and genetic testing is also relevant for males. Inherited risk of breast cancer can also be passed down from one’s maternal AND paternal lineage.



Erica S. Youngerman, an associate at Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP, helps clients as they navigate today’s complex health law and health care business transactions landscape. She advises a wide range of health care entities, including physician and other provider practices, hospitals and other health systems, pharmacies and hospice and home care companies, and other participants in the health care industry, including private equity-backed management services organizations. Erica advises clients from the beginning to the end of health care transactions and on more pure regulatory analyses. She is active in professional and public service communities, serving as a mentor for aspiring attorneys and other young professionals. Erica is the secretary for the Women in Law Section.



Breast Cancer Awareness Month: An Attorney's Story of Survival

By Erica S. Youngerman

In recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness month, health care attorney Erica S. Youngerman from Katten Muchin Rosenman spoke with Jennifer Feldman, an attorney and two-time breast cancer survivor. Jennifer resides in Kensington, Maryland with her husband Jay, their daughter Sadie, and their dog. Jennifer is a volunteer for Sharsheret and Alpha Epsilon Phi. She holds a bachelor of arts degree in political science from the University of Florida and a juris doctorate from Whittier Law School. Jennifer is licensed to practice in California, Maryland and the District of Columbia, where she currently works at the Montgomery County Circuit Court as a staff attorney.



Jennifer Feldman

Q: Please introduce yourself and tell us about your legal practice.

A: My name is Jennifer Feldman. I am 41 years old, graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in political science in 2003, and graduated from Whittier Law School in 2007. I am licensed to practice in California, Maryland and D.C. I currently work as a staff attorney at the Montgomery County Circuit Court in Maryland, at the Self-Help Center. We provide free legal assistance to *pro se* litigants in family law disputes involving divorce, custody, visitation, guardianship and child support. This month marks seven years that I have been working here.

Q: Could you share with us a little about your breast cancer journey?

A: In June 2009, I was 27. I had just completed my first year of practicing law at a mid-size law firm. I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I was changing for bed at night when I found a lump myself. It turned out that I had DCIS (ductal carcinoma in situ), and invasive breast cancer. I had a bilateral mastectomy, followed by six rounds of chemotherapy, and reconstruction. Four and half years later, I was diagnosed with a recurrence. Again, I found the lump myself. In 2013, I had surgery again, followed by 45 rounds of radiation and 16 rounds of chemotherapy. When all was done, I had reconstruction again. This process was significantly longer than my first round of treatments.

Due to my recurrence, my doctors advised that it would no longer be safe for me to try and get pregnant and carry a baby to term. Prior to my second round of surgery and treatments, I underwent one round of fertility preservation and we created eight embryos. Since then, I have continued to take daily medications and have yearly follow-ups with my various doctors.

Q: How did you navigate your professional responsibilities as an attorney while undergoing treatment?

A: During my first round of breast cancer, I was really fortunate to work for a firm that was supportive of me and what I was going through. After my bilateral mastectomy, I took off six weeks to recover. When I started my chemotherapy treatments I continued to work. Since my treatments were spaced out every three weeks, I scheduled my treatments on Thursday mornings, so that I could take off Fridays, spend the weekend recovering and go back to work on Monday. I realize how fortunate I was that I continued working throughout my treatments, especially because of the circumstances I found myself in several years later.

In 2012, my husband and I relocated to Maryland from California. I struggled to find a job in my desired field of family law in a new community. Although I was able to waive into Washington, D.C, I had to take the Maryland bar exam. However, less than a year after moving, I was diagnosed with a recurrence of breast cancer. Suddenly I found myself having to start the process of surgeries and treatments all over again—which put my professional career on a temporary pause. In the fall of 2013, I had surgery, followed by radiation. I began chemotherapy treatments in 2014, and in July of that summer I took and successfully passed the Maryland bar. I studied during my chemo treatments and worked as a contract attorney part-time. The truth is that studying and working were a welcome distraction to the chemotherapy treatments and side effects. Finally, after my treatments were complete and I was licensed in Maryland, I began working in private practice at a family law firm.



Q: Did you face any professional challenges due to your diagnosis?

A: I definitely faced professional challenges due to my diagnosis. During my first round of cancer, even though my employer was very supportive overall, I recall a specific instance that has always stuck with me. It is commonly known that chemotherapy patients often lose their hair. In preparation for a settlement conference a partner at my law firm wanted to confirm that I planned to wear a wig to the conference, rather than go with a scarf on my head, or appear bald. Personally, I was totally comfortable appearing bald or with a scarf, but I could tell that my employer was not. So I wore a wig. During my second bout of cancer, I had to delay taking the Maryland bar exam and getting my job hunt truly started in Maryland. I definitely felt that due to this unexpected recurrence my law career was stalled, delayed, and negatively impacted. These days, I feel very fortunate to have landed where I am. I absolutely love my job, I love that I can assist the unrepresented and people who otherwise cannot afford legal help in a very trying time in their lives.

Q: Did you take any leaves of absence or change roles because of your diagnosis or treatment? If so, what was your experience like upon a return to work as an attorney?

A: As stated above, the only time I took leaves of absence was post-surgery. During both radiation and chemotherapy I continued working around my treatment schedule. During my first round of cancer, when I returned to work, I found that my colleagues were very supportive of me. They were concerned that I did not push myself too hard and allowed me to balance my recovery and work.

Q: What personal and professional advice would you give to an attorney newly diagnosed with breast cancer?

A: I would tell an attorney newly diagnosed with breast cancer that the diagnosis does not have to be the end of the road for your dreams either professionally or personally. It is possible to find a balance between work and treatments—if you want to—but also, if you want to take a leave of absence and not work, that is okay too. For me, having distractions was very helpful. To keep my mind occupied and challenged, to have engaging discussions, to stick with a routine, was all instrumental in my ability to keep moving forward with a positive attitude. And, of course, find someone to talk to about what you are going through. Although friends and family want to be present and supportive, sometimes you need the perspective of someone who has already traveled down this road.

CDC Adds Uterine and Endometrial Cancers to the List of 9/11-Related Cancers: Now Begins the Work of Reaching Victims and Their Families

By Dana Cohen



For years, advocates for the 9/11 community¹ have had to tell women battling uterine cancer that there was no help for them. These women were exposed to the same carcinogenic toxins as everyone else who lived, worked, and studied in Lower Manhattan, and if they had developed any other cancer, they would have been eligible for health care and compensation. We, as advocates, had no satisfactory explanation for why they were singled out for disparate treatment, and the memory of these conversations, many from long ago, continues to haunt me as I lay in bed at night. Finally, more than two decades after the 9/11 attacks, those difficult conversations have become a thing of the past.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has, at last, added uterine cancer to the list of 9/11-related illnesses, correcting a patent injustice. Women with uterine cancer are now eligible for the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP) and the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund (VCF), which means they will receive the health care and compensation that they have always deserved. Families who

have lost loved ones to uterine cancer will also be eligible for compensation for their losses.

The benefits afforded by the WTCHP and the VCF are a much-needed lifeline for sick people, and for the families they leave behind. Since the CDC's announcement, my colleagues have been reconnecting with countless individuals who reached out over the years because many of the people who were denied benefits for their uterine cancer years ago will likely not know that they are now covered. Some are far sicker now, and some will have passed away.

Now is the time to pour our collective efforts into reaching victims to help to spread the news of this change. Here is what you need to know:

- People who were in the New York City exposure zone for some period between Sept. 11, 2001 and May 30, 2002 may be eligible for benefits including free lifetime health care and compensation for pain and suffering and

economic losses. Families who lost a loved one to uterine cancer are eligible for compensation as well.

- The program is not just for first responders. It also covers people who lived, worked, or went to school in the exposure zone.
- Covered conditions include respiratory ailments and virtually every cancer. As of late January 2023, uterine cancer (which includes endometrial cancer) is covered. Help is available now.
- In order to qualify, an individual must prove they were in the exposure zone for the requisite period. The sooner the necessary documentation is collected, the better.
- The process is non-adversarial. This is a program of the United States Justice Department, not a lawsuit.
- Although people do not need a lawyer to apply, there are experienced advocates who can assist with the process and their fees for services are capped by the federal government and may not exceed 10% of any award received.

Like many, I was there on the day of the attacks. My office is just two blocks from the World Trade Center and we all returned to work after the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) told us that “the air [was] safe to breathe.”

We now know that was inaccurate, and it turns out that listening to the EPA’s guidance resulted in half of the people at our firm coming down with cancer related to their toxic exposure. Two colleagues who were only in their 40s lost their lives to cancer.

I consider myself fortunate to only have 9/11-related respiratory issues. I don’t have uterine cancer, but knowing that I and thousands of other women will be protected moving forward is critical.

Now, after 21 long years of waiting, we must do everything possible to reach these women. There is no making up for lost time when it comes to cancer, and there is no time to waste.



Dana Cohen is a partner at the law firm of Barasch & McGarry, lawyers for the 9/11 Community, where she is the co-director of the firm’s Family Assistance Team, which represents families who have lost a loved one to 9/11-related disease. She has devoted her career to seeking justice for seriously injured people. In addition to leading the Family Assistance Team, she has handled some of the firm’s most complex cases, including those arising from medical malpractice, product li-

ability and firefighter accidents. She can be reached at dana@baraschmcgarry.com.

Endnote

1. The 9/11 community refers to the individuals who were present at the World Trade Center or surrounding New York City exposure zone at some point between Sept. 11, 2001 and May 30, 2002. *See*, e.g., <https://www.vcf.gov/>.



All Access Pass

Maximize Your Time and Earn CLE Credits with On-Demand Learning



**Access hundreds of programs
online and satisfy your MCLE
requirement for one low price.**

- > Gain access to all CLE Online video programs and course materials for one year
- > New programs added each month
- > Monthly billing option

**\$495 for
NYSBA Members**

For more information visit **[NYSBA.ORG/ALLACCESSPASS](https://www.nysba.org/allaccesspass)**

Online only. Does not include live programs, CD or DVD products.
All Access Pass requires member login and cannot be transferred. Annual subscription required.

WILS CONNECTS

International Women's Day 2023



Sherry Levin Wallach and Sheryl Galler. Sheryl received the Her Hero Lifetime Achievement Award.



The Huntington Her Hero Lifetime Achievement Awards were presented at the International Law Conference on the Status of Women in New York City. The event takes place on International Women's Day and is sponsored by the New York City Bar Association and co-sponsored by WILS and NYSBA's Committee on Leadership Development.



Mirna Martinez Santiago (above right) was honored with the Epiq Award for Justice and Advocacy.



Edwina Martin (above left) also received a Her Hero Lifetime Achievement Award (with Mirna Martinez Santiago and Sherry Levin Wallach).



Susan Kohlmann (above left), who also received a Her Hero Lifetime Achievement Award, and Sherry Levin Wallach.



Right: The Honorable Cheryl E. Chambers, Associate Justice, Appellate Division, Second Judicial Department, with Sherry Levin Wallach.

WILS CONNECTS

Annual Meeting 2023



WILS first panel (left to right): Kim Wolf Price, Sheryl Galler, Lakeisha Caton, Eden Forsyth, and Sima Sarana Ahuja analyzed new laws addressing the gender pay gap.



The second panel (left to right): Laura Sulem, Shira Franco, Dawn Lott, Kim Brown and Jennifer Diana.



Kaylin Whittingham, Ronald C. Minkoff, and Kim D. Ringle spoke on the ethics panel, "Blurred Lines Between Business and Legal Advice."



WILS Communications Committee Chair Morgan Richardson welcomes guests to WILS' networking reception.



WILS networking reception followed the Annual Meeting program.



Chief United States District Judge, W.D. of N.Y., Elizabeth Wolford (center) received the Ruth G. Schapiro Memorial Award.

WILS CONNECTS

Annual Meeting 2023



(Standing): Kaelyn Gustafson , Laura Sulem, Morghan Richardson; (seated): Frettra de Silva and Susan Harper at the Gala.



The elegant Presidential Gala tables.



WILS Chair Elect Frettra de Silva (left) and past Chair Susan Harper.



Laura Sulem, Morghan Richardson and Kaelyn Gustafson at the Gala.



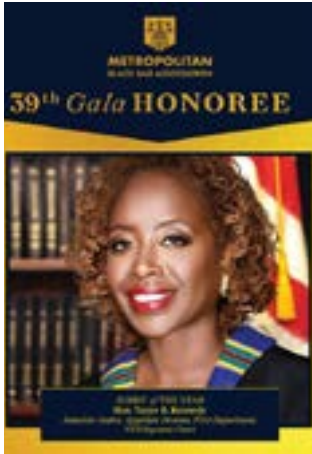
Members of WILS and the Health Law Section at the Gala.



WILS Annual Meeting Dinner

WILS Members in the News

By Terri A. Mazur



Justice Tanya R. Kennedy Awarded Jurist of the Year and Alphonso B. Deal Award

The Honorable Tanya R. Kennedy, Associate Justice, Appellate Division, First Department, received the Metropolitan Black Bar Association (MBBA) Jurist of the Year Award at the May 19, 2023 MBBA Annual Gala in recognition of her significant and

ongoing contributions to the legal community. The MBBA is a citywide association of Black and other minority lawyers in the New York metropolitan area. Among other things, the MBBA encourages research and prepares reports on legal issues affecting the citywide Black community, and works with government agencies and other organizations to encourage the personal and professional development of young lawyers and law students and to enhance the status of Black and other minority people in the legal profession.

Justice Kennedy also received the Alphonso B. Deal Award from the Tribune Society of the Courts of New York State at its 55th Annual Gala on November 2, 2023. The Tribune Society “is a fraternal organization of African Americans and other minority judicial and non-judicial court personnel.” Leah Richardson, the president of the Tribune Society, Inc., explained that the main goals of the Society “are to consistently improve the administration of justice and ensure equal opportunity for all who work in or whom the New York Unified Court System serves,” and to “promote and extend diversity on the judiciary and upper echelon non-judicial positions within the NYS Unified Court System,” supporting and promoting “affirmative action generally to assure equal justice and self-improvement on behalf of our people.”

These awards are a tribute to Judge Kennedy’s continued commitment to improving the judiciary, as well as to promoting diversity and inclusion. Judge Kennedy is an inspiration to us all.



Carol Villegas Honored as Finalist for Lawyer of the Year and Named One of Top 10 Most Influential Securities Litigation Attorneys in New York

Carol C. Villegas has had another banner year in her securities litigation practice

as a partner at Labaton Sucharow.

New York Law Journal named Ms. Villegas one of three finalists—and the only woman—the 2023 Lawyer of the Year at the New York Legal Awards in October 2023. This award honors those attorneys “who have made a remarkable difference in the legal profession in New York—whether in shaping the law, achieving outsized results for their clients, being an outstanding jurist or assisting those in need of legal services.”

Business Today also named Ms. Villegas to its 2023 Top 10 List of Most Influential Securities Litigation Attorneys in New York. Ms. Villegas is the only woman to make the list. In compiling this list, *Business Today* recognizes New York attorneys who represent investors and companies as plaintiffs in complex securities litigation involving fraudulent practices or failures of corporate governance.

Ms. Villegas focuses her practice on securities litigation on behalf of institutional investors and holds several leadership positions within the firm, including on the firm’s Executive Committee. She is the chair of Labaton’s Women’s Networking and Mentoring Initiative, and its chief of compliance. She is also an active member of NYSBA’s Women in Law Section, chair of the City Bar Fund, a member of the National Association of Public Pension Attorneys, the National Association of Women Lawyers, and the Hispanic National Bar Association. She received her J.D. from New York University School of Law and her undergraduate degree from New York University.

WILS Members in the News



Ellen Makofsky Named to the 2023 Top 50 Women Super Lawyers New York Metro Area List

Ellen Makofsky appeared on the cover of *The Super Lawyers New York Metro/Top Women Lawyers* edition, which heralded her as “Lady Justice” and as “the rock star for thorny elder law or estate tax issues.” Ms. Makofsky has been selected numerous times to the Top 50 Women Super Lawyers list for the New York Metro area.

Ms. Makofsky is the founder of Makofsky Law Group, an elder law and estate planning firm based in Long Island, New York. For more than 30 years, she has concentrated her practice in elder law, trusts and estate, probate and estate administration, and guardianships for more than 30 years. The National Elder Law Foundation has named her a certified elder law attorney (CELA). She is a past president of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, New York Chapter. Ms. Makofsky is also an active member of the New York State Bar Association. She served three terms as secretary of NYSBA and served on its Executive Committee for 10 years. She chaired the NYSBA Elder Law and Special Needs Section, the Committee on Women in the Law (the predecessor to the Women in Law Section), the Continuing Legal Education Committee, and the Publications Committee, and is a member of the Executive Committee of the NYSBA Trusts and Estate Section.



Bond Schoeneck Names Kim Wolf Price Firm’s Chief Strategist and Diversity Officer

Bond Schoeneck & King has elevated Kimberly Wolf Price to the firm’s Chief Strategy & Diversity Officer on September 21, 2023. In this position, Ms. Wolf Price will work with firm management and administration in implementing its strategic initiatives. She will focus on areas such as strategic planning, attorney professional development, diversity and inclusion, innovation and growth, firm culture development, and strategic talent acquisition.

Kevin Bernstein, chair of Bond Schoeneck’s Management Committee, lauded Ms. Wolf Price as a “proven strategic thinker” who “has contributed to the planning and direction of the firm since she joined the firm” in 2020. Ms. Wolf Price explained that her new role will allow her “to expand upon the work she has been doing for the past three and a half years” in the areas of DEI strategy and planning “both within Bond Schoeneck and within the communities they serve.” She will also assist on projects to prepare the firm for the future of legal practice and continue to work with the firm’s newest attorneys on their professional development.

Ms. Wolf Price, chair of NYSBA’s Women in Law Section, earned her law degree at Syracuse University College of Law and her undergraduate degree at Colgate University. She began her legal career in the New York City office of Clifford Chance US, then worked for a small law firm in Syracuse before working for 10 years at Syracuse University College of Law, first serving as assistant dean of professional and career development and later taking on an academic role as director of externship programs. Ms. Wolf Price is also a member of NYSBA’s Committee on Diversity & Inclusion and a former chair of the Lawyers in Transition Committee.

WILS Members in the News



Morghan Richardson Recognized as One of Crain's New York Business 2023 Notable Women Lawyers

Morghan L. Richardson was selected by Crain's New York Business as one of the 2023 Notable Women in the Law. Each year Crain's honors 100 women attorneys for this

list – women who are furthering justice and contributing to their area of legal expertise in immeasurable ways.

Ms. Richardson is a partner and co-chair of the Matrimonial & Family Law practice of Tarter Krinsky & Drogin. Richardson focuses her practice on divorce and family law, and regularly handles cases that involve complex divorce litigation, alimony, child support, prenuptials, parent coordination, separation agreements, visitation, property division, asset protection and LGBTQIA+ family law issues. She has fought complex divorce cases for clients that include a Nobel-Prize winning economist, a prominent music magazine editor, and one of the spouses from the hit television show *The Real Housewives of New York*. She also chairs WILS Communications Committee



Alyssa Malin Receives Anti-Defamation League's 2023 Sydney Wilf Distinguished Young Leadership Award

The Anti-Defamation League of New York/New Jersey (ADL) honored Alyssa Malin with the Sydney Wilf Distinguished Young Leadership Award

in May, during the 2023 Annual ADL Leadership Event. Ms. Malin is committed to the ADL's mission of fighting hate.

Ms. Malin is a lawyer and the founder and CEO of The Stet Collective, which empowers women to meet the challenges of being a lawyer, where she is a professional development and wellness coach to women lawyers. Prior to found-

ing The Stet Collective, she was general counsel of A&E Real Estate in New York City for seven years, and before that, executive director of property administration and associate general counsel of Sugar Hill Capital, an associate at Belkin Burden Goldman, and she interned at the Department of Legal Affairs of the New York State Homes and Community Renewal.



Alyson Matthews Recognized by Herald Community Newspapers 2023 Top Lawyers of Long Island and Nassau County Women of Distinction

Alyson Matthews, a member of Bond Schoeneck & King, was recognized as a 2023 honoree at the Herald Community Newspapers' Top Lawyers of Long Island Awards ceremony on May 17, 2023. Ms. Matthews was also named to Nassau County's 2023 Women of Distinction by Blank Slate Media.

Ms. Matthews focuses her practice on labor and employment law at Bond Schoeneck & King. She provides her clients with experienced guidance to maintain a compliant workplace, advising on all aspects of labor and employment law, providing practical solutions to prevent litigation or resolve issues at the pre-litigation stage. She has strong relationships with unions. A graduate of Brooklyn Law School and Boston College, she is an active member of the New York State Bar Association, where she is a past chair of the NYSBA Labor and Employment Law Section, and currently serves on the Executive Committee of the NYSBA Women in Law Section, and co-chairs the WILS Awards Committee. She is also a member of the Suffolk County Bar Association and the New York State Association of School Attorneys, where she serves on the Board of Directors as first vice president. Ms. Matthews has been selected as a New York Super Lawyer in 2022 and New York Super Lawyers Rising Star 2017-2019.

WILS Members in the News



Sheryl B. Galler Is New Chair of NYSBA's Labor and Employment Law Section

Sheryl B. Galler ended her two-year service as chair of NYSBA's Women in Law Section and immediately stepped into her new role of NYSBA's Labor and Employment Law Section in June 2023. Ms. Galler, a

partner at Book Law, advises employers and employees on federal, state, and local employment laws. She negotiates and drafts employment, severance and non-competition agreements, drafts employee handbooks and helps clients develop and implement employment policies. She also conducts sexual harassment prevention training for law firms, nonprofits and commercial entities, investigates discrimination and harassment claims, and counsels clients on a wide range of employment law and compliance matters.

Ms. Galler is the author of "Sexual Harassment and Retaliation in the Legal Profession: How To Stop It," *NYSBA Journal* (January/February 2022), "Preventing and Handling Sexual Harassment at Law Firms," *NYSBA Journal* (January/February 2019) and "Know New York State's New Paid Family Leave Benefits Law," *NYSBA Journal* (May 2017). She has moderated and presented continuing legal education courses on employment law and professional practice for the New York State Office of the Attorney General, NYSBA, and the Women's Leadership Initiative at Albany Law School.

A 1993 graduate of Columbia University Law School, Galler was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar. She received her B.A. from Columbia University, summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa. She has been a member of WILS and its predecessor, CWIL, since 2012, and not only is she the WILS immediate past chair, she currently serves as WILS' delegate to NYSBA's House of Delegates.



Pamela D. Bass Named Partner at Thomas, Drohan, Waxman, Petigrow & Mayle

Pamela D. Bass has been elevated to partner at Thomas, Drohan, Waxman, Petigrow & Mayle. Her practice focuses on collective bargaining in both the public and private sector, employee discipline matters, litigation matters, and assisting clients

with policy formulation and concerns, including gender equity policies. She is also involved in sports law as it relates to educational institutions. She graduated with honors from Brown University, has an M.Ed. from the University of Texas, and received her J.D. degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law.

Ms. Bass also has 19 years of experience in higher education and intercollegiate athletics, serving as a NCAA Division I head and an assistant women's basketball coach prior to receiving her J.D. degree. She has extensive experience in NCAA compliance, and has served on university and athletic conference committees on leadership, gender equity, and diversity. Ms. Bass is a member of the NYSBA Women in Law Section Executive Committee and chairs the WILS Gender Issues Committee.

Justice Dianne T. Renwick's Historic Appointment as Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division

By Linda A. Redlisky

Justice Dianne T. Renwick has become the first woman of color appointed as Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, First Department. Governor Kathy Hochul's June 2023 appointment is a welcome continuation of appointments of exceptionally qualified women to serve in leadership positions.

Justice Renwick has a depth of understanding of the challenges facing the legal system. She began her career as a staff attorney in Bronx County, and later an attorney in the Legal Aide Society's Federal Defenders of New York group representing criminal defendants in the Eastern District of New York. Thereafter, she became a Housing Court Judge in New York County. She then served as a Civil Court Judge in both New York and Bronx counties, and was elected as a Justice of the New York State Supreme Court, serving in the civil term for Bronx County. As a result of her impressive record and reputation for fairness, Governor David Paterson appointed Justice Renwick to the Appellate Division, First Department, in 2008, making her the first woman of color to serve on the First Department since its creation in 1894. The



Justice Dianne T. Renwick

accomplishment of being the first woman of color appointed to the Appellate Division, and now the first woman of color to serve as Presiding Justice of the First Department, speaks to her leadership abilities and demonstrated commitment to serve the legal community with fairness and impartiality.

The importance of diversity on the bench and in the legal profession cannot be overstated. As noted by the Brennan Center for Justice, "Diversity on the bench is an essential component of a fair and impartial judiciary. Bringing a range of experiences and perspectives to bear allows judges to make better informed decisions and increases public

confidence in their rulings."¹ We celebrate Justice Renwick's appointment as an encouraging step in acknowledging the need for diversity and appropriately elevating and appointing highly qualified and committed justices to the bench.

Endnote

1. <https://www.brennancenter.org/issues/strengthen-our-courts/promote-fair-courts/diversity-bench>.

Hon. Deborah H. Karalunas: First Female Administrative Judge for the Fifth Judicial District

By Terri A. Mazur

The Honorable Deborah H. Karalunas was appointed as the administrative judge for the Fifth Judicial District by Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas, with the approval of Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson, effective July 10, 2023. Judge Karalunas becomes the first female administrative judge for the Fifth Judicial District. This marks another noteworthy milestone in the promotion of women to leadership roles on the bench.

Judge Karalunas will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the trial courts in the Fifth Judicial District, which is comprised of Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Onondaga, and Oswego counties. Her extensive career on the bench coupled with her leadership skills will benefit the Fifth Judicial districts and the constituents it serves.

Judge Karalunas was elected as a Supreme Court justice in the Fifth Judicial District in 2002, where she presided over a wide variety of civil cases related to commercial litigation, personal injury, medical malpractice, intellectual property, constitutional law, and environmental issues. In 2007, she was appointed as the presiding justice of the Supreme Court, Commercial Division, Onondaga County. Judge Karalunas is the past chair of the Fifth Judicial District Women in the Courts Committee, having served for 17 years, and was appointed to the New York State Committee on Pattern Jury Instruction in 2017. Active in the Central New York Women's Bar Association, she has served as president and as a member of the board of directors. She frequently lectures on substantive law and trial practice topics for state and local bar associations, demonstrating her commitment to teaching and mentoring lawyers and her dedication to the prac-



Hon. Deborah H. Karalunas

tice of law. Judge Karalunas is highly regarded by her peers: she was the 2017 recipient of the Central New York Women's Bar Association's inaugural Karen DeCrow Award, which is awarded annually to a member of the judiciary or legal profession who works to advance, among other things, gender equity and social equality for all races, creeds, ethnicities and sexual orientation. She also was the 2018 Public Service Honoree of the Armenian Bar Association, and the 2022 recipient of the Association of Justices of the Supreme Court of the State of New York's Justice Martin J. Evans Award for Judicial Excellence and Leadership.

Prior to her election to the Supreme Court, Judge Karalunas was a partner at Bond, Schoeneck & King in Syracuse, New York. She began her legal career as law clerk to Chief Judge Howard G. Munson of the U.S. District Court in the Northern District of New York. We congratulate Judge Karalunas and wish her success in her new role.

Celebrating Juneteenth

By Catherine Christian



Ed Note: This article originally appeared at NYSBA.ORG.

When I was asked to write an essay for this special Juneteenth issue I was honored and immediately thought how very fortunate I am to have found a career that has brought me professional fulfillment.

New York Upbringing

I was raised by a strong hard working single mother in Bedford Stuyvesant and East New York. Mom was a nurse but from middle school becoming a lawyer was my goal. My legal career began right out of law school as a prosecutor in the New York County District Attorney's Office.

From day one I observed that a successful career is obtained by mentor relationships, professional development training and access to meaningful assignments. Much of my professional development and fulfillment has been obtained through my activities that I have engaged in as an active member of bar associations.

Benefits of Professional Networking

One of my DA office mentors, Margaret Finerty, encouraged bar association membership. Peggy knew that prosecutors are a part of the larger family of lawyers represented by bar associations, and it was important that the voices of all actors in the criminal justice system be heard. Along with my New York County Lawyers Association presidency, my New York State Bar Association activities and relationships have contributed greatly to my professional development.

This past year I was honored to co-chair, with Andy Koss-over, NYSBA's Task Force on the Modernization of Criminal Practice. Immediate Past-President Sherry Levin Wallach appointed the task force in the summer of 2022.

President Levin Wallach entrusted Andrew and me with shepherding a significant review of criminal practice and the criminal justice system to suggest new laws and policies to improve safety, fairness, access to justice and efficiency in the administration of criminal justice. We hope that the report educates the public and provides a resource to legislators and policymakers as they seek to improve safety, fairness, access to justice and efficiency in the administration of criminal justice.

Increasing Diversity in the Legal Profession

In 2017, I was honored to receive the Kay Crawford Murray Award. To receive an award named after Kay was very special as she spent her career recognizing the value of diversity in the legal profession and dedicated her career to advancing the professional development of women attorneys.

I am one of those women. Kay was always soft spoken with sage advice. Proverbs 31:26 best describes Kay: "She opens her mouth with wisdom; And in her tongue is the law of kindness." I thank the women and men like Kay who have been mentors and role models throughout my career to support and push me forward. I have learned from each of them that *your personal achievement is meaningless unless you bring others up with you.*



Catherine Christian is a former chief of the New York County District Attorney's Office Elder Abuse Unit and is now a partner at Liston Abramson in New York.. Christian is a member of the WILS Executive Committee and co-chairs the WILS Awards Committee. She is a past president of the New York County Lawyers Association.

Nigeria, the Connection Continues!

By Linda A. Redlisky

WILS' Immediate Past Chair Sheryl Galler participated virtually in the Third Annual General Conference and International Women's Day Event of the Nigerian Bar Association's Women's Forum (NBAWF) in March 2023. The theme of the conference was "Tech Her In: Innovating for Gender Equity."

Galler spoke at a plenary session titled "Collaborating for Her." The panelists were asked to evaluate the success of bar associations and organizations in advocating and developing programs for women lawyers. They also were asked for recommendations as to how those organizations, and women attorneys generally, could better support each other and advance women in the profession.

Starting with a brief history of the Women in Law Section, Galler noted that although we are a relatively young Section within NYSBA, we grew from a committee that had been part of NYSBA for over 30 years. She explained that WILS' mission is to advance women in the legal profession and all women under the law.

Regarding WILS' successes, Galler shared a brief overview of what the Women in Law Section offers its members:

1. **Education.** WILS offer panels and webinars on new laws and developments in the legal profession, such as the impacts of artificial intelligence.

2. **Legislative advocacy.** WILS analyzes pending laws that affect women—such as laws to combat the gender pay gap, provide paid family leave, and prevent sexual harassment—and makes recommendations to NYSBA's government relations and advocacy team.

3. **Professional development.** WILS offers panels and webinars on how women attorneys can get a seat at the table, become lead counsel at trial, develop skills, take control of their career, and find mentors.

4. **Networking and social events.** This is the fun stuff. WILS offers virtual and in-person events including its book club, museum tours, and holiday parties, all of which are important for building bonds, friendships and making connections.

She added that the Women in Law Section is proud of its strong relationships with the other NYSBA sections and committees and with other bar associations. Galler and her colleagues were invited to events hosted by three other bar associations, in addition to the NBAWF, to celebrate and commemorate Women's History Month 2023.

The Women in Law Section, and indeed any bar association, must figure out how we can help emerging lawyers now and in the future. What new challenges are they facing? How can we provide tools they need to confront those challenges? We can be proud of our success but cannot rest on our laurels.

Galler ended her presentation with appreciation to the NBAWF for our ongoing cooperation and friendship, and expressed the hope that, now that the COVID-19 pandemic has receded, we will be able to expand our joint efforts from webinars to in-person events.

The skilled moderator of the panel was Oyinkansola Badejo-Okusanya, Partner, Africa Law Practice (top left). Panelists were Sheryl Galler (top right), Mulikat Thomas, Managing Partner, Audu Thomas & Co. (bottom right); Ibukun Ala-



bi, Chair, Business Network BNLF (bottom left); Cordelia Eke, Author and Director, Rivers State Ministry of Justice; and Amina Suzanah Agbaje, CVP/National President FIDA Nigeria.

At the end of the program, the NBAWF presented each panelist with a personalized commemorative plate in an elaborate wooden case. To Sheryl's surprise and delight, the NBAWF arranged to deliver her personalized award to New York. We thank our NBAWF colleagues, with special thanks to Professor Foluke Dada, for these arrangements. A photo of the award (which is heavier than it looks!) is below.

This is the third year that the NBAWF honored WILS with an invitation to participate in its International Women's Day Conference. WILS' Immediate Past Chair Terri A. Mazur joined the NBAWF's first conference in March 2021. Galler spoke at the Nigerian Bar Association's Annual General Conference in October 2021 and the NBAWF's International Women's Day Conference in March 2022.

By way of background, these invitations result from a Memorandum of Understanding that NYSBA, WILS and the NBAWF signed in 2020. Since then, we have had the pleasure of coordinating speaking opportunities with the chairperson of the NBA's Women's Forum, Chinyere Okoro-cha, who is also a Partner and Head of Sectors at Jackson, Etti & Edu, a top tier law firm headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria.

In March 2023, we were honored that Ms. Okoro-cha joined us to speak at a fascinating webinar titled "The Rise of Legal Technology in 2023: Opportunities and Challenges." Women attorneys from New York, Brazil, Italy, and Nigeria shared their perspectives on emerging technology in law firms and the effect on our careers. Galler, in her capacity as chair of WILS, and Helen Naves, senior officer of the NYSBA International Law Section, moderated. We have reprinted NYSBA's article about that lively program in this issue of *WILS Connect*.

We look forward to more opportunities to bring together the members of WILS and the NBAWF to discuss issues of interest to women attorneys worldwide. We also look forward to the day when we can meet the leaders of the NBAWF in person.



Women in Law Section Probes Broad Negative Impact of the Perpetual Gender Pay Gap During 2023 Annual Meeting

By Laura Sulem

On January 19, 2023, the Women in Law Section (WILS) hosted the 19th Annual Edith I. Spivack Symposium at the New York Hilton Midtown, which also served as WILS' 2023 Annual Meeting. This was the first in-person Annual Meeting since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The symposium's theme was "The Perpetual Gender Pay Gap: How Unequal Pay Negatively Impacts Women, Society, and the Profession." Gold and bronze sponsors of the event were Labaton Sucharow and Bates Group, respectively.

WILS Chair Sheryl Galler opened the symposium with welcome remarks about the section's purpose and the name-sake of the Annual Meeting. She noted that WILS currently boasts a membership of approximately 1,000 women and men attorneys from all over the world. Its mission is to address critical issues impacting women attorneys and women in general, which it does through its programming and evaluation of proposed New York legislation affecting women. Galler explained that the Annual Meeting honors Edith I. Spivack, a trailblazing lawyer, inspiring mentor to many women, and a charter member of NYSBA's Committee on Women in the Law, the predecessor to the Women in Law Section. Spivack graduated from Columbia Law School in 1932 and became a legend in the legal community, serving with distinction at the New York City Law Department for 70 years until her retirement at the age of 94. She advocated for legislative reforms regarding women's rights and was even admired by Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who described her as a steadfast contributor to the welfare of the communities that the law exists to serve.

Emily Martin, Vice President for Education and Workplace Justice for the National Women's Law Center, delivered an impactful keynote address. She provided historical context on pay inequity and discussed its implications, with a focus on the obstacles that confront women and girls of color and women in low-wage jobs. Martin also identified new approaches in public policy that can help shift our culture around gender, pay, and work, emphasizing the need for frameworks that allow women to achieve and succeed.

After the keynote address, WILS presented three CLE-qualified panels on the negative impacts of unequal pay. The first panel, "Women's Work: New Laws Addressing the Gender Pay Gap," consisted of distinguished attorneys from private practice, the New York State Department of Labor, and academia. These panelists explained the new pay trans-



Emily Martin gave the keynote address.

parency laws and presented data on the gender pay gap and the negative impacts on women's earnings resulting from the pandemic, resume gaps, and the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs*. They also addressed how the new laws affect employee rights and employer obligations around the job hunt and hiring process, job postings, interviews, and salary negotiations and decisions. Speakers on the first panel included LaKeisha Caton, partner at Pryor Cashman LLP; Eden Forsythe, policy counsel at New York State Department of Labor; Sima Saran Ahuja, general counsel at Marist College; Sheryl B. Galler, partner at Book Law LLP; and Kim Wolf Price, attorney professional development & diversity officer at Bond Schoeneck & King.

The second panel, "If I Had a Dollar: Breaking Down Pay Disparity and Its Impacts in the Legal Profession and Beyond," featured a dynamic panel of women from the banking and career coaching industries, private practice, and the government sector. These panelists explored the long-term impacts of the gender pay gap on women as individuals, on the legal profession, and on society. They analyzed data and addressed the intersectional impacts for women of color and other groups. They ended the presentation with suggested strategies for combating the pay gap and tips on negotiating your salary. Speakers on the second panel included Jennifer Diana, senior legal counsel, Standard Chartered Bank; Shira Franco, partner at Davis+Gilbert LLP; Dawn A. Lott, execu-

tive director of the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission; Kimberly Brown, career and leadership expert and founder of Manifest Yourself, LLC; and Laura Sulem, senior director, Practical Law at Thomson Reuters.

During the 2023 WILS Annual Meeting ethics presentation titled “Blurred Lines Between Business and Legal Advice: Navigating the Ethical Rules,” three ethics professionals examined how lawyers determine whether they are providing business advice or legal advice to their clients, and how (if at all) that determination affects their ethical obligations. The panelists addressed what happens when there is a tension between what clients want to do and what the law says they should do, as well as the related ethical obligations of their lawyers. They also identified the risks of providing both business and legal advice to clients, and provided best practices for understanding and following the applicable rules of ethics. The third panel included Ronald C. Minkoff, partner at Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz PC; Kim D. Ringler, founder, The Ringler Law Firm; and Kaylin L. Whittingham, founder, Whittingham Law.

WILS also held a section business meeting and elected officers for 2023-24, including Chair Kimberly Wolf Price, Chair-Elect Frettra DeSilva, Secretary Erica Youngerman, Treasurer Denise Bricker, and Members-at-Large Laurie Seal Coles, Sarah Simpson, Margaret Sowah, and Kaylin Whittingham.

At the end of the symposium, WILS hosted a fun and engaging networking reception, sponsored by Lowenstein Sandler LLP and Tarter Krinsky & Drogin LLP. The reception was very well-attended, including by attorneys who joined the Women in Law Section after having met WILS Executive Committee and other members at the event. An attendee even suggested a book for our virtual book club, *Too Young To Be Old*, by Diane Gilman, which we featured in our June 1, 2023 book club meeting.

In addition to its programming events, WILS also presented two prestigious awards to deserving recipients. During the annual WILS luncheon on January 19, 2023, WILS presented the Kay Crawford Murray Memorial Award to Jamie A. Levitt, managing partner of Morrison & Foerster LLP’s New York office. The Murray Award honors women in the profession who recognize the value of diversity and have dedicated their time to advancing the professional development of women attorneys. On January 20, 2023, NYSBA President Sherry Levin Wallach presented the 2022 Ruth G. Schapiro Memorial Award, which is sponsored by WILS, to the Honorable Elizabeth A. Wolford, chief United States district judge for the Western District of New York. The Schapiro Award recognizes a female or male member of the association who has made noteworthy contributions addressing the concerns of women, including through pro bono services, writing, and service to bar associations and community organizations. This ceremony was followed by a reception in honor of Judge Wolford sponsored by Bond Schoeneck & King PLLC.

The 2023 Annual Meeting was a bustling and well-received event. It was great to connect in person following two years of virtual Annual Meetings. We are looking forward to the WILS 2024 Annual Meeting.



Laura Sulem is the senior director of litigation at Practical Law, a Thomson Reuters company, where she oversees content and business strategy for the litigation service. She graduated from New York Law School, where she was a member and an executive articles editor of the *NYLS Law Review*. Laura sits on the Executive Committee of NYSBA’s Women in Law Section and chairs the Annual Meeting, Programming and CLE Committee.

Women in Law Section Bestows Prestigious Awards to Pioneering Lawyers

By David Alexander



Hon. Elizabeth Wolford and NYSBA Past President Sherry Levin Wallach.

The Chief United States District Judge of the Western District of New York Elizabeth A. Wolford and Jamie Levitt, New York managing partner at Morrison & Foerster, were honored by the Women in Law Section of the New York State Bar Association during its Annual Meeting Jan. 18-24, 2023 in New York City.

Judge Wolford received the Ruth G. Schapiro Memorial Award and Levitt was honored with the Kay Crawford Murray Memorial Award.

“Hon. Elizabeth A. Wolford and Jamie Levitt are two exceptional lawyers who have long been at the forefront of expanding diversity and elevating the role of women in our profession,” said Sherry Levin Wallach, former president of the New York State Bar Association. “They are transformative leaders who have spent their careers selflessly dedicating their time towards helping others.”

Judge Wolford was appointed by President Obama as the first female U.S. District Court judge in the Western District of New York. In 2021, she became the first woman to become the chief judge of the Western District.

“Hon. Elizabeth Wolford has been instrumental in developing a new pro bono plan designed to diversify legal rep-



Past Chair Sheryl Galler and Jamie Levitt

resentation. She has mentored numerous women attorneys and has promoted legal services and funding for programs benefiting women and their families through her work with bar associations and as a board member of legal and service organizations. Judge Wolford considers it a priority to open doors for women in the law and in the community at large,” said Sheryl Galler, chair of the Women in Law Section.

In response to a 2017 report entitled “If Not Now, When? Achieving Equity for Women Attorneys in the Courtroom and in ADR,” which encourages judges to adopt policies that would result in more women having the opportunity to take lead roles in court, Judge Wolford was among the first to implement a rule in her chambers that “strongly encourages litigants to permit more junior attorneys to examine witnesses at trial.” Although the rule applies to all attorneys, its impact has been a positive one for women.

Judge Wolford is a past president of the Greater Rochester Association for Women Attorneys and the Monroe Country Bar Foundation and served as a member of the Board of Directors for Just Cause. In addition, she is a past recipient of the association’s Root/Stimson and the Outstanding Young Lawyer awards.

Levitt is the managing partner of Morrison & Foerster's New York Office and chair of the Morrison & Foerster Foundation. She formerly served as head of the New York Litigation Department, co-chair of the firm's Complex Litigation and Trial Practice, chair of the firm's global Pro Bono Committee for a decade and a member of the firm's board of directors.

"Jamie Levitt exemplifies the spirit of Kay Crawford Murray. She creates new pathways for diversity and inclusion in her professional and personal life by mentoring young lawyers and creating diverse litigation teams, working pro bono on dozens of cases in the areas of reproductive rights, race discrimination and asylum, and supporting funding to protect voting rights and fair elections. She is a catalyst for change and a force for good," Galler said.

In 2022, Levitt was recognized by the publication *Corporate Counsel* as a Managing Partner of the Year in recognition of her outstanding commitment and dedication to the promotion of women and diversity in the law.

The Ruth G. Schapiro Memorial Award recognizes exemplary achievement by a male or female member of the association in addressing the concerns of women. It was established in honor of the Committee on Women in the Law's first chair, Ruth G. Schapiro.

The Kay Crawford Murray Memorial Award is bestowed upon an individual for valuing diversity in the legal profession and dedicating their time to advancing the professional development of women attorneys.

The Women In Law Section sponsored the 19th Annual Edith I. Spivack Symposium on Thursday, Jan. 19, during the Annual Meeting. The symposium's central theme was "The Perpetual Gender Pay Gap: How Unequal Pay Negatively Impacts Women, Society, and the Profession."

Honoring attorneys who render extraordinary service to the public and the profession is part of NYSBA's Annual Meeting tradition. The 146th Annual Meeting took place from Jan. 18 to 24 with in-person events at the New York Hilton Midtown from Jan. 18 to Jan. 21 and virtual sessions Jan. 23 and Jan. 24.

Highlights of the Annual Meeting included the Presidential Summit, "Mental Health and the Justice System: Impacts, Challenges and Potential Solutions," held on Wednesday, Jan. 18. The Presidential Gala honoring civil rights attorney Sherrilyn Ifill was held on Friday, Jan. 20, at the Rainbow Room. For information on NYSBA's 2024 Annual Meeting, go to <https://nysba.org/am2024>.

David Alexander is a content and communications specialist for the New York State Bar Association. This article previously appeared at [NYSBA.org](https://nysba.org).



How To Manage Time, Set Priorities and Reduce Anxiety

By Rebecca Melnitsky

Effectively managing time takes effort, but breathing, slowing down and prioritizing are a good way to start.

That was the message from Alyssa Malin, former in-house counsel to a New York City real estate investment firm who switched to life coaching. Nowadays, she runs The Stet Collective, which is focused on helping female lawyers with professional development and wellness.

On March 29, the New York State Bar Association hosted a seminar featuring Malin speaking about time management for lawyers. The seminar was sponsored by the Association's Women in Law Section, the Committee on Law Practice Management and the Committee on Continuing Legal Education.

Setting Priorities

Malin said women are often prone to perfectionism and taught to take care of others before themselves, and that carries over into the workplace. "When we have a priority that is not in line with that gender norm, it results in some guilt," she said.

She said that the term work-life balance is a misnomer and that it's better to strive for being present and focused instead. "I obviously can't tell you how to prioritize," said Malin. "Everyone's life is different, and everyone's desires for how they want to live are different." She added that a list of priorities should also include what a person wants in their personal life as well as the workplace.

Malin said people should write down their top five priorities and then look at how they are spending their time. "It's a little bit uncomfortable because you're going to see that you may not be living according to your values," she said. "But it's a really effective exercise."

Reducing Anxiety

Anxiety is the number-one productivity killer and the most common issue Malin sees in her practice. She added that anxious people tend to procrastinate and avoid their work – often by doing other less-important tasks.

"The anxious brain is not a clear-thinking brain," Malin said. "Paranoid thoughts start to seem rational to us, and we have trouble differentiating between reasonable arguments and unreasonable arguments."



Alyssa Malin

The first step to reducing anxiety is to address the physical components, like twitching, clammy hands, nausea, chest tightness and difficulty breathing. These sensations are caused by the release of cortisone and adrenaline. "The primitive brain is responsible for our stress response," Malin said. "And it hasn't evolved enough to differentiate between a lion that was going to eat us and an email from an upset client."

Using words to describe the physical symptoms distracts the brain from what's causing the anxiety and shows that those thoughts, while stressful, are not life-or-death. "You are not in physical danger; you are just feeling an uncomfortable physical sensation," Malin said. "And that's really all anxiety is."

The second step is to address the thought that is causing anxiety. As Malin described, thoughts create feelings, which create actions, which create results. "I recommend writing down these thoughts to see that they're just thoughts," she said. "They are not facts."

Malin recommended coming up with an alternative—yet believable—thought that feels better than what is causing the anxiety. "I call it thought work," she said. "It's a really awesome tool, and it's a tool that lawyers are particularly cut out for because . . . we're always training to be thinking of alternative explanations, other ways to look at a problem, other ways to interpret the facts."



Effective Planning

When tasks are overwhelming, it helps to make a plan and then execute the plan later. “This way you’re telling your brain that . . . you don’t have to actually do the work,” said Malin. “And that is much more calming to the brain. It’s much less overwhelming. And once you’ve made that plan, all you have to do is follow it.”

She also said it’s important to limit distractions, like turning off notifications. Even if one cannot ignore all messages, it helps to only allow notifications from the most important people.

Overall, the key to effective time management is practice, consistency and finding what works for an individual. “The truth is there’s no organizational system that’s perfect,” Malin said. “There’s just the system that is perfect for you.”

Laura Sulem, the chair of the Women in Law Section’s Annual Meeting and Programming Committee, delivered the opening remarks. The full program, entitled “Reclaim Your Calendar: Productivity & Time Management Tactics for Lawyers—Part 2,” is available in the program archives at [NYSBA.ORG/WILS](https://www.nysba.org/wils).

Rebecca Melnitsky is a content and communications specialist at NYSBA. This article previously appeared at [NYSBA.ORG](https://www.nysba.org).



Reclaim Your Calendar: Productivity and Time Management Tactics for Lawyers

By Laura Sulem



On March 15 and 29, 2023, Alyssa Malin from The Stet Collective conducted a two-part series, “Reclaim Your Calendar: Productivity and Time Management Tactics for Lawyers.” Many lawyers struggle with managing their time in a demanding and fast-paced profession. In Part I of her presentation, Malin emphasized the importance of a proper mindset to help people, and especially lawyers, follow through with tasks and get work done. She described the heavy and unpredictable workload many lawyers have in a client-based industry and warned against the dangers of perfectionism. Perfectionism can lead to overwhelm and procrastination. She ended the session with tips on changing your mindset to think differently and avoid procrastination.

Part II of the program covered the importance of reducing anxiety and explored the causes of overwhelm, including a demanding workload, unrealistic managers and clients, and the want to have it all, both professionally and personally. Malin explained that we can combat anxiety by setting priorities and better planning our time. She suggested that busy professionals can increase their productivity by aiming for consistency over perfection.

Malin is an attorney and professional development/wellness coach to lawyers. Inspired by her own experience as an attorney whose life was transformed by coaching, she became a certified coach, left her job as general counsel to a New York City real estate investment firm, and founded The Stet Collective to help other attorneys achieve the same kind of transformation. Ms. Malin’s methodology draws upon her own experience as well as the teachings of cognitive psychology, neuroplasticity, and feminist theory to help her clients build resilience, make empowered decisions, and go on to lead sustainable, fulfilling lives.

Women on the Move 2023: Navigate The Path to Your Success

By Erica S. Youngerman

Women on the Move is an annual continuing legal education program spearheaded by the Women in Law Section that provides practical professional information and advice to women lawyers. This year's event, entitled "Navigating the Path to Your Success," was hosted virtually on October 18, 2023, and was followed by a virtual networking session. The program opened with welcoming remarks by WILS Chair Kimberly Wolf Price and an introduction by New York State Bar Association President Richard C. Lewis, who also shared some WILS history. Attendees then heard from keynote speaker Hon. Sylvia O. Hinds-Radix, Corporation Counsel, New York City Law Department, who shared her personal experience with success and overcoming challenges and changes in her path to achieving her version of success. The program then featured three panels with esteemed speakers and moderators who spoke on a number of topics, including each of the following:

Navigating Change for Success

Panelists discussed successfully navigating various changes in attorneys' professional lives, including changing specialties, keeping abreast of emerging areas of law and artificial intelligence, re-entering the workforce, returning to the office and thriving after layoffs. The presenters also shared their experiences for lateral moves between firms of various sizes, government positions and in-house roles and how they retooled and maintained focus on their professional development and improving the profession. As any change in workplace and role requires attorneys to ensure they are providing competent legal assistance to their clients that is free of conflicts of interest, the panel also addressed ethical implications, including complying with employer policies and rules of ethics, maintaining confidentiality, notifying clients, establishing transition plans and ensuring an accurate social media presence. This panel was moderated by Erica Youngerman, who focuses her practice on health care transactions and compliance and is an associate with Katten Muchin Rosenman. The speakers were the Honorable Ruth Bogatyrow Kraft, a partner with Falcon Rappaport & Berkman and chair of the firm's Labor & Employment Practice Group; Kristen G. Niven, an associate in the Litigation Group at Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz; Laura Sulem, senior director for Practical Law at Thomson Reuters; and Jinhua (Anna) Wang, partner in charge (New York) at Robinson & Cole.

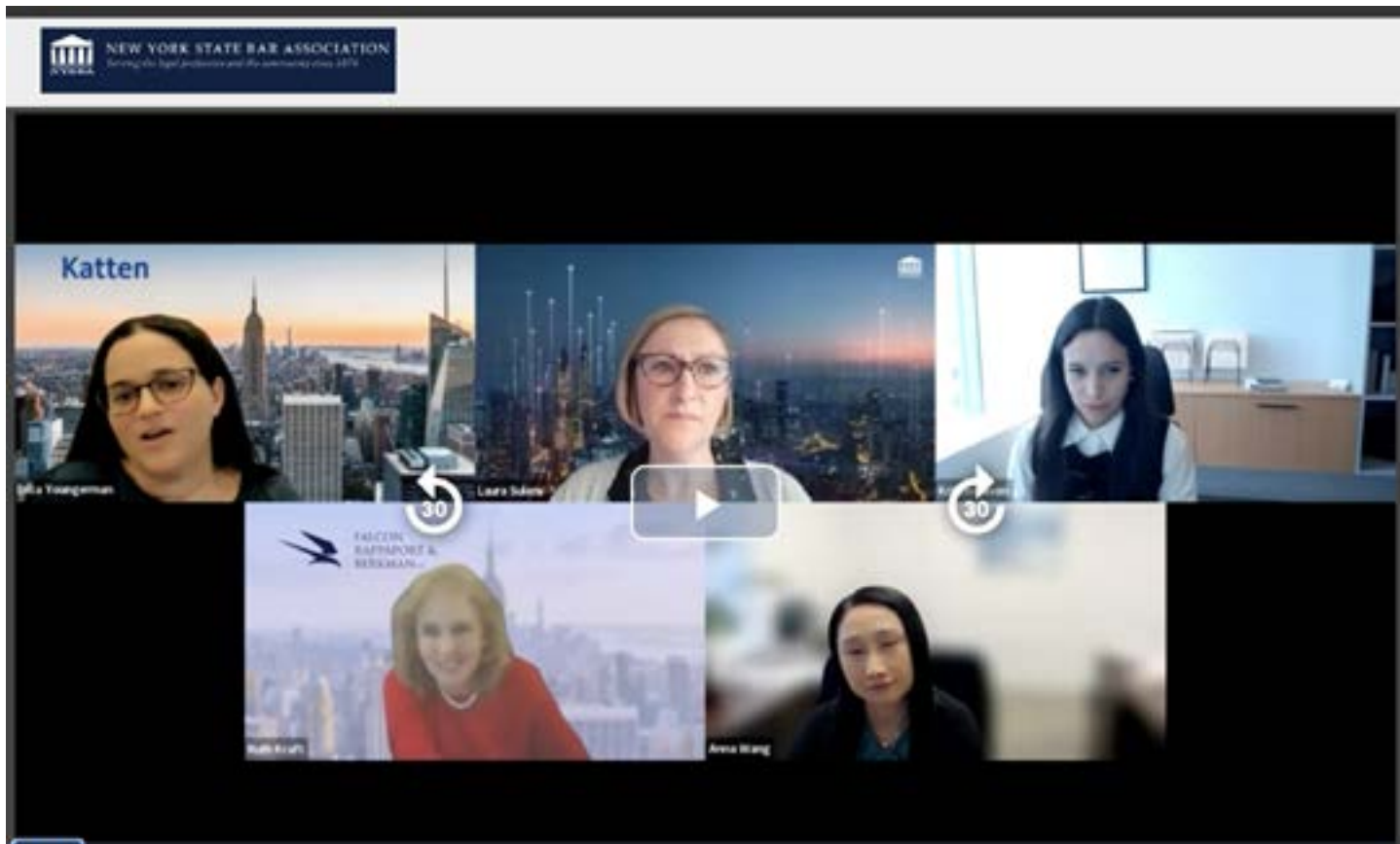
Overcoming Gender Bias on the Path to Success

This panel discussed recognizing gender bias in the workplace, including the most visible forms such as discrepancies in pay and promotions, and the less visible forms such as being regularly assigned administrative roles or not being invited to meetings. Panelists also specifically addressed gender biases with respect to women of color, pregnant women and women with children or other caregiving responsibilities. Panelists discussed strategies for overcoming gender biases and provided some insight for employers and employees alike on workplace protections for women and various employment law considerations that are implicated. Moderated by Christina H. Singh-Bedell, assistant attorney general in the New York State Office of the Attorney General, this panel featured the following speakers: Mia C. DeLane-Gurley, senior counsel at Bond, Schoeneck & King; Sheryl B. Galler, a partner at Book Law focusing on employment law; Kjersten C. Lazar, a certified financial planner and private wealth advisor, first vice president, wealth management, Raymond James & Associates, Inc.; and Michael A. Sabella, counsel with Baker & Hostetler.

Redefining Success

The final panel discussed how to define success and how the meaning of the word may be different for every individual. Topics included determining your goals, establishing metrics for success, evaluating satisfaction, changing goals over time, and pursuing alternative roles and/or careers. Moderated by Alyson Mathews, member, Bond Schoeneck & King, this panel featured the following speakers: Wendy E. Cohen, managing partner (New York) of Katten Muchin Rosenman and co-chair of the firm's investment management and funds practice; Florence Hutner, senior director for special projects, New York Law School; Robin Kraiterman, client resource attorney, Paul, Weiss, Riffkind, Wharton & Garrison; and Kate Ulrich Saracene, a partner with Katten Muchin Rosenman and chair of the firm's Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation practice and co-chair of Katten's Well-Being Committee.

The 2023 Women on the Move program is available on demand on the Women in Law Section website.



WOM's Navigating Change for Success panelists were (top left to right) Erica Youngerman, Laura Sulem, Kristin Nivin; and (bottom left to right) Ruth Kraft and Anna Wang.

Please contact Program Chair Erica S. Youngerman at erica.youngerman@katten.com or our Section Liaison Ernesto Guerrero at eguerrero@nysba.org with any questions, for information regarding future sponsorship opportunities, or speaker proposals.

Meet the New Co-Chairs of the WILS Legislative Affairs Committee

By Terri A. Mazur

Kaelyn Gustafson and Robin Kramer are the new co-chairs of WILS Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC), succeeding Denise Bricker and Sarah Simpson who successfully led the LAC through very active New York State legislative sessions from 2019 to 2022. During this time, the LAC worked on a number of important legislative issues, which included helping draft



Kaelyn Gustafson

a new state law establishing a hotline for reporting workplace sexual harassment and actively supporting New York's passage of the "Revenge Porn" law (which criminalized cyber sexual assault), New York's Equal Rights Amendment, the ban on requesting salary history, New York's equal pay law, a law banning nonconsensual pelvic exams on anesthetized women, and an updated anti-cyberstalking law. Denise Bricker is deputy general counsel of the Audubon Society. Sarah Simpson is senior counsel, regulatory and legislation at the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA). Before that, Sarah served as principal law Clerk to Judge Maureen T. Liccione for the New York State Court of Claims and previously was counsel to the Suffolk County Legislature. We are grateful to Denise and Sarah for their outstanding leadership and the time and energy they have devoted to the LAC.

WILS' LAC is responsible for identifying and recommending the WILS legislative agenda to the section's Executive Committee for adoption. The LAC monitors legislative activity, identifies legislation relating to issues of interest to women, then conducts research, drafts evaluations and memos supporting or opposing proposed legislation as it may affect women, and presents such reports to WILS' Executive Committee for adoption. In addition, when requested by the WILS Chair or Executive Committee, the LAC may present such reports to the NYSBA Executive Committee and/or House of Delegates for their consideration. Committee members may also participate in meetings with NYSBA's lobbyist, organize and host programs, and develop partnerships with other NYSBA sections relating to legislation.

Like their predecessors, new LAC Co-Chairs Gustafson and Kramer are passionate about helping shape legislation of interest to or impacting women. For the upcoming year, Kramer and Gustafson explained that the LAC is "primarily concentrating on ensuring the passage of the New York State ERA in 2024," which has been passed by



Robin A. Kramer

two consecutive New York legislative sessions (in 2022 and 2023) as required for New York Constitutional amendments, and will now be put to a public vote in the November 2024 election.

In addition, Gustafson stated that they are "focusing on legislation impacting women's health autonomy." Kramer expanded on this: "The laws I am most concerned about now are laws relating to a woman's right to her body, including a right to abortion, and protecting that right and the right of doctors and others to support that right; laws that may not seem to affect women but do, including a prohibition against discrimination on the basis of appearance; and other situations that treat women differently, such as some health insurers failure to pay for abortion and contraception but still pay for such drugs as Viagra."

Kramer indicated they will also work on ferreting out laws that have an inequitable impact on women and restoring women's rights: "I would like to find laws that affect women differently from men and support changes to such laws. I want to support laws that recognize that women may have different needs than men and make sure that the laws of New York State recognize such differences and provide the necessary assistance to women. I also think it is vitally necessary to push back against recent Supreme Court decisions that reduce women's rights."

Kramer and Gustafson both joined WILS and the WILS LAC because they want to make a difference for women. Kramer has long been focused on helping achieve equality for women, explaining: "When I was in college and law school

in the 1970s, it seemed like there was hope for equality for women. But it hasn't proven to be true, and in some ways it's getting worse. There remains a need for women to address issues related to women in and with the law and I think the Women in Law Section is a group that is necessary to do just that." She joined the LAC because she wanted to participate in the law-making process: "The law is the foundation for much of what happens both in our daily lives and in the world around us. If the law is not fair or doesn't treat women and men equally, then there is more justification for people to do the same. We need to make the law equal both in its application and impact and legislation is therefore critical to achieving that goal. My participation in the Legislative Affairs Committee will allow me to participate in that process."

Gustafson is also committed to helping women and wants to make a difference in the legislative process: "Growing up in politics, I understood first-hand the role all civilians play in shaping our government, and wanted to contribute to my State and local communities by offering my expertise as a lawyer and a woman. So I joined WILS and the WILS LAC."

Kramer has more than 30 years of experience in all aspects of land use and real estate development not only in New York City, but also throughout the country, and recently retired from the full-time practice of law at Adler & Stachenfeld LLP. Her practice encompassed a broad range of land use matters for developers, investors, nonprofits, and institutional clients. She advised on site acquisition and assembly, development feasibility, and zoning-related matters, including the purchase and sale of air rights. She has also handled litigation on behalf of local governments, represented mine operators and gas producers in seeking government approvals, challenges to and defenses of annexations, applications for tax incentive financing, preparation of a county-wide economic development program, and preparation of impact fee ordinances.

Kramer has represented clients in applications to government agencies for other discretionary and non-discretionary land use approvals. She drafted an amicus brief on behalf of law professors supporting the City of New London in *Kelo v. City of New London* at the Supreme Court.

She was born and grew up in Manhattan, and attended Hunter College High School when it was all girls/women. Kramer attended college at the University of Rochester, New York University School of Law, and has a master's degree in public affairs from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, and is admitted to practice in New York, Kansas and Missouri. She also is an adjunct instructor at NYU's Schack Institute of Real Estate, where she teaches Land Use and Environmental Regulation. Married with three grown children, two of her children are married and one is a lawyer.

As co-chair of the LAC, Gustafson would like to increase awareness of the legislation potentially impacting women and encourage members not only of WILS, but also NYSBA and the broader legal community, to become more involved in policy and politics.

Gustafson has been an active member of WILS and the WILS LAC since 2019. She is a litigation attorney at Friedman Kaplan Seiler Adelman & Robbins, focusing on complex commercial litigation and white collar criminal defense. Prior to joining Friedman Kaplan, Gustafson was a litigation associate at Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson. Before going into private practice, Gustafson clerked for the Honorable James Orenstein of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, and the Honorable Rebecca Freyre of the Colorado Court of Appeals. Gustafson is admitted to the bars of Colorado and New York, and became a member of the New York State Bar Association even before she relocated from Colorado to New York because she wanted to be a part of the New York legal community and to be kept abreast of issues impacting the legal community. She is also a member of the White Collar Criminal Litigation Committee of NYSBA's Commercial and Federal Litigation Section.

Gustafson has helped develop WILS CLE programs relating to the legislative process in New York and has served on New York State Bar Association panels, including "The Legislative Process in NYS: How 'Revenge Porn' Became a Crime" as a speaker, and "The Legislative Process in NYS: Women's Fight for Equal Rights" as a moderator. She also volunteers for Kelleigh's Cause, a 501(c)(3) that raises funds to research the rare and life-threatening illness arteriovenous malformations (AVMs).

WILS Legislative Affairs Committee's Recap of the New York Legislature 2023 Session and 2024 Preview

By Kaelyn Gustafson and Robin A. Kramer

The June 2022 *Dobbs* decision, overturning *Roe v. Wade*, proved to be a watershed moment, propelling women's rights activists to action and prompting both reactive and forward-looking legislation across the country. The New York Legislature proved no different. What follows is a brief accounting of the legislation passed in New York's 2023-2024 legislative session that directly, or disparately, impacts women and other minority groups. This recap is not exhaustive, but instead highlights some of the important bills that passed this term. The following also endeavors to preview what New Yorkers might expect from their elected officials in 2024, based on a subset of bills that were introduced but did not pass during this past term.

It's a confusing and uneasy time to be a woman or a member of any minority group—the concept of autonomy seems academic and even if it does manifest in our daily lives, our grasp on it feels subject to the whims of American politics. However, as outlined below, the activity of the 2023-2024 legislative session provides hope for a more inclusive New York that celebrates diversity and advances equity and equality.

What Passed?

Equal Rights

Assembly Bill A1283, sponsored by Assemblymember Rebecca A. Seawright (76th Dist., D, WF), would amend the New York Constitution to provide that no person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws of this state or any subdivision thereof, and provides that “no person shall, because of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, creed, religion, or sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, reproductive health care and autonomy, be subjected to any discrimination in their civil rights by any other person or by any firm, corporation, or institution, or by the state or any agency or subdivision of the state.”¹ The bill passed the Senate and Assembly in January 2023, and the measure will be put to a public referendum in the 2024 election. Senator Liz Krueger (28th Dist., D, WF) sponsored the Senate version the bill.

Reproductive Rights

Senate Bill S1066, sponsored by Senator Shelley B. Mayer (37th Dist., D, WF), provides certain legal protections for reproductive health service providers who provide legally

protected health activities, including protection from extradition, arrest and legal proceedings in other states relating to such services, and restricts the use of evidence relating to the involvement of a party in providing legally protected health activity to persons located out of state. Governor Hochul signed the bill into law on June 23, 2023. Assemblymember Karines Reyes (87th Dist., D, WF) sponsored the Assembly version of the bill.

Assembly Bill S1060, sponsored by Assemblymember Amy Paulin, (88th Dist., D, WF), allows New York State pharmacists to execute a non-patient specific order from a licensed physician, certified nurse practitioner, or the commissioner of health for the dispensing of self-administered hormonal contraceptives. This will reduce the number of unintended pregnancies by increasing access to contraceptive drugs for women in New York State, bypassing the frequent difficulties encountered in obtaining medical appointments at offices with limited hours, long waits or inconvenient locations. Governor Hochul signed the bill into law on May 2, 2023. Senator Toby Ann Stavisky (11th Dist., D) sponsored the Senate version of the bill.

Senate Bill S4007C enacted into law major components of law necessary to implement the governor's state mental health and hygiene budget for 2023, including Part U, which provides for the protection of electronic health information, sets requirements for communications to individuals about their electronic health information, and prohibits law enforcement agencies and officers from purchasing or obtaining electronic health information without a warrant. Governor Hochul signed the bill into law on May 3, 2023.

Senate Bill S1351, sponsored by Senator Liz Krueger (28th Dist., D, WF), amends the criminal procedure law and the executive law to protect against the arrest and extradition of reproductive health service providers who perform services lawfully in the state of New York. It prohibits cooperation with out-of-state investigations related to the performance or aiding in the performance of an abortion performed within the State of New York. Governor Hochul signed the bill into law on March 3, 2023. Assemblymember Charles D. Lavine (13th Dist., D, WF) sponsored the Assembly version of the bill.

Assembly Bill A997, sponsored by Assemblywoman Phara Souffrant Forrest (57th Dist., D, WF), provides the New

York Department of Health (DOH) additional flexibility to implement guidance from the United States Food and Drug Administration, particularly concerning age restrictions for non-invasive prenatal testing. The New York State Medicaid program currently supports the expansion of non-invasive prenatal testing beyond the former coverage of individuals who met the risk criteria and/or were 30 years of age or older. This bill enables DOH to align their policy with that of federal agencies. Governor Hochul signed the bill on March 3, 2023. Senator Cordell Cleare (30th Dist., D) sponsored the Senate version of the bill.

Autonomy

Assembly Bill A976, sponsored by Assemblymember Amy Paulin, (88th Dist., D, WF), relates to implementation of a statewide electronic tracking system for evidence collection kits used to collect and preserve evidence of a sexual assault or other sex offense that are submitted to the custody of law enforcement. Currently, 33 states and Washington, D.C. have either implemented or are in the process of implementing sexual assault kit tracking systems. These tracking systems give survivors agency and allow them to access information about the status of their rape kit, when and if they are ready. Governor Hochul signed the bill into law on March 3, 2023. Senator Lea Webb (52nd Dist., D, WF) sponsored the Senate version of the bill.

Assembly Bill A975, sponsored by Assemblymember Marianne Buttenschon (119th Dist., D), amends the penal law in relation to the unlawful dissemination of a personal image and amends the civil rights law to create a private of action for such an offense. The purpose of the bill is to ensure that images or videos of individuals who have been a victim of a crime are not published on social media platforms to further degrade or cause even more harm to such individuals. Governor Hochul signed the bill into law on March 3, 2023. Senator Monica R. Martinez (4th Dist., D, WF) sponsored the Assembly version of the bill.

Assembly Bill A998, sponsored by Assemblymember Linda B Rosenthal (67th Dist., D, WF) clarifies the process by which a victim of domestic violence can opt out of a utility, phone, or television contract. The bill recognized that when fleeing an abuser, victims of domestic violence often leave behind items of great sentimental and monetary value, creating significant challenges to their ability to move to safety. Providing an escape clause in such contracts that relieve victims of domestic violence from their obligation to continue paying for services at a location they have fled is good public policy. Governor Hochul signed the bill into law on March 3, 2023. Senator Kevin S. Parker (21st Dist., D, WF) sponsored the Assembly version of the bill.

Gender and Sexual Orientation

Assembly Bill A1142, sponsored by Assemblymember Dr. Anna Kelles (Dist. 125, D, WF), requires the use of gender-neutral terms in any law, local law, rule, regulation, ordinance or resolution. Governor Hochul signed the bill into law on June 25, 2023. Senator Liz Krueger (28th Distr., D, WF) sponsored the Senate version the bill.

Assembly Bill A4903, sponsored by Assemblymember Dr. Anna Kelles (Dist. 125, D, WF), requires substance use disorder services to provide treatment services in accordance with a patient's gender identity or expression and preference. Governor Hochul signed the bill into law on June 25, 2023. Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal (47th Dist., D, WF) sponsored the Senate version of the bill.

Senate Bill S2422, sponsored by Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal (47th Dist., D, WF), amends New York's Human Rights Law to strike stigmatizing statutory language from the definition of "sexual orientation." The definition of "sexual orientation" in Section 292 of the Human Rights Law reads: "The term 'sexual orientation' means heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality or asexuality, whether actual or perceived. However, nothing contained herein shall be construed to protect conduct otherwise proscribed by law." Of the 40 statutory terms defined in Section 292, "sexual orientation" is the only one that contains a disclaimer that the definition does not permit otherwise illegal conduct. The conflation of homosexuality with criminality is deeply harmful, and rooted in a time when states—including New York—had laws on the books criminalizing consensual sexual acts between adults. There is nothing inherently criminal about one's sexual orientation, and New York State's anti-discrimination law will now reflect that. Assemblymember Tony Simone (75th Dist., D) sponsored the Assembly version of the bill.

What's Next?

Several bills were introduced relating to menstrual cycles, including bills requiring various institutions to provide menstrual products, providing leave for menstrual cycle pain and suffering, removing gendered terminology from menstrual products, and creating research and/or education on the health effects of certain personal or menstrual products. Some of these bills include:

Assembly Bill A643A, sponsored by Assemblymember Linda B Rosenthal (67th Dist., D, WF), sought to enact the "total access to menstrual products (TAMP) act," which would have amended several laws in New York to require the provision of menstrual products, at no cost, in toilets designated for women and toilets designated as gender-neutral, in certain institutions.

Senate Bill S5913A, sponsored by Senator Iwen Chu (17th Dist., D, WF), sought to require free menstrual products in non-public schools. Assemblymember Linda B Rosenthal (67th Dist., D, WF), sponsored an Assembly version of the bill.

Assembly Bill A4060, sponsored by Assemblymember Amy Paulin (88th Dist., D, WF), sought to require menstrual products in public colleges and universities. Senator Michelle Hinchey (41st Dist., D, WF) sponsored a Senate version of that bill.

Assembly Bill A512A, sponsored by Assemblymember Linda B Rosenthal (67th Dist., D, WF), sought to create a research program to determine the risks posed from potential toxins in menstrual products.

Assembly Bill S3529A, sponsored by Senator Nathalia Fernandez (34th Dist., D), sought to prohibit the use of certain restricted substances in menstrual products including, but not limited to, talc, lead, and mercury. This legislation also would have banned the use of such restricted substances as a fragrance, colorant, dye, preservation, or other intentionally added ingredient for the presentation of products. Linda B. Rosenthal (67th Dist., D, WF), sponsored an Assembly version of this bill.

Senate Bill S202A, sponsored by Senator Kevin S. Parker (21st Dist., D, WF), would have amended the Workers' Compensation Law to provide four days of paid leave for menstrual complications and menopause.

Senate Bill S1522, sponsored by Senator Roxanne J. Persaud (19th Dist., D), sought to replace all instances of the words or variations of the words "feminine hygiene products" and "sanitary napkins" with the words menstrual products or pads, respectively, or a variation thereof. Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (67th Dist., D, WF), sponsored an Assembly version of the bill.

Relatedly, this past legislative session saw many bills introduced related to maternal, medical, and mental health care. For example:

Assembly Bill A1594, sponsored by Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (67th Dist., D, WF), would have required the New York Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene to create a pamphlet of mental health resources for those who have suffered a pregnancy loss, including, but not limited to, a miscarriage, stillbirth or abortion. The bill also sought to require providers to give patients an adequate supply of menstrual products upon discharge to help with their aftercare.

Senate Bill S201, sponsored by Cordell Cleare (30th Dist., D), would have permitted pregnant women to enroll in health insurance during a special enrollment period without

penalty. Assemblymember Latrice M. Walker (55th Dist., D, WF) sponsored an Assembly version of the bill.

Senate Bill 204, sponsored by Cordell Cleare (30th Dist., D), sought to provide incarcerated individuals with access to breast cancer screenings and information about breast self-examinations. Assemblymember Kimberly Jean-Pierre (11th Dist., D) sponsored an Assembly version of the bill.

Senate Bill S1193, sponsored by Senator Roxanne J. Persaud (19th Dist., D), would have ensured that ovarian cancer survivors have the right to access screenings for health conditions. Assemblymember Michaelle C. Solages (22nd Dist., D, WF) sponsored an Assembly version of the bill.

Senate Bill 1451, sponsored by Senator James Sanders, Jr. (10th Dist., D), sought to include among the initiatives authorized in the public health law under the Hospital-Home Care-Physician Collaborative Program, programs to address disparities in health care access or treatment and/or conditions of higher prevalence in certain populations such as: racial and ethnic minority groups; persons with disabilities; women; the poor; and persons living in rural and other medically unserved and underserved geographic areas. Assemblymember Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes (141st Dist., D) sponsored an Assembly version of the bill.

Senate Bill S2359, sponsored by Senator Samra G. Brouk (55th Dist., D, WF), sought to establish a maternal mental health workgroup, to (i) study and issue recommendations related to maternal mental health and perinatal and postpartum mood and anxiety disorders, and (ii) identify underrepresented and vulnerable populations and risk factors in the state for maternal mental health disorders that may occur during pregnancy and through the first postpartum year. Assemblymember Sarah Clark (136th Dist., D, WF) sponsored an Assembly version of the bill.

Senate Bill S5133, sponsored by Senator Roxanne J. Persaud (19th Dist., D), sought to amend the tax law and the state finance law to provide for taxpayer gifts for uterine fibroids education and to establish the uterine fibroids education fund. Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner (77th Dist., D) sponsored an Assembly version of the bill.

Finally, several other bills were proposed that increased autonomy for sexual assault survivors, domestic violence victims, and victims of human trafficking:

Assembly Bill A5350A, sponsored by Assemblymember Monica P. Wallace (143rd Dist., D), and **Senate Bill S997**, sponsored by Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal (47th Dist., D, WF), would have prohibited the use of a victim's DNA collected from sexual offense evidence kits from being added to the state DNA identification index or other databases or being used in certain actions.

Senate Bill S395, sponsored by Cordell Cleare (30th Dist., D), would have directed the New York state interagency task force on human trafficking to investigate connections between social media and human trafficking. Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (67th Dist., D, WF), sponsored an Assembly version of the bill.

To be sure, certain legislation was introduced this session that could undermine women's autonomy. For example, Assemblymember David DiPietro (147th Dist., R) introduced **Assembly Bill A3307**, a bill that sought to (i) require testing for a fetal heartbeat prior to the performance of an abortion; (ii) establish standards for informed consent; (iii) direct the department of public health to prepare and disseminate certain materials regarding abortion and providing for certain civil remedies; (iv) expand the definition of medi-

cal professional misconduct to include certain acts of abortion, and (v) authorize certain sanctions for violations. While such legislation is not poised to advance in the Democratic-controlled Legislature, the Legislative Affairs Committee nonetheless will track and potentially comment on such legislation as appropriate.

If you are interested in participating in the important work done by the Legislative Affairs Committee, please contact our section liaison, Ernesto Guerrero, at eguerrero@nysba.org.

Endnote

1. <https://legislation.nysenate.gov/pdf/bills/2023/A1283>.



New Legal Technology Brings Both Promise and Pitfalls

By Rebecca Melnitsky

Technology has moved us forward, but it's important not to get left behind. The rise of technology in the legal field provides both opportunities and challenges as systems become both more sophisticated and widespread.

That was the topic of the New York State Bar Association's Continuing Legal Education course on March 21.

The CLE was sponsored by NYSBA's Women in Law Section, the International Law Section, the Committee on Law Practice Management, and the Committee on Continuing Legal Education in honor of Women's History Month and International Women's Day.

Sheryl Galler, chair of the Women in Law Section, and Helen Naves, senior officer of the International Law Section, moderated the discussion.

The multi-national group of panelists included:

- Helen Naves of HNaves Advogados in São Paulo, Brazil
- Jessica L. Copeland of Bond, Schoeneck & King in Buffalo
- Nancy Satiko Caigawa of Kasznar Leonardos Propriedade Intelectual in São Paulo, Brazil
- Chinyere Okorocha of Jackson, Etti & Edu in Lagos, Nigeria
- Monica Colombero of Legance - Avvocati Associati in Milan, Italy

All panelists agreed that technology had made aspects of their work easier, especially with being able to see remote clients face-to-face. "I assist clients across the country and sometimes internationally," Copeland said. "So being able to actually see the client instead of just being on an audio teleconference has made a world of difference."

In addition, technology has enabled "networking across borders" as Okorocha described it. "Look at us today."

Okorocha noted that in Nigeria, the pandemic greatly increased the use of technology. "COVID catapulted us light years ahead," she said. "There's a common saying that once you become lovers, it's difficult to go back to holding hands. So once we tasted the virtual world, there was no going back."

In 2020, the Supreme Court of Nigeria ruled to allow virtual court hearings and proceedings. In addition, Lagos, where she practices, had gone further and set out guidelines for virtual court hearings.

Also, new tools are being developed to classify documents, find case law, strengthen evidence, and to enable all parties to have access to documents. Some technology, like chatbots to answer rudimentary questions, AI to organize work, and "smart contracts" already exist.

Caigawa said that in Brazil, there is an AI program called Sinapses that screens lawsuits to classify and identify possible legal precedent. "All of that is being developed and it's an ongoing process, of course," she said. "It was launched in 2021 so we are only at the beginning of the use of such tools."

She said that between 2009 and 2021, more than 150 million lawsuits were filed electronically in Brazil. This accelerated during the pandemic and led to a backlog. The National Council of Justice of Brazil created a new program to innovate technology, fight corruption, manage data and information, and strengthen the judiciary.

However, technology made by humans still has human faults. "Even in artificial intelligence and even in all these technologies there is the human element," Galler said. "We're seeing a lot of stories about bias that is baked into the systems electronically. It's not as objective as we all hope it would be."

The panelists agreed that these tools can be used to enhance an attorney's work, but they cannot replace an attorney or their years of experience. In addition, there are concerns with protecting client information while using free online tools like ChatGPT.

Plus, while technology has enabled workers—especially women—to work anytime and from anywhere, there's the issue of remote work intruding on personal time. Being available all the time makes it difficult to set boundaries between the office and home.

"I'm a proponent of finding that balance," Copeland said. "Just because you can work anywhere doesn't mean you should work from anywhere. There's an office for a reason."

The panelists agreed that meeting in person and going to the office is still the best way to learn and establish connections

"I believe that we can sum up that technology and remote working is an opportunity," Colombero said at the event's conclusion. "It is not an alternative way to work."

This article originally appeared at NYSBA.ORG.

WILS Co-Sponsors the Fourth International Law Conference on the Status of Women

By Linda A. Redlisky

The 4th Annual International Law Conference on the Status of Women, which was held on March 8, 2023 in conjunction with the United Nations' 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, commemorates International Women's Day and the International Day of Women Judges. The conference was sponsored by the New York City Bar Association and co-sponsored by NYSBA's Women in Law Section and NYSBA's Committee on Leadership Development. We thank NYSBA Past President Sherry Levin Wallach for inviting WILS then-Chair Sheryl Galler to attend the conference as her guest.

Then-President Levin Wallach spoke on a panel that examined the impact of innovation and technological change on gender equality, women and girls. At the end of the evening, she was honored with the Huntington National Bank Her Hero Lifetime Achievement Award. This award recognizes women in law and public policy who dedicate their

careers to justice for women and girls. NYSBA member Edwina Martin, the commissioner and public administrator of Richmond County, New York, also was a recipient of the 2023 Her Hero Lifetime Achievement Award. Mirna Martinez Santiago, chair of NYSBA's Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and a member of the NYSBA Executive Committee, was a recipient of the 2023 Epiq Award, which recognizes women who work in organizations committed to helping women and girls.

To read more about the event, see the NYSBA news article at: <https://nysba.org/nysba-president-sherry-levin-wallach-to-receive-lifetime-achievement-award/>.

WILS Celebrates NJWLA Platinum Gala Honorees

By Terri A. Mazur

WILS then-Chair Sheryl Galler was honored to attend the Platinum Gala of the New Jersey Women Lawyers Association's Women's Initiative and Leaders in the Law. The gala, held on March 28, 2023, honored leaders from the judicial, public, corporate, and private law firm sectors.

We thank Linda Harvey, past president of the NJWLA and partner at Greenberg Dauber Epstein & Tucker, P.C., for inviting Sheryl and introducing her to so many friends and colleagues!

WILS Immediate Past Chair Sheryl Galler (left) and NJWLA Past President Linda Harvey at the NJWLA Platinum Gala.



Champion for Women's and Children's Rights Receives Ruth Bader Ginsburg Memorial Scholarship

By Jennifer Andrus

The New York State Bar Association presented Shelley Wu, a champion of women's and children's rights, with the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Memorial Scholarship during its House of Delegates meeting April 1 in Albany.

Wu is a third-year law school student at the Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University. Wu ranks in the top 10% of her law school class, serves on the Law Review, and commits her time to helping domestic violence survivors, seniors, people with disabilities, and inmates preparing for parole hearings.

In her application letter, Wu says she learned how to advocate for others as a child, helping her Chinese immigrant parents navigate language and cultural barriers in America. Those early experiences instilled in her a strong sense of justice and a commitment to help those who face discrimination.

After graduating early from Fordham with an undergraduate degree, Wu worked as a paralegal in the Child Abuse and Domestic Violence units of the New York County District Attorney's office. She says that work experience inspired her to become an attorney and fight for women's rights and gender equality.

New York State Bar Association [Past] President Sherry Levin Wallach said Wu is not afraid to get in the trenches and do the tough work advocating for survivors of domestic violence survivors and their children.

"Shelley's grit and determination is just what we need in the next generation of lawyers in civil legal service. The future of our profession is bright with young leaders like Shelley Wu," she said.



Shelley Wu

The \$5,000 scholarship is presented by NYSBA's Women in Law Section, the Committee on Annual Awards, and the Committee on Civil Rights. Created in 2020 after the death of Justice Ginsburg, the scholarship is designed to honor Justice Ginsburg's principles, including elevating the standard of integrity in the legal profession, fostering a spirit of collegiality, and promoting the public good.

In her nomination letter, Cardozo Law School Dean Melanie Leslie praised Wu's work both on campus and off campus. "Shelley has cultivated a service-oriented mindset and a commitment to advancing women's rights," she wrote.

Wu intends to pursue a career in civil rights litigation with a focus on fighting gender-based discrimination and harassment.

Jennifer Andrus is a content and communications specialist at NYSBA. This article previously appeared at [NYSBA.ORG](https://www.nysba.org).

Medication Abortion in the Post-*Dobbs* World

By Josephine A. Reina

The Women in Law Section held a webinar on June 5, 2023 addressing current litigation over medication abortion after the *Dobbs* decision. Moderator and WILS member Josephine Reina was joined by Kirsten Moore (founder and director of the Expanding Medication Abortion Access (EMAA) Project), Whitney Cloud (partner at DLA Piper and founding member of the firm's *Dobbs* task force), Linda Goldstein (senior counsel at the Center for Reproductive Rights), and Jenna Lauter (Equal Justice Works fellow at the NYCLU) to discuss this important topic.

Ms. Moore began the program with a discussion of the two-drug protocol for medication abortions, mifepristone and misoprostol, as well as the timeline of regulation of mifepristone by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Mifepristone was approved under Subpart H¹ in 2000. Seven years later, in 2007, the FDA established a Risk Evaluation & Mitigation Strategies (REMS) program for the drug, which placed certain prescription requirements on the drug. Specifically, only certified prescribers could prescribe mifepristone, it could only be dispensed in person in a clinic, and the patient had to sign a consent form. In 2016, the FDA approved a label change that relaxed some of those requirements. In January 2023, the FDA permanently removed the in-person dispensing requirement and allowed pharmacies to certify to fill prescriptions for mifepristone. This significantly increased access to medication abortion. Throughout her presentation, Ms. Moore emphasized the track record of safety of mifepristone and that the FDA's decisions were based on clinical data.

Next, Ms. Goldstein discussed the circumstances of the parties and main arguments in the *Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine v. FDA* litigation, which was brought in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas in Amarillo. The plaintiffs in that case are four physicians and four medical organizations. Some of the plaintiffs claimed that they have treated individuals with complications after taking mifepristone. Others claimed they would be required to perform a dilation and curettage (D&C) procedure to treat those complications, which is a violation under the Federal Health Care Provider Conscience Protection Laws. The plaintiffs presented three categories of challenges to the FDA's approval of mifepristone as follows: (1) studies supporting approval were insufficient to establish the drug's safety and efficacy; (2) mifepristone cannot be regulated by the FDA under subpart H because pregnancy is not an illness, it is a condition;

and (3) allowing abortion medication to be sent through the mail violates the Comstock Act. Ms. Goldstein noted that the third argument is particularly concerning because it could be used more broadly against medical equipment that providers use to perform in-clinic abortions. The defendants in the case are the FDA, Health & Human Services, and Danco Laboratories, one manufacturer of mifepristone.

The defendants asserted both procedural and merit-based arguments. Their procedural arguments centered around lack of standing (i.e. the physicians do not prescribe the drug), expiration of the statute of limitations to bring suit (time for filing suit after denial of a citizen's petition in 2016 had passed), and exhaustion (the Comstock Act argument was not raised in the administrative process that the FDA has for challenges to its regulations). The merit-based arguments were as follows: (1) the FDA is given significant deference as a federal agency to make decisions and their approval process should not be second-guessed; (2) not all abortions can be considered unlawful under the Comstock Act; and (3) the court lacked judicial authority to circumvent a statute that prevents the FDA from withdrawing approval of a drug without a hearing. Ms. Goldstein also briefly discussed amicus briefs submitted by other interested parties regarding concern over the impact of a court second-guessing the FDA's approval process on the pharmaceutical and medical device market.

Ms. Cloud discussed the decision of Judge Kacsmaryk, the U.S. District court judge for the Northern District of Texas, to stay the approval of mifepristone, as well as the decision of the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit on the emergency appeal. Notably, Judge Kacsmaryk found that plaintiffs had standing to bring the suit, significantly expanding who can bring suit challenging a drug's approval since the plaintiffs in this case did not prescribe the drug. He also ruled that the FDA was not entitled to agency deference in interpreting pregnancy as an illness versus a condition, and he was critical of their decisions to approve the drug in 2000 and change its label in 2016. Judge Kacsmaryk issued a preliminary ruling suspending the approval of the drug. Ms. Cloud noted how bold Judge Kacsmaryk's decision was given the fact that the FDA is one of the most revered agencies in the United States, and it was the first time a court attempted to invalidate the FDA's approval of a drug. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals disagreed with Judge Kacsmaryk and stayed his decision to overturn the approval of mifepristone. However, it left in

place all of the REMS requirements that the FDA had previously lifted. The United States Supreme Court stayed the decisions of both lower courts and returned mifepristone to its status prior to the litigation while the appeals process plays out. Ms. Goldstein shared her insight into the recent oral arguments heard by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in May. She noted that the three-judge panel was skeptical of the defendants' arguments, including that the FDA is entitled to special deference in their scientific decisions, and that they were also lenient towards the plaintiffs' standing arguments.

Finally, Ms. Lauter discussed measures New York State is taking to protect access to medication abortions, including preparing for a court decision from the U.S. Supreme Court withdrawing FDA approval of mifepristone. To that end, the NYCLU and the New York Attorney General's Office have developed proposed legislation to protect medical providers' ability to prescribe mifepristone that they already have in stock if approval of the drug is withdrawn. Governor Kathy Hochul announced that New York will stockpile a five-year supply of misoprostol to ensure that medical providers have adequate access to this medication, should approval of mifepristone be withdrawn. The state budget also included language extending private insurance coverage and medical malpractice insurance to medication abortion. Additionally, the state Legislature passed a law to ensure access to medication abortion on all SUNY and CUNY campuses. Moreover, to protect access to abortion care more broadly, the state Legislature passed a package of laws protecting individuals from states where abortion care is banned who seek abortions in

New York, both in person and through telehealth. These laws also protect abortion care providers as well as individuals who aid those seeking an abortion in New York.

WILS is committed to future programming when the U.S. Supreme Court issues its ruling in this case.



Josephine A. Reina focuses her practice on products liability, drug and medical device, asbestos, toxic tort, and environmental matters. She handles all stages of litigation, including court appearances, depositions, drafting, and motion practice and has proven experience collaborating with internal and external attorneys developing successful defense strategies, trial preparation, and settlement negotiations. Ms. Reina has earned recognition in

Best Lawyers in America: Ones to Watch.

Endnote

1. 21 C.F.R. 314 Subpart H is a set of regulations issued by the FDA to expedite the approval of "new drug products that have been studied for their safety and effectiveness in treating serious or life-threatening illnesses."

Abortion Pills Face Uncertain Future After *Dobbs*

By Rebecca Melnitsky



After *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* made abortion unavailable in many states, an increasing number of patients have turned to the drugs mifepristone and misoprostol for medication abortions. But mifepristone is facing a challenge to its long-standing Food and Drug Administration approval.

At a virtual webinar sponsored by the Women in Law Section, panelists discussed the history of medical abortion drugs and their potential future as *Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine v. FDA* works its way through the higher courts.

The panelists included:

- Whitney C. Cloud, partner at DLA Piper.
- Linda C. Goldstein, senior counsel at the Center for Reproductive Rights.
- Jenna Lauter, Equal Justice Works fellow at the New York Civil Liberties Union.
- Kirsten Moore, director of the EMAA Project.

Josephine Reina, associate attorney at Tanenbaum Keale, moderated the discussion.

In 2000, the FDA approved the two-drug regimen of mifepristone and misoprostol for abortions up to seven weeks. (This was later expanded to 10 weeks.) Mifepristone

blocks the hormones necessary to sustain a pregnancy, and misoprostol starts contractions to pass the pregnancy.

"It has an incredibly compelling safety track record," said Moore. "More than 5 million people have used it in the U.S. alone. And the serious adverse event rate is less than 0.05%." She added that even during an adverse event, a patient would have to take more misoprostol or go to a doctor to complete the abortion.

Moore also noted that the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists regards mifepristone and misoprostol as the "gold standard" for the treatment of early miscarriages.

When the FDA first approved mifepristone, only physicians could prescribe it and patients were required to get the drug from a clinic and take the first pill there. These requirements were loosened over time, a process that accelerated as the pandemic made it advisable to dispense the medication via telehealth and mail it to patients.

But the legal status of in-person pharmacy dispensation of mifepristone is not consistent across all states. "It's complicated because FDA evaluates the safety of drugs," said Moore. "States regulate the practice of medicine and the practice of pharmacy."

The data collected during the pandemic supported the use of virtual prescribers and mail-order pharmacies for mifepristone and misoprostol, as it proved that it was equally as ef-

fective and safe as the traditional distribution model. Patients even received the drugs sooner, as they did not have to wait for an appointment at a physical location.

Lawsuit Challenges: The Use of Mifepristone

Anti-choice organization Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine sued the FDA late last year, arguing that the initial study in 2000 was insufficient to establish the safety of mifepristone, and that mailing the drug violates the Comstock Act, which criminalizes mailing “obscene materials.”

The case was filed in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas in Amarillo, where every civil case is heard by one judge.

“That judge is Matthew Kacsmaryk, a Trump-appointee who was general counsel to a conservative religious advocacy group before his appointment,” said Goldstein. “The plaintiffs asserted venue in Amarillo because the Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine was incorporated in Amarillo in August of 2022, which notably was after the *Dobbs* decision and a mere three months before the case was filed.”

Three other anti-abortion groups and four anti-choice doctors joined the Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine in the lawsuit.

“None of the plaintiff-physicians prescribe mifepristone to their patients for abortion care,” said Goldstein. “The physicians claim to have treated patients who were prescribed mifepristone by other physicians and suffered complications. None of these physicians have identified any harm that they personally suffered as the result of providing that care.”

There is also concern that if this case is upheld, it could open the floodgates for challenges to all other FDA approvals, including misoprostol, and vastly expand who can bring such lawsuits. “The FDA’s standing as an agency is one of the most revered agencies,” said Cloud. “So this is a really bold decision.”

On April 7, the district court granted a preliminary injunction, suspending the FDA’s mifepristone approval. An emergency stay ruling from the Fifth Circuit unwound the District Court’s decision, restoring the mifepristone approval

to old prescription, dispensation and timing standards it had in 2000.

The Supreme Court issued a stay on April 21, restoring mifepristone approval to what it was before the case was started as the litigation works its way through the courts.

The case went back to the Fifth Circuit, and arguments were heard on May 17. “It was very active questioning on both sides, but it is plain from the questions that the panel was very skeptical of the notion that FDA gets any kind of special deference for its scientific judgments,” said Goldstein. “And also very lenient towards the plaintiffs’ standing arguments.”

Lauter said New York State is bracing for restrictions on access to abortion medications and is stockpiling a five-year supply of misoprostol. In addition, New York will not help other states extradite or arrest someone for their involvement in abortion care and has passed laws to protect people providing and seeking abortions in the state.

“New York State cannot actually stop other states from initiating investigations and prosecutions,” said Lauter. “Nor can they make something legal in another state that state’s laws prohibit. So what the laws really do is they make sure that New York does not participate in hostile states’ efforts to punish care. And hopefully they throw some sand in the gears to make those investigations and prosecutions more difficult.”

The full webinar is available in the program archives at NYSBA.ORG/WILS.

This article previously appeared at NYSBA.ORG.

WILS Partner's Committee Inaugural Quarterly Breakfast Meeting Is a Success

By Jennifer Fiorica Delgado

The WILS Partner's Committee held its inaugural quarterly meeting at Lowenstein Sandler's offices in midtown Manhattan on May 2, 2023. Shelia Plaisance of Templar Advisors facilitated a discussion about executive presence, and participants got to know one another. After about an hour and a half together, it was clear that this group has chemistry!

The WILS Partner's Committee explores the unique issues faced by women partners in law firms, including maximizing client development, securing firm leadership positions, and finding and acting as mentors and sponsors. Members network with other women partners and foster a strong and supportive community for women partners throughout New York State. Members are current and former partners or executive level counsel in private practice.

If you are interested in learning more about the Partner's Committee, please email the chair, Jennifer Delgado, at jdeldgado@lowenstein.com.



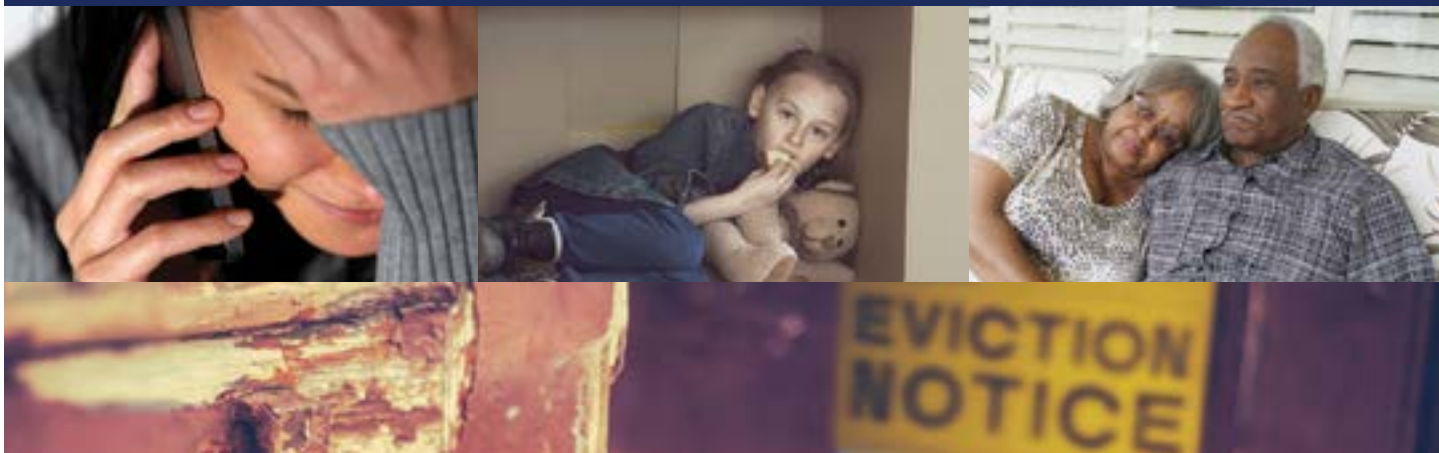
Jennifer Fiorica Delgado is a partner in Lowenstein Sandler's business litigation group, where she maintains a robust litigation, investigations, and counseling practice in which she services a diverse client base, from multibillion-dollar asset managers to multinational cosmetics companies. She has experience representing U.S.-based and global asset managers, hedge funds, and institutional investors with a wide range of capital markets disputes, including structured finance and securities litigation; she also routinely handles M&A disputes and bankruptcy-related litigation. In addition, Jennifer maintains a robust pro bono practice, and holds leadership roles within and outside of her law firm.

TOGETHER, we make a difference.

When you give to The New York Bar Foundation, you help people in need of legal services throughout New York State. Through our grant program, we are able to assist with legal needs associated with domestic violence, elder abuse, homelessness, attorney wellness, disability rights, and other life changing legal matters.



Make a difference, give today at www.tnybf.org/donation
or mail a check to: The New York Bar Foundation, 1 Elk Street, Albany, NY 12207



WILS Book Club Series

By Laura Sulem



The Women in Law Section (WILS) continued its popular virtual book club series in 2023. We once again invited attorney authors of fascinating books to attend our virtual book club meeting, discuss their work, and answer questions from the audience. We also featured our first non-attorney author! The works covered in the first half of 2023 included a novel about climate change; a memoir about love, honesty, and gender change; and a story about turning heartbreak into trailblazing success at any age.

***The Change Agents: Whispers in the Wind*, by Sarah E. Lewis**

On March 23, 2023, we featured Sarah E. Lewis's novel *The Change Agents: Whispers in the Wind*. In this optimistic climate fiction story, animals seek an extraordinary partnership with humans and race together against the climate crisis to save their shared world from a changing climate. This book offers an escape from the doom and gloom stories about climate change to leave readers feeling optimistic about our ability to fight this threat and energized to do something about it. In the meeting, Ms. Lewis discussed her passion for tackling

climate change and the unique challenges of writing a novel from the perspective of animals affected by these changes. Lewis had an engaged audience who asked great questions about the book and how to help save our planet. WILS member Laura Sulem moderated the meeting.

***Getting to Ellen: A Memoir About Love, Honesty and Gender Change*, by Ellen Krug**

On May 18, 2023, the WILS virtual book club featured *Getting to Ellen: A Memoir About Love, Honesty and Gender Change*. At the age of 52, author Ellen (Ellie) Krug transitioned from male to female while living in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. *Getting to Ellen* details her gender journey. As a man, Ed Krug had everything anyone could ever want: the love of a soul mate, two beautiful daughters, a house in the best neighborhood, and a successful trial lawyer's career. In a quest to find inner peace, however, Ed gradually confronted fear and loss, including the residue of growing up in an alcoholic household and a parent's suicide. Ms. Krug explained in her book and at the meeting that for Ed to live authentically as

Ellen, she had to sacrifice much of that picture-perfect life. Ms. Krug also touched on recent anti-transgender legislation and how the brazen attacks on transgender and other rights are negatively affecting the LGBTQIA+ community. The meeting was moderated by WILS member Jennifer Letitia Smith.





Too Young To Be Old: How To Stay Vibrant, Visible, and Forever in Blue Jeans, by Diane Gilman

On June 1, 2023, the WILS book club featured its first non-attorney author, Diane Gilman. At age 60, this charismatic, pearl-haired “Queen of Jeans” launched her DG2 Jeans line on the Home Shopping Network. Her jeans are the top tele-retailing brand globally, with over \$100 million a year in retail sales domestically, and are also seen on QVC UK, Italy, Germany, France, Australia, and Canada. In *Too Young To Be Old*, Ms. Gilman details how she has conquered life’s challenges and harnessed her power to live a “third act” filled with dream-catching and fulfillment. In the meeting moderated by WILS member Laura Sulem, Ms. Gilman spoke frankly about her struggle with breast cancer and shared with the audience her secrets for vibrancy and visibility at any age. As Ms. Gilman said, she is 77 years young and embracing aging instead of fighting it.



CLE

Review our upcoming LIVE WEBINAR schedule

We’re offering dozens of brand new webinars every month on a variety of topics, including COVID-19 related programs, so be sure to register today!

Visit us online at **[NYSBA.ORG/CLE](https://www.nysba.org/cle)**

Section Committees and Chairs

The Women in Law Section encourages members to participate in its programs and to volunteer to serve on the Committees listed below. Please contact Section Officers or Committee Chairs for further information.

Annual Meeting, Programming and CLE Committee

Laura Sulem (Chair)
Thomson Reuters
New York, NY
laurasulem@gmail.com
Ally Wacker (Deputy Chair)
allie.wacker@gmail.com

Awards Committee

Sharon L. Brown
Barclay Damon LLP
New York, NY
slbrown@barclaydamon.com

Alyson Mathews
Bond Schoenck & King PLLC
Garden City, NY
amathews@bsk.com

Champions Committee

Michael Barasch
Barasch & McGarry
New York, NY
michael.barasch@gmail.com
Deborah Kaye
deborah.h.kaye@gmail.com

Communications Committee

Morghen Leia Richardson
Tarter Krinsky & Drogin LLP
New York, NY
mrichardson@tarterkrinsky.com

Development and Sponsorship Committee

Terri A. Mazur
tmazur575@gmail.com
Linda A. Redlisky
Rafferty & Redlisky LLP
Pelham, NY
redlisky@randrlegal.com

Emerging Lawyers Committee

Christina H. Singh-Bedell
christina.bedell@ag.ny.gov
Jamie A. Rosen
Meister Seelig & Fein
New York, NY
jr@msf-law.com

Equity in the Legal Profession Committee

Debra Vey Voda-Hamilton
dhamilton@hamiltonlawandmediation.com

Gender Issues Committee

Pamela Bass
pbass@tdwp.com

General Counsel Committee

Frettra de Silva
Standard Chartered Bank
New York, NY
frettra.desilva@sc.com

Legislative Affairs Committee

Kaelyn Gustafson
Friedman Kaplan
New York, NY
kgustafson@fklaw.com
Robin A. Kramer
rakramer@gmail.com

Membership and Engagement Committee

Lisa R. Schoenfeld
Schlissel Ostrow Karabatos PLLC
Garden City, NY
lschoenfeld@soklaw.com

Partners Committee

Jennifer Fiorica Delgado
Lowenstein Sandler LLP
New York, NY
jfiorica@lowenstein.com

Reports, Surveys and Publications Committee

Terri A. Mazur
tmazur575@gmail.com

Women on the Move Committee

Erica S. Youngerman
Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP
New York, NY
erica.youngerman@katten.com

GET ACTIVE!

Join a Women in Law Section Committee

Get active and join a WILS committee to help address the many critical issues impacting women attorneys today. Committee membership is a great opportunity for you to shape and influence the laws and policies affecting women, develop research initiatives to spotlight issues important to women, and create innovative programs and events that raise your profile and enhance your professional development. We welcome your ideas and participation!

Please email our Section Liaison, Ernesto Guerrero (eguerrero@nysba.org), to indicate your preference for up to three committee(s) you wish to join.



WOMEN IN LAW SECTION COMMITTEES

Annual Meeting and Programming Committee

Organizes programs throughout the year for the Section, including WILS' Annual Meeting event, the Edith I. Spivack Symposium. Committee members develop and run programs and events, have extensive interaction with leaders in the legal profession, and may have an opportunity to participate as a speaker or moderator of a program.

Awards Committee

Chooses recipients for the Ruth G. Schapiro and Kay Crawford Murray Memorial Awards and participates in the awards ceremonies. This committee will also participate in selecting recipients for the newly created Ruth Bader Ginsburg Memorial Scholarship. Meets September through November and in January.

Champions: Men Advancing Women Committee

Engages men as partners to advance women in the profession, the Association, and society-at-large. Activities include planning Drinks & Dialogues events (small get-togethers to discuss gender issues in a "safe environment" for men and women), commenting on news and issues, and supporting policies that advance women.

Communications Committee

Promotes the work and activities of the Section, including on social media and the NYSBA Communities platform.

Development and Sponsorship Committee

Develops a financial sponsorship plan to support WILS programs, events, and activities. Committee members also foster relationships with companies, legal vendors, and law firms to provide financial support for the activities and mission of the Section and of NYSBA and works closely with senior leadership on developing and executing WILS' strategic operational strategy. If you have an interest in finance and developing relationships with companies, vendors, and law firms to support WILS, this is the committee for you.

Emerging Lawyers Committee

Promotes opportunities and relationship-building for women new to the legal profession and supports their professional development and success. Programming includes networking events for women lawyers at varying career stages, panels featuring women leaders in different practice specialties, and the opportunity to learn about the variety of career paths available for women with law degrees (including non-traditional careers for lawyers). For law students, recent graduates, and new attorneys.

Equity in the Legal Profession (EILP) Committee

Explores, understands, and advances the equity of women in the law. The committee examines issues that may be delaying or derailing the advancement of women in the legal profession due to gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, or disability. Activities include programming, researching and drafting reports, and collaborating with our NYSBA colleagues, law firms, corporations, the public sector, and outside bar associations. We promote scholarship, recognition, networking, and engagement to advance equitable access to leadership positions for women in the legal profession.

Gender Issues Committee

Addresses specific issues and rights that may impact women, children, and families. Examples include domestic violence, human trafficking, and gender violence. The committee also helps women secure leadership positions and develop specific skills, such as negotiation skills.

General Counsel Committee

Develops strategies and tactics to help advance women lawyers within companies and as outside counsel. The committee supports women in-house counsel to help them advance their careers and find and exploit professional opportunities. For current and former in-house counsel in private, public, and not-for-profit practice.

Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC)

Identifies new or existing New York State legislation relating to issues of interest to women, drafts evaluations and memos in support of proposed legislation as it may affect women, and presents such reports to WILS' Executive Committee (EC) for adoption, and when requested by the WILS' Chair or EC, to the NYSBA Executive Committee or House of Delegates for their consideration. Members conduct research, make recommendations to WILS regarding the legislation, and prepare memos supporting or opposing legislation. Members may also participate in meetings with NYSBA's lobbyist, plan programs, and develop partnerships with other NYSBA sections. The time commitment is approximately 15-25 hours annually. The peak committee activities occur between January and June 30.

Membership and Engagement Committee

Recruits, retains, and engages members of the Section and seeks to advance and promote WILS' mission. Committee members are the membership ambassadors of WILS.

Partners Committee

Explores the unique issues faced by women partners in law firms, including maximizing client development, securing firm leadership positions, and finding and acting as mentors and sponsors. Members network with other women partners and foster a strong and supportive community for women partners throughout New York State. For current and former partners or executive level counsel in private practice.

Reports, Surveys and Publications (RSP) Committee

Reviews reports submitted to the House of Delegates and drafts memos about such reports to the WILS Executive Committee for consideration. Committee members also conduct surveys on behalf of the Section, prepare WILS's publication, *WILS Connect*, and write articles, blogs, and other materials to promote the equality and fair treatment of women in the legal profession and all women under the law.

Women on the Move (WOM) Committee

Organizes and runs WILS' annual Women on the Move CLE conference, which focuses on topics of concern to women attorneys and is traditionally held in October. Members identify topics and speakers, work with panelists, and have the opportunity to speak on or moderate panels. This committee meets spring to late October.



PUBLICATIONS

Attorney Escrow Accounts

Rules, Regulations and Related Topics

Fifth Edition

EDITORS

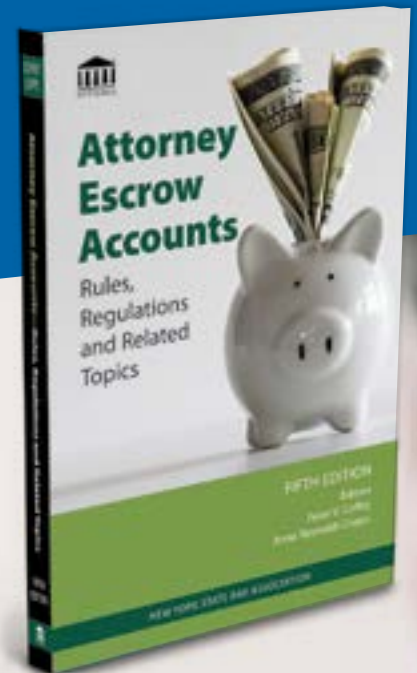
Peter V. Coffey, Esq.

Anne Reynolds Copps, Esq.

Since its original publication more than 20 years ago, *Attorney Escrow Accounts: Rules, Regulations and Related Topics*, has become the go-to source for information and guidance on attorney escrow in New York. Now in its Fifth Edition, *Attorney Escrow Accounts* continues to be an important reference for both newly admitted and seasoned attorneys thanks to its extensive discussion of the legal and ethical issues attorneys encounter as they handle client funds.

This new edition revises and updates coverage of handling escrow funds, escrow agreements, IOLA accounts, and the Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection of the State of New York. Also included is a new chapter, "How to Open and Manage Escrow Accounts," which provides the reader with practical guidance on how and where to set up an IOLA account, the bookkeeping requirements for properly maintaining an escrow account, some practical examples of the steps to take when an attorney receives various types of escrow funds, and the steps to be taken upon the death of the sole owner of an IOLA account. The revised Appendix is itself a valuable resource of model forms and pertinent rules, statutes, and ethics opinions.

A must-have for every attorney who practices in New York State!



Print (402623)
eBook (402623E)

NYSBA Members \$90.00
Non-Members \$125.00

ORDER ONLINE: [NYSBA.ORG/PUBS](https://www.nysba.org/pubs) | ORDER BY PHONE: 800.582.2452



NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
WOMEN IN LAW SECTION

One Elk Street, Albany, New York 12207-1002

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ALBANY, N.Y.
PERMIT NO. 155

Annual **MEETING**

JANUARY 16-20, 2024

Women in Law Section Program

January 18, 2024

9:15 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

New York Hilton Midtown NYC

