

**WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**January 27, 2018**  
**Columbia Law School**  
**New York, New York**

A quorum being present, the Board of Directors meeting was called to order at approximately 1:03pm.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Maureen Crush, seconded by Sean Morton to approve the Board of Directors meeting minutes of the November 18, 2017. The motion passed.

**President's Report**

President Littman reported that we had 169 people registered to attend today's meeting, which is a record for our January meeting, which is the busiest of the year. She recognized our first time attendees.

President Littman offered her condolences to Lenore Kramer for the loss of her mother, and noted that as a testament to her dedication to this organization, Lenore came here today to chair the Nominations Committee meeting.

President Littman reminded the Board that this week is the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the landmark USSC decision in Roe v. Wade. We celebrate this momentous occasion.

President Littman reported that the previous night she and 30 of our colleagues went to a WBASNY CLE program at Sullivan and Cromwell where a panel consisting of Assemblywoman Monica Wallace, Senator Liz Kruger, and Kelly Owens, the director of women's affairs for the governor spoke, moderated by Sandra Rivera. They spoke about history, workplace issues and where the legislature is going with it, including difficulties and health and safety issues with focus on reproductive rights. The program was full of great insight that you could not get in any other forum. The panelists told us over and over again how valuable WBASNY's input was in the process and that they are teaching their colleagues to come to us as well. She thanked Past President Jaqueline Flug and the organizers of the program.

President Littman reported that the Board Appeal went out in December, and she is gratified to have a good response. The contributions from all the WBASNY Officers and other Board members totaled just over \$3,500.

President Littman reported that Corresponding Secretary Joy Thomson attended the NYCLA Awards dinner on our behalf where many of our members of the judiciary and the bench were honored. She also reported that in December she and 25 members went to the USSC to be admitted. We were honored by the presence of 7 of the 9 Justices on the bench and had the privilege of a private audience with Ruth Bader Ginsberg.

President Littman reported that the final version of the joint Domestic Violence Initiative with NYSBA is online, and we were recognized this week in the New York Law Journal.

President Littman reported that since the last meeting we have had two requests to participate in amici, of which we participated in one on protecting contraceptive coverage. She thanked the Amicus Committee for their quick work on this. She also reported that we presented written testimony to the New York City human rights commission.

President Littman reported that we wrote to Justice DiFiore after she put together a task force asking to include more women on that task force, suggesting that she include Justice Betty Ellerin and that we wrote to the CLE Commission asking that training be expanded to include young lawyers, who presently are not eligible for diversity credit. President Littman also wrote to United States Attorney, Jeff Sessions after interim United States Attorney appointments were announced asking him to consider more representation by women in those important job.

President Littman reported that WBASNY had a table at the Third Department admission ceremony and passed out membership applications. GRAWA and Western New York were at the Fourth Department admission ceremony to do the same.

President Littman updated the Board on the status of the Thousand Islands Women's Bar Association. On December 6, she, President-Elect Kolcon, Elaine Avery and Linda Chiaverini went to Watertown to host a welcome event. The attendees are eager to be part of the organization with 21 registered members to date. We expect them to have the required 25 members by the March meeting, and then we can charter the chapter.

President Littman reported that the Equal Opportunities in the Profession Committee sent out its survey and that the Diversity Committee has a big CLE program coming up in March.

President Littman reported that in response to request from a couple of chapters, we will be partnering with Planned Parenthood for a reproductive rights lobby day on March 13. The Officers met and felt that this was worthy of supporting, but we need twenty members to commit to be there. Members are to contact Sandra Rivera if they are interested in participating. She reminded the Board that this is not taking the place of our May lobby day.

President Littman reported that we finally settled with our prior video company and we will move forward with videotaping more of our CLEs in the future and putting them up on our website.

President Littman reported that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Department released its decision in Christopher YY vs. Jessica ZZ, a landmark decision in which the marital presumption of legitimacy was extended to apply to same sex couples. This is a step in the right direction for those of us working to secure the rights of families.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Reid-Green reported that we have had income of \$195,248 and expenses of \$194,308, resulting in a surplus income of \$931. We have a tax bill due for approximately \$3,100 and a bill from the accountant for \$5,000. The main source of this bill is from assistance to two chapters to correct their financial records. These expenses will result in a current deficit.

### **State of the Judiciary**

Hon. Jeffrey Sunshine, a member of the Brooklyn and Staten Island chapter and Kings County Supervising Judge for Matrimonial Matters and Chair of the Chief Administrative Judge's Matrimonial Practice Advisory Rules Committee spoke to the Board on the State of the Judiciary as it relates to matrimonial law. He thanked WBASNY for always being there for him and reminded the Board that he will always be there for WBASNY. He noted that three of our members are honorary Chairs of his committee and they have always been at the forefront on behalf of women and children. They are Justices Silberman, Miller & Ellerin.

Justice Sunshine reported that, for the first time, Matrimonial lawyers and judges have a seat at the court system's table and a voice in legislation. He noted that this organization helped accomplish enactment of the current maintenance guidelines. There are new challenges of the new tax code, and his committee is watching that. He stated that for the first time in fifteen years of trying, the contempt law in Supreme Court is the same as in Family Court. He also reported that there is a bill before the legislature on the issue of venue requiring that some nexus to be necessary for choice of venue.

Justice Sunshine reported that his committee is working on education of the judges and lawyers on how to deviate from the maintenance guidelines. He further reported that the court system will be submitting a bill to the legislature for e filing in matrimonial matters. His committee will be submitting a revised bill regarding release of forensic reports to self-represented litigants.

Justice Sunshine reported that his committee designed the new Statement of Net Worth form, and is working on revising and revamping the uncontested divorce process in the State. There will be proposals to revise the rights and responsibilities form. There will be a proposal jointly by his committee and the Office of Policy and Planning to tighten issue of foreclosures in matrimonials giving standing to an innocent spouse to participate in the process.

### **AXA Advisors**

Debora Walker and James Licata from AXA Advisors presented to the Board about what their company can provide for WBASNY.

### **Equal Opportunity in the Profession Committee**

Deirdre Hay and Elizabeth Kraengel reported that their committee launched their survey on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of this month, and reminded members that if they didn't receive it to get their spam folders. They asked that Board members encourage everyone in their chapters to participate in the survey. They further reported that they are hoping to have an event in Seneca Falls to extend on the CLE from last night.

### **Legislation Committee**

Committee Chairs Kelly Damm, Marea Wachsman , Christine Wienberg along with Sandra Rivera reported that the Legislation Committee has been working hard on the many portions of the Governor's Budget that pertain to our organization, as well as many other pieces of legislation. They are bringing four issues to the Board for a vote today.

1. Governor's Budget – Women's Agenda Section H. This section added public schools to the definition of public education to extend anti-discrimination protection to public schools. A motion to support the Women's Agenda section H extending anti-discrimination protection to public schools was made by Eileen Milanowicz and seconded by Jaqi Flug. A vote was held and the motion passed with the usual abstentions.
2. Adding "sex" as a protected class under the New York State Constitution. A motion to support adding sex as a protected class under the New York State Constitution by Eileen Milanowicz and seconded by Leyla Kiose. A vote was held and the motion passed with the usual abstentions
3. Federal bill for safe student travel abroad – Legislation voted not to support this bill. However, a year ago WBASNY already supported the bill. Maureen crush reported to the Board that this bill was brought to WBASNY's attention by Orange Sullivan last year. There is presently no requirement that universities report to the students when they're doing orientation the safety issues of the locations where they are traveling to. The proposed legislation requires that this information be made available. There is companion legislation requiring the US Consulate Offices to record this data and make it available so that statistics can be calculated.

A motion was made by Jacqueline Flug, seconded by Anne LaBarbera that we continue to support the bill. A friendly amendment was offered by Donna Frosco, in light of our vote last year to support similar legislation that we support the legislation before this year's congress. The friendly amendment was accepted. A motion was made by Susan Brock, seconded by Phaedra Britt to table the motion. The motion passed.

4. Making the current 22 NYCRR on parent education mandatory – Delores Gebhart reported to the board the 22 NYCRR §144 provides for voluntary parent education in custody matters in the State. In Westchester there is no program at all. The lack spurred Justices Miller & Silberman with others to create Judicial Restoration of Parent Education (JROPE). JROPE proposes that there be mandatory live training in all custody disputes. Justice Sunshine's Committee (MPARC) has a proposal endorsing mandatory trainings, but instead of live programs, OCA create a video that is free online in contested matrimonial matters. It took no position on family court because it can't.

A motion was made by Heather Neu, seconded by Andrea Composto to support MPARC proposal, but for it to be extended to include Family Court. A discussion ensued. A motion was made by Dawn Reid-Green, seconded by Kelly Pressler to call the question. A vote was held and the motion passed. A vote was held on the initial motion and passed with 43 in favor and 25 opposed.

### **International Women's Rights Committee**

Fay Parris reported that the 62nd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women will convene from March 12-23, and the theme is "Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls". WBASNY will be participating in two events. The first will be in Co-Sponsorship with Human Rights Now, and will pertain to the Me Too movement and breaking the silence of sexual assault globally. In attendance will be a journalist from Japan who spoke out against the system and what she encountered when she alleged sexual violence against her by a high-level official. The Second event will address Strategies pertaining to the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls and will take place on March 23rd.

### **Dues Increase**

President Littman reported that we have been on the cutting edge on the amicus work, our legislative and substantive committees turn around position statements, legislative criticism & suggestions on a dime. We meet four times per year and are being sought out by companies, legislators, etc, but none of this can take place unless we can afford to continue. Despite declining bar membership everywhere, WBASNY is growing. Since our last dues increase we grew two new chapters and soon will add a third. We have effectuated change, established clinics, helped individuals and community service in greater numbers than we ever had. In September when she spoke to us about a dues increase, it was for the first time since 2009. In November the Officers put together a ten page packet attempting to provide the Presidents with the information needed to go back to their chapters. We stated that we were looking for a \$15 increase, but at the November Executive Committee meeting when asked if this was a hard and fast number, the answer was that there's room to negotiate – we're lawyers. President Littman noted that none of us is an expert in running an organization like this. The Officers are not experts, but volunteers, as are Presidents and Delegates. We're all here because we care about this organization and the future of it and the work that it does. President Littman reminded the Board that we haven't had a dues increase since 2009, and that we've been running at a deficit since 2011. We have been helped by convention money, but we can't always count on that.

Maureen McLaughlin, seconded by Christine Randazzo made a motion for a \$5 dues increase. An extensive discussion was held whereby anyone who wished to voice their position was invited to come to the podium and briefly present to the Board. A motion was made by Caroline Levy, seconded by Kelly Damm to call the question. The motion passed with seven votes in opposition.

A roll call vote on the motion for the \$5 dues increase was held and the motion passed with 66 in favor, 28 opposed and 1 abstention.

### **Diversity Committee**

Committee Chair John Coffey reported that the Committee will be holding a CLE on March 5<sup>th</sup> at the Brooklyn Bar Association entitled “Renee Richards v. USTA 40 Years Later. This CLE will be videotaped and then available for online viewing in the future.

### **Awards Committee**

Joy Thomson reported on the 2018 WBASNY award recipients. They are Hon. Christine A. Sproat (*Mid-Hudson*) - Joan L. Ellenbogen Founders Award, Hon. Elizabeth A. Garry (*Del-Chen-O*) - Marilyn R. Menge Award, Michaela K. Rossettie Azemi, Esq. (*Finger Lakes*) - Doris S. Hoffman Outstanding New Lawyer Award, Jillian L. McGuire, Esq. (*Central New York*) - Hanna S. Cohn Pro Bono Award and Hon. Joanne D. Quinones (*Brooklyn*) - Judith S. Kaye Access to Justice Award.

### **Iceland Trip**

Amy Saltzman reported that the planning is going well, and fifteen people will be attending. She is working with a woman at the Icelandic Women’s Bar Association to organize a program while there. They are excited to come to our convention in May. Ms. Saltzman asks that if anyone in the New York City area can take one of the Icelandic lawyers along to Cooperstown to let her know.

### **Nominations**

Co-chair Grays reported that there were eight interviews starting at 9 am. The voting meeting will be March 10<sup>th</sup> at a location to be determined.

### **Chapters – Membership**

Phaedra Britt reported that WBASNY had a table at the Third Department admission ceremony. They handed out applications and pamphlets and spoke to quite a few of the newly admitted attorneys to build awareness of WBASNY. A lot of the people were actually going to practice in Manhattan, so NYWBA may want to send a representative next year.

### **Convention 2018 Committee**

Catherine Courtney reported that Convention 2018 will be May 31-June 3 in Cooperstown, NY at The Otesaga Resort Hotel. The Committee is working on several outings and excursions. They had 20 CLE submissions and they are working hard to narrow down the presentations to 7 or 8.

### **Motion to Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer P. Brown  
Recording Secretary