

Celebrating WBASNY at 45

A Journey Together: 45 Years of Collective Strength.

We come together at Convention to engage and celebrate with each other, congratulate our Award Recipients, install our WBASNY Officers for 2025-2026, learn, network, relax and have fun. This year, we also proudly celebrate WBASNY's 45 Anniversary!

WBASNY has grown from its initial five Chapters - Capital District, Central New York, New York (Manhattan), Staten Island and Westchester - into 20 Chapters across New York State. We recognize and appreciate the value and power of our Collective Strength.

In this special section, our Chapters reflect upon: What Chapter achievement(s) highlight WBASNY's collective strength?

Adirondack

The Adirondack Chapter is proud to highlight the tremendous success of our second annual *Women in the Law Day* program, held on March 5, 2025. What began as a local initiative in 2024 has grown into a statewide effort, with sister WBASNY chapters joining to make this year's program a true reflection of our collective strength.

Together we reached over 650 students, across 13 in-person locations from Long Island to Buffalo, showcasing the legal profession and its diverse career paths. Students engaged directly with attorneys, judges and legal professionals, gaining invaluable insights into the legal world.

The momentum continued beyond March 5th, with three additional chapters hosting their events later in the month. The growing participation and enthusiastic response affirm the program's impact and importance in empowering the next generation of legal professionals.

This achievement reflects WBASNY's unified ability to inspire, educate and open doors, ensuring a legal career feels both accessible and attainable to students across New York State.



Brooklyn

The Brooklyn Women's Bar Association (BWBA), a WBASNY chapter since 1918, exemplifies the collective strength of our statewide organization through its commitment to professional development, community engagement and judicial access.

A standout initiative is BWBA's "Lunch with a Judge" series, which fosters mentorship and transparency within the judiciary. In June 2024, BWBA hosted a virtual session with Justice Robert R. Reed, offering members insight into his personal journey from Compton, California to the New York County Supreme Court's Commercial Division. This event provided an intimate platform for discussing judicial perspectives and career development.

Complementing its professional programs, BWBA emphasizes member connection through events like the "Paint and Sip" held in August 2024 at Brooklyn Bridge Park. This gathering allowed members, including judges and attorneys, to bond creatively in a relaxed setting, reinforcing camaraderie and community within the legal profession.

Under the leadership this past year of President Hon. Cenceria P. Edwards, BWBA continues to uphold its mission to promote, protect and further the rights of women, aligning seamlessly with WBASNY's overarching goals.

Bronx

The Bronx Chapter is proud of the programs we hosted and co-sponsored this past year. Our goal this year is "*let's grow together!*" We want to expand our reach to not only get our name out there but get more people involved, including not only practicing attorneys and judges but also the students of our community, who we recognize are our future. This year our Chapter participated in a wide variety of events including a statewide essay contest through the New York State Unified Court System, for which we collaborated with other bar associations throughout the State. We sponsored a fundraiser for those in the community who were in need after losing their homes due to a fire and collected toys to donate to children during the holiday season. We were able to collect a tremendous amount of necessities and toys for these families. By attending events and 5k walks we also spread awareness for causes that are important for women, including domestic violence and breast cancer awareness. Our most exciting events were our Lunch chats with Judges, during which we were able to see beyond the bench, and learn about individual judges and their journeys to the bench. Through all of our endeavors we strive to demonstrate the strength and reach of WBASNY as a state organization. We take pride in connecting, supporting and speaking up for women from all walks of life, especially those in our Bronx community.

Capital District

The Capital District Chapter of WBASNY has proudly contributed to both joint ventures and individual chapter initiatives that advance WBASNY's mission. A standout achievement is our ongoing commitment to recognizing and uplifting the next generation of attorneys. Through events like *Sweet Success* and our annual Installation Dinner, we have honored new attorneys and trailblazing women who have broken barriers in the legal field.

We've collaborated with other bar associations to support causes aligned with WBASNY's values, including raising funds and awareness for cancer research and domestic violence survivors, as well as community outreach programs like Toys for Tots and Ronald McDonald House meal preparation.



Our Chapter also prioritizes wellness and connection, hosting yoga, golf, boxing, kickboxing and rock-climbing events. Networking and mentorship remain central, with regular happy hours and Albany Law School student engagement.

Notably, we are preserving our Chapter's legacy through an upcoming historical event featuring our founding members. Their stories will be transcribed and archived, ensuring future WBASNY members remember and learn from the pioneers who established our foundation.

This blend of tradition, innovation and service highlights the Capital District Chapter's role in strengthening WBASNY's collective impact.

Central New York

On June 20, 1977, Karen DeCrow convened the first meeting of what would become the Central New York Women's Bar Association (CNYWBA). Inspired by a conversation with Joan Ellenbogen, a WBASNY founder and WBASNY's first President, Karen galvanized local attorneys to address challenges facing women in the profession and to form a supportive legal community.

Formally established in 1980, CNYWBA quickly emerged as a leader in promoting women in the law. It was the first WBASNY chapter to create a legal clinic providing advice and assistance to victims of domestic violence. Through its efforts, many women have been elected to the judiciary in Central New York.

The Chapter's impact continues through its judicial evaluation process, charitable fundraising (including support for the CNY Diaper Bank), CLE programs, educational outreach to students, voter registration drives, law student mentorship and advocacy against gender bias in the legal system.

As CNYWBA celebrates more than 45 years of service, we are proud of our legacy and look forward to continuing our important work for decades to come.



Del-Chen-O

Since its inception Del-Chen-O has held a dinner honoring a distinguished member. What makes this event unique is that each woman recognized has broken through in a traditionally male dominated field. In rural counties, where “old boys clubs” still rule, this event has underscored that women have made a profound mark in our legal communities. We at Del-Chen-O have rejected the idea of the boy’s club and have created our own remarkable celebration of leaders. In turn, this event has brought together not just the female practitioners but also our male leaders, who are often in attendance and championing our Honorees.



This past November one of our counties, Chenango, had its first female judge elected to a county level bench; a well deserving and hard working attorney who has dedicated her life’s work to family and matrimonial work however, it is hard not to see the correlation between this event, our organization and this election. Del-Chen-O continues to strive to ensure that our members are seen for who they are - outstanding leaders and advocates. The overall goal of WBASNY is encapsulated in this event. We will continue to celebrate our leaders and those who are outstanding examples for the next generation.

Finger Lakes

The Finger Lakes Chapter congratulates WBASNY on this momentous anniversary! FLWBA is a small but mighty 18th chapter of WBASNY, organized by Elizabeth Peck (founding President); Kimberly Rothman (founding Treasurer); and Deirdre Hay (founding Director/Delegate), in response to calls from Irene Villacci, Gail Boggio and Linda Chiaverini (inaugural installation, photo below). The Chapter was ratified in March 2007, with founding members Kelly A. Damm and Mari Townsend among its initial group, and it serves Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins and Yates Counties. Since becoming a Chapter, our members have chaired, co-chaired and sat on many WBASNY Committees. We proudly recognize Deirdre Hay’s service on the WBASNY Board and as WBASNY President from 2019 - 2020.



FLWBA educates members through lunch seminars and CLE programs. Our meetings include presentations from attorneys, judges, Cornell faculty and community leaders on significant topics of interest, such as Collaborative Law, Environmental Issues, Immigration Law and Women in the Judiciary. FLWBA is also known for its wonderful and informative wine law CLE programs taking busloads of members around the Finger Lakes wineries. FLWBA recognizes the importance of building networks with organizations active in the region whose mission is compatible with our own. FLWBA has engaged closely with many area organizations

through co-sponsorship of programs and support, including the Women’s Opportunity Center, Cancer Resource Center, Family and Children’s Services of Ithaca, Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce, Planned Parenthood, National Organization of Women and the National Women’s Hall of Fame. We have partnered with NYSBA Young Lawyer’s Section, NYSBA Criminal Law Section’s Annual Meeting at Seneca Falls, NYSBA Law Day at Cornell Campus and the Tompkins County Bar Association.

With gratitude to all of our current and past leaders and members, and to the Presiding Justice Elizabeth Garry and other members of the judiciary who have supported our Chapter from its inception, we join in celebrating our history. As we ponder the future, FLWBA wants to strengthen the pipeline of future leaders, grow both within Tompkins County and throughout our surrounding FLWBA counties, and continue our history of participating on the State Level. The future is all of us; our individual commitments and our personal connections can strengthen FLWBA, build on its past successes and help the Chapter to thrive.

Mid-Hudson



Mid-York

As a small chapter, Mid-York stays engaged at the State level through our participation in Committees such as the Awards, Nominations, Legislation, Membership, Wellness and Environmental Committees. We try to meet each month whether it is virtual or in-person for lunch. We collaborate with other chapters to create and join events happening in the upstate and central New York areas. Our Chapter President, AJ Bosman, was awarded the 2025 Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg Beacon Award by the New York State Bar Association's Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. She was honored with the Award at the Association's Annual Meeting on January 15, 2025.



Nassau

The Nassau County Women's Bar Association (NCWBA) recently hosted its "Winter Holiday Party and Mittens Drive", an event dedicated to supporting survivors of domestic violence. Through the generosity of our members and attendees, we raised \$2,255.00 for The Safe Center, a nonprofit organization that provides critical services to survivors, including mental, emotional, psychological and legal support.



This initiative underscores the NCWBA's ongoing commitment to empowering women and strengthening our community. As many of the survivors served by The Safe Center are women, we are proud to be part of efforts that make a real difference in their lives. A domestic violence survivor and prior Safe Center client spoke at the event about her experiences and the help she received from this invaluable resource. The event also featured a mittens drive.

The NCWBA recognizes the importance of providing not only legal resources but also the support that helps individuals heal and rebuild. Through events like this, we continue to advocate for and assist those in need, reinforcing our commitment to creating a more just and compassionate community for all.

New York

One of the New York Chapter's most influential achievements—and a true reflection of WBASNY's collective strength—is the launch and continued success of the Martha E. Gifford Summer Program: What It's Really Like to Practice Law as a Woman.

Held annually in June, this program is designed for law students, summer associates, interns and new attorneys. It features a dynamic panel of women attorneys who share candid insights about their experiences across diverse legal settings, including government, large and small firms, nonprofits and in-house counsel. The discussion focuses on the challenges and realities that women face as they enter the profession, offering practical guidance and inspiration.

NYWBA's dedication to this initiative has had a far-reaching impact. Several years ago, the Chapter successfully trademarked the program and created a comprehensive Toolkit, enabling other bar associations to replicate the event. The Toolkit includes a timeline, sample materials and tips for recruiting panelists, making it easy for others to adapt and implement the program in their own regions.

By creating and sharing this resource, NYWBA exemplifies WBASNY's spirit of collaboration and mentorship. The program empowers future generations of women lawyers and reinforces our mission of fostering gender equity within the legal field.

The NYWBA is proud of this enduring legacy and remains committed to hosting the program each year, ensuring that women entering the legal profession feel seen, supported and prepared.

Orange-Sullivan



When I think of what best exemplifies the collective strength of WBASNY and its impact on the Orange-Sullivan chapter, I immediately think of the involvement of our past Presidents in mentoring and educating current board members, and how essential it is for our Chapter's long-term health and, in turn, WBASNY's success and growth.

Each spring at our annual dinners, the past Presidents gather for a group picture. The love and sisterhood is felt as we stand shoulder to shoulder. The group has strong ties and unconditional service to WBASNY. They bring to our Chapter the leadership skills they gain from WBASNY, and use them to teach, mentor and support all the newer attorneys who now sit on our Board. Many of our past Presidents have chaired or still chair WBASNY Committees, serve on the WBASNY Board and three (soon to be four) have been WBASNY Presidents. Their experience provides invaluable insights into the organization's history, culture and challenges, helping new leaders understand its evolution and the foundational values each chapter shares.

The past Presidents are the pillars of our past and while their time on our Chapter's Board may be expired for now, the Chapter would not be as successful as it is without their support, a value I know they gained from WBASNY. Our past Presidents ensure the Chapter's growth and success for the future, which is exemplified by this year's victory of our membership doubling in size. We are becoming bigger and better to support WBASNY as a whole. Eve Lincoln, Esq., WBAOSC President 2024-2025



Queens



The Queens County Women's Bar Association (QCWBA) takes great pride in its diversity, which stands as one of its most significant achievements. More than just the "Queens of Queens," the QCWBA represents a rich blend of cultures, races, religions and practice areas. It is this diversity that strengthens our Chapter, fostering a supportive community and expanding our impact. Our collective differences have enhanced our mission, particularly in promoting diversity within the judiciary. With over 20 members elevated to the bench, our efforts have helped ensure that the judiciary reflects the diverse litigants it serves. The QCWBA remains committed to championing diversity, recognizing it as a driving force behind our mission and continued success.

Rochester

Everything the Greater Rochester Association for Women Attorneys (GRAWA) does reflects WBASNY's collective strength. From advocacy to mentorship, community impact to professional development, WBASNY's mission is the foundation of our work.

Formed in 1983 by trailblazing women determined to create space for leadership, inclusion and equity, GRAWA continues to be a driving force in the Rochester legal community. One key achievement that exemplifies our shared strength is our comprehensive support of members at all stages of their careers. Through mentorship programs, judicial candidate evaluations, scholarships and impactful CLEs, GRAWA empowers women attorneys while shaping the future of the profession.

Our Chapter prioritizes connection and growth by offering leadership opportunities, fostering meaningful relationships and cultivating new voices. Throughout the years, we have provided scholarships for aspiring attorneys, encouraged active engagement from law students, and remained a consistent advocate for justice and inclusivity in the region.

GRAWA's enduring commitment to collaboration and service strengthens not just our local legal community but the broader WBASNY mission statewide. We are proud to be a Chapter where meaningful change is made, and where women lead with purpose, energy and impact.

Rockland

Since its formation in 1984, the goal of the Rockland County Women's Bar Association (RCWBA) has been to provide a network and support system for the women attorneys in Rockland County and through WBASNY statewide; to provide educational programs to our members; to address issues affecting all lawyers, in particular women; and to encourage an interest in law and our system of Justice. Our programming and events revolve around this goal.

In its earliest years, RCWBA conducted research and published a report on women in the Courts in Rockland, as a result of which significant changes were made, especially in Family Court. We also worked to change an antiquated rule in a local county club which, until that time, prohibited women from owning a membership. Every year we bestow the Belle Mayer Zeck Award in recognition of an individual's wisdom, ethics, creativity and pursuit of excellence in the law, thus promoting understanding between the legal profession and the community, and advancing the status of women. We also award the Hon. Catherine Miklitsch Scholarship each year to a deserving High School Senior who has written an essay that exemplifies how the law affects individuals in a myriad of different situations.

From mentoring programs, legal clinics, judicial receptions, CLE programs and social events, RCWBA strives to work together to provide an outlet for its members to achieve the goals of the Chapter and WBASNY.

Staten Island

At the 2024 Annual Judicial Gala, the Staten Island Chapter proudly awarded scholarships to four law students with ties to the Staten Island community. This initiative exemplifies WBASNY's collective strength in advancing women in the legal profession, and supporting future leaders committed to justice and equality.

These scholarships go beyond alleviating financial burdens—they represent an investment in the next generation of women attorneys. By providing resources and recognition to these students, the Staten Island

Chapter empowers them to focus on their legal education and become advocates for change. Each recipient carries forward the legacy of WBASNY's mission: to uplift women and amplify their voices within the legal system and society at large.



This initiative underscores the Staten Island Chapter's dedication to creating tangible pathways for women to thrive in the law. It also reflects the Chapter's commitment to ensuring that women continue to lead, shape policy and serve as influential voices in our profession.

Through programs like this, the Staten Island Chapter reaffirms its role in cultivating excellence, equity and leadership among emerging women attorneys—core values that continue to unite and strengthen WBASNY as a whole.

Suffolk

Whether in times of personal hardship, professional challenges or other crises, the members of the Suffolk County Women's Bar Association (SCWBA) have always found ways to lift each other up and show up for each other. When faced with adversity, the bonds formed between the members of the SCWBA provide the emotional, mental and practical support needed to navigate difficult times. This collective power of the SCWBA not only offers comfort but creates a network of shared knowledge and resources. For example, our members often gather in communities to offer guidance, professional support or even just a listening ear.

In the SCWBA, we stand up for each other, advocating for equal opportunities and representation. From mentorship programs to organizing events to educate and empower, SCWBA members are breaking down barriers and creating spaces where they can rise together. This support also extends beyond professional environments and into family life, mental health and physical well-being.

These acts of support help create a ripple effect, inspiring future generations to value the strength in unity. As women continue to rise, the SCWBA paves the way for a legal community where empathy, collaboration and empowerment are prioritized, and no woman has to face challenges alone.



Thousand Islands

The Thousand Islands Women's Bar Association (TIWBA) is located in the “North Country” of the State, with Lake Ontario on its western border, and the St. Lawrence Seaway and Canada on its northern border. Although we are remote and challenged both geographically and by winter weather events that interfere with large attendance at regular meetings, members make up for these physical challenges by remembering one of the special and unique features of WBASNY - being creative in developing a collective strength to service its mission. The Chapter gathers informally in the City of Watertown, the hub of activity for the northern counties, and also by email. Oftentimes we collaborate with the local county bar associations (many are members of TIWBA as well as the county bar associations) on particular projects - we know there is strength in numbers. Our latest and newest initiative is to join forces with our county bar associations to form a multi-bar committee to brainstorm on specific actions we can undertake to reach out to lawyers and law students to consider a rewarding and work-life balanced career in law in Northern New York, both in the public and private sectors. This committee will work on recruitment ideas, mentorships, visits to law schools and any other creative initiatives that blossom from this collective strength, learned from WBASNY. Happy 45th anniversary to all of us in WBASNY!



Westchester

The Westchester Chapter of WBASNY (WWBA”) has had a prolific 2024-2025 year! Our mission and mantra has been expansion, and indeed we have expanded. The WWBA has increased its membership by 15% and this has been mainly through the engagement of new law firms, new members and students. The WWBA has over 100 student members, and a robust and active mentorship program through which we have created a pipeline for new attorneys to join and become active. Among our many programs, networking events and CLEs, the WWBA has created a calendar packed with wonderful opportunities for our membership over this past year. A few of our incredible highlights include our Intro to Golf Event (sold out!), Member Mixer - Bar Meets Bench event at Sailhouse in Tarrytown, Team Orbach Breast Cancer Walk and American Heart Association Heart Walk, Holiday Party, and CLEs on incredibly important topics including Immigration, 42 U.S.C Section 1983 cases, land use, ethics and estate planning.

The WWBA is committed to increasing our membership but also “engaging” our members, particularly our new ones. New members have been charged with moderating CLEs, running programs and taking leadership roles. This strategy has allowed our Chapter to grow, and has provided new and exciting energy that we will continue into 2025-2026!



Western New York

The Women’s Bar Association of the State of New York’s Western New York Chapter (WBASNY WNY) proudly celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2024, marking a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to advancing women in the legal profession and society. This landmark year was distinguished by the historic appointment of our first woman of color Chapter President, exemplifying our dedication to diversity and inclusion within the legal community.

Throughout our four-decade history, WBASNY WNY has consistently spotlighted and honored the achievements of our members. Our annual Installation of Officers & Directors and Awards Ceremony serves as a testament to this tradition. During the 2024 ceremony we not only installed our new leadership but also recognized esteemed members and community leaders for their contributions. Honorees included Trini E. Ross, Esq., U.S. Attorney for the Western District of New York; Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden, Associate Justice of the New York State Appellate Division, Fourth Judicial Department; Elizabeth A. Kraengel, Esq., past WBASNY WNY President; and Cheyenne Freely, Esq.



Our Chapter’s commitment extends beyond ceremonies; we actively engage in initiatives that support and promote our members throughout the community, whilst creating a space for networking through friendships and fun.

As we reflect on our 40-year journey, WBASNY WNY remains steadfast in its mission to empower women in law, celebrate their accomplishments and foster an inclusive environment that paves the way for future leaders.