

# Year-End Chapter Reports 2019-2020

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## Adirondack

This year the Adirondack Women's Bar Association expanded our domestic violence legal clinic to a second location, collaborating with Wellspring, the sexual assault and domestic violence resource for Saratoga County. Our members volunteer at this monthly clinic, offering information and guidance on a variety of legal issues impacting those affected by domestic violence. In September, our members also volunteered for the League of Women Voters of Saratoga County's National Voter Registration Day Voter Registration Drive. That drive hosted over thirty locations throughout Saratoga, Washington and Warren Counties. During the holidays, we supported Breakfast With Santa hosted by Catholic Charities (another collaborator of our domestic violence clinic) and a toy drive for Adirondack Community Action Programs. In March, we hosted an International Women's Day Celebration with proceeds to benefit the Saratoga Center for the Family. The evening was a success, with the venue space donated by a local business and a silent auction featuring donations from several women-owned local businesses.

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## Bronx

On April 10, 2019, The Bronx Women's Bar Association (BxWBA) elected its first President of Hispanic decent with the platform: Inclusivity and Empowerment of Women in the Legal Profession. BxWBA hit the ground running and began its membership drive in April with a Paint and Sip. In essence, we provided those who signed up at that time with two free months. We are proud to have members from a host of different areas including the Judiciary, Corporation Counsel, Bronx Defenders, Legal Aid Society, Children's Law Center, Assigned Counsel and the Administration for Children's Services.

From the beginning, it was non-stop planning and executing for the BxWBA as we successfully provided over twenty different programs/events. Unfortunately, our remaining events had to be postponed or modified to virtual events due to the health crisis that has affected our entire state. Throughout the year, and especially during this pandemic, BxWBA kept its members informed through newsletters and emails.

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, we were successful in conducting our first telephonic election where the first woman of Dominican decent was elected. Below is a brief description of the many events we were able to provide to our members.

- April 30: Membership Drive/Paint & Sip
- June 5: Pride Event at Billy's (co-sponsored)
- June 12: Induction Reception at Billy's
  - Honoree Murray Richman, Esq.
  - Honoree Llinet Rosado, J.S.C.
  - Honoree Mina MacFarlane, Esq.
  - Swearing in by Justice Jenny Rivera, Court of Appeals
  - Musical Performance: Shirley Rodriguez-Remeneski School Orchestra
  - Silent Auction
- July 25: Meet and Mingle at Billy's Rooftop Bar
- October 1: Voter Registration Drive
- October 16: Hispanic Heritage Month celebration [First Annual for BxWBA]
  - Panelist: Hon. Doris Gonzalez, AJ Bronx Supreme Court
  - Panelist: Hon. Nelida Malave-Gonzalez, Surrogates Court
  - Panelist: Hon. Fiordaliza Rodriguez, Bronx Family Court
  - Panelist: Nathalia Fernandez, 80<sup>th</sup> District Assembly Member
- October 18: Breast Cancer Awareness Month
  - Victoria Pilotti, Breast Cancer Survivor
  - Stephanie Bernik, Chief of Breast Surgery at Mt. Sinai West
- October 28: Red Mass at St. Angela Merici (co-sponsored)
- October 29: Domestic Violence Awareness luncheon
  - Janet Caraballo, Retired NYPD

November: Thanksgiving Food Drive (co-sponsored)  
November 18: Ruth Bader Ginsberg Documentary at the Andrew Freedman Home

- Panelist: Hon. Sallie Manzanet-Daniels, Appellate Division, 1<sup>st</sup> Dept
- Panelist: Darcel Clark, Bronx District Attorney
- Panelist: Hon. Marian Doherty, Bronx Civil Court

November 21: Paternity CLE

- Speaker: Hon. Shahabuddeen Ally, Bronx Criminal Court

December 9: Holiday potluck  
January 6&15: Lunch and Learn on Health & Wellness Screening

- Sponsored by Baseline Health

January 21: MLK luncheon

- Dr. Louis J. Braun, Civil Rights Activist

January 23: Alternative Dispute Resolution informational luncheon

- Lisa Denig, Special Counsel for ADR Initiatives, OCS
- Hon. Carol Sherman, Chief Magistrate & Counsel
- Hon. Doris Gonzalez, AJ Bronx Supreme Court

January 19: Lunch & Learn on Financial Wellness

- Sponsored by James Licata, Financial Planner at Prudential

February 3: Criminal Law & Family Court Practice CLE

- Speaker: Hon. Shahabuddeen Ally, Bronx Criminal Court

February 26: Heart Awareness luncheon

- Guest Speaker: Jeffery D. Wessler, MD

February 27: Black History Month Luncheon with Justice Troy K. Webber  
March 2: Dr. Seuss celebration at St. Angela Merici  
April 27: Annual Meeting/Election  
May 8: Virtual Chat & Check In

## Brooklyn

Unfortunately due to the pandemic, the Brooklyn chapter was not able to do all the events that we had scheduled including (but not limited to) our annual dinner at the Liberty Warehouse, at which one of our honorees was Attorney General Leticia James, our Women's History month celebration, a Pink & Teal CLE sponsored by Share, a Labor Law cle in conjunction with the Academy of Trial Lawyers and additional Lunch with a Judge programs, just to name a few. However, we did do the following events:

Our installation on June 11, 2019, which was standing room only, was held at the Appellate Division, Second Department, where our President, Meryl Schwartz was sworn in by the Honorable Marsha Steinhardt.

On July 9, 2019, our Young Lawyers Committee, headed by President-Elect Natoya McGhie and the Honorable Genine Edwards, held a well-attended Paint and Sip evening. On September 5, they partnered with the Young Lawyers Section of the Hispanic National Bar Association and held a roller-skating event at Brooklyn Bridge Park.

On September 23, we had a CLE program chaired by the Honorable Matthew D'Emic focusing on treating mental diseases in order to prevent violence.

Our Annual Membership Party was held on September 26<sup>th</sup> and honored Joanne Minsky Cohen with the Joanne Minsky Cohen Award for her outstanding service to the BWBA and the Brooklyn legal community.

On October 2, 2019, the Hon. Alan D. Scheinkman, Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, Second Department, hosted our always very popular Lunch with a Judge program at the Appellate Division, 2d Department.

On October 15, 2019, we held a Hispanic Heritage Celebration where the Hon. Betsy Barros of the Appellate Division, Second Department was the honoree.

Our Mentorship Committee, chaired by Natoya McGhie, Carrie Anne Cavallo and Madeline Kirton, met with and matched mentees with mentors based on areas of interest and career goals.

BWBA members and their families participated in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk in Brooklyn on October 20<sup>th</sup> and raised close to \$7000!

The CLE Committee, chaired by the Hon. Marsha Steinhardt, along with the Young Lawyers Committee presented a standing room only CLE program at the Supreme Court of Kings County on October 24<sup>th</sup> on Courtroom Basics that provided practical information for both young and not-so-young lawyers.

The Hon. Esther (Mickey) Morgenstern hosted a well-attended Lunch with a Judge on November 14<sup>th</sup>. Our Annual Holiday Party was held on December 4<sup>th</sup> and raised over \$2500 for Safe Homes Project, an organization that provides for battered women and their children.

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, the YLC and Mentorship Committees held a happy hour networking event at Kimoto Rooftop.

We welcomed newly elected, re-elected, appointed, and reappointed judges on February 6<sup>th</sup> at our Judiciary Night co-chaired by the Hon. Sylvia Hinds-Radix, Hon. Ellen Spodek and Victoria Wickman.

On February 18<sup>th</sup> BWBA celebrated Black History Month and honored the Hon. Rodneyse Bichotte, NYS Assembly member and Brooklyn Democratic Party Leader.

For the 7<sup>th</sup> straight year, Honorable Joanne Quinones led BWBA members in Read Across America event where we went to PS 274 in Bushwick, Brooklyn and read Dr. Seuss books to the children there. BWBA also gave the children goodie bags that included books, pencils among other things.

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## Capital District

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## Central New York

Once again, the Central New York Chapter has had a successful year filled with diverse events and initiatives. Unfortunately, some of our programming has been foregone or postponed given the unique circumstances we all have faced this spring. As of April, 2020, CNYWBA had 132 voting members and an overall membership of 141.

We started our membership year with a cocktail reception to install our new officers at the Greenwood Bistro and Winery on June 12, 2019. The oath was administered by the incoming president's long-time friend and colleague, Village Magistrate Judge D. Christian Fischer. Chapter members, officers and incoming board members had an opportunity to mix and mingle over cocktails and hors d'oeuvres on a pleasant summer evening.

Throughout the summer, our Judicial Review Committee, chaired by Suzanne Galbato and Kelsey Shannon, worked diligently to review applications from and interview candidates seeking judicial office. Applying a newly adopted rating system, screening for competence and qualification as well as for commitment to gender equality, the committee ranked candidates as unqualified, qualified or highly qualified and candidates who had a demonstrated track record of promoting the advancement of women in society or the profession were eligible for a "commended" rating is well.

The chapter reinvigorated its Long-Range Planning Committee with former chapter president Bryn Lovejoy-Grinnell as its chair, with the specific mission to evaluate the chapter's finances and determine how best to use its funds going forward. The committee made recommendations to invest a portion of our fund balance into a certificate of deposit as operating reserves and to explore whether to hire a local, part-time executive director who could attend events, handle logistics and assist as needed. The committee agreed to create a request for proposal for dissemination to interested candidates. Other issues being explored include a giving circle, ongoing sponsorship of specific events and scholarship-type ideas to benefit non-lawyers.

Throughout the year, CNYWBA continued its award-winning pro bono project at Vera House in which attorneys from the chapter and the Volunteer Lawyers' Program provide 45-minute legal consultations on Monday evenings to those who have experienced domestic and sexual violence.

In the fall, our chapter decided to fully endow our founding member Beatrice Krupkin's scholarship (requiring an infusion of roughly \$8,500 from our coffers) and transfer the funds to Syracuse University College of Law (Ms. Krupkin's alma mater) for disbursement. The transfer to the University also eliminated significant "handling charges" the chapter was paying annually for the administration of the scholarship, which were in danger of depleting the principal. By endowing the scholarship, the chapter has guaranteed that a \$1,000 scholarship can be awarded to a qualifying law school student every year in perpetuity. The endowment arrangement still allows members of the chapter to donate to the scholarship fund, which would eventually allow the annual scholarship amount to be increased.

On September 19<sup>th</sup>, chapter representatives attended and hosted a table at the Syracuse University College of Law's "Welcome to Syracuse" event to introduce our organization and encourage law students to take advantage of our free law student membership and become familiar with CNYWBA and WBASNY.

On September 26<sup>th</sup>, the Chapter hosted its 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Judicial Reception, traditionally its most successful and signature event. The event had been held at the Dinosaur BBQ for as many years as anyone can remember, but we were running out of space at that venue, so it was held at The Rail Line, a new up-and-coming event space in the city. Nevertheless, it was still catered by the Dinosaur, so no fans were disappointed despite the change of place. The event was well attended, and President Laurel Eveleigh publicly announced the judicial ratings assigned by the chapter's Judicial Review Committee to the assembled crowd.

On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Honorable Justice Deborah Karalunas hosted a "Chamber Chat" for our members entitled "If Not Now, When?" Justice Karalunas introduced the results from recent surveys assessing the participation of women in the court room and chambers in first chair or leadership roles. These polls highlight that the percentages of women assuming those roles have not markedly increased in the past thirty years, despite significant increases in women in the profession during that same time. At the conclusion of a spirited open discussion, the group decided that the message these statistics convey should more appropriately be directed to those who are in middle and upper management in firms, corporations and the judiciary. The group decided to pursue a follow-up program aimed at a broader audience and Justice Karalunas graciously agreed to help put together the program and secure panel members.

On October 29<sup>th</sup>, the Honorable Mary Keib Smith hosted a "Dinner with a Judge." These events, typically limited to four to five people, provide the opportunity for our members to interact with a judge on a personal basis over dinner. Our Dinners with a Judge have been extremely popular events and are always fully subscribed very quickly. Judge Keib Smith's dinner included discussion of the pending court consolidation proposal, which is of particular interest to many of our members.

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, CNYWBA co-sponsored a WBASNY event in Seneca Falls celebrating the 100-year anniversary of women's suffrage. The event included an afternoon program and tour of Women's Rights National Historical Park and dinner with a presentation by women's suffrage scholar and historian, Sally Roesch Wagner.

Also in November, the chapter sponsored dinner and a program as an adjunct to a multi-day CLE being presented by Vera House to train advocates who represent some of our most vulnerable neighbors. The program featured a delicious vegan dinner and an educational presentation on societal lenses and breaking down biases.

We hosted our annual Holiday Party on December 16<sup>th</sup> at Maxwell's. The event was free to our members if they made a suggested donation to Blessings in a Backpack, a program that provides food for food-insecure students who might not otherwise have anything to eat during the 65 weekend hours while they are not in school. The event was well attended, the food was great and the company was festive.

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, CNYWBA hosted a free CLE event at the federal courthouse that sprung out of Justice Karalunas's Chamber Chat, "If Not Now, When?" The focus was on the new presumptive ADR provisions in the Fifth Judicial District and included discussion (and a coveted Diversity, Inclusion and Elimination of Bias CLE credit) of how firms, companies and the judiciary could work to promote the women as lead counsel or first chair advocates in both ADR and the courts. The high-powered panel included Justice Karalunas as the moderator; Chief Judge of the District Court for the Northern District of New York, the Honorable Glenn Suddaby; U.S. Magistrate for the Northern District of New York, the Honorable Judge Therese Wiley Dancks; Chief Administrative Judge of the Supreme Court for the Fifth Judicial District, the Honorable James P. Murphy; and Supervising Judge of the Family Courts for the Fifth Judicial District, the Honorable Martha Walsh Hood. The program was informative and prompted lively discussion of various viewpoints on the important issue of promotion of women in the profession.

The chapter awarded its Emerging Leaders Award to Jillian McGuire, current Vice President and the 2020-2021 President Elect. The Rising Star Award will be presented to Sara Lowengard, a former WBASNY delegate, Chair of the Judicial Reception Committee and overall rock star board member over the last several years. The chapter's annual Karen DeCrow Award will be presented to the Honorable Therese Wiley Dancks, U. S. Magistrate Judge for the Northern District of New York, a former CNYWBA President and active chapter member for nearly thirty years.

Several of our events have had to be deferred or canceled this spring, given the state lockdown for virus quarantine. Our Fortieth Anniversary Celebration will be postponed until a date sometime in the fall. Our "Read Across America" event (held annually in March to celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday) had to be cancelled, but the chapter made our usual contribution of \$100.00 worth of books to the two participating schools' libraries. The Law and Medicine Dinner, usually held in April with doctors from the local women's medical association has been rescheduled for October 22<sup>nd</sup>. We are working on a virtual means to host an "Equal Means Equal" event in lieu of the in-person "popcorn and a movie" event we had planned.

Having been inspired by her attendance at the WBASNY January meeting, one of our newest board members proposed the establishment of a "New Lawyer's Section" of our chapter. The goal of the new section is to provide social and professional opportunities for new attorneys to help bridge the gap between law school and the legal profession. The group will include attorneys with 0-10 years of experience and focus on outreach to the local law schools to encourage new attorney participation upon graduation. Board members Taylor Baker, Samantha Riggi and Colleen Gibbons have agreed to co-chair this section going forward.

The chapter's Annual Meeting was held virtually on April 29<sup>th</sup> and the proposed 2020-2021 slate of officers was unanimously approved. The Central New York Women's Bar Association is looking forward to another great year under the new officers' leadership.

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## **Del-Chen-O**

Despite having to postpone many of our year end plans, Del-Chen-O had another successful year. In the fall we hosted our annual recognition dinner, honoring Cathleen Murphy, the Principal Law Clerk to Presiding Justice Garry. The event was well attended, including by members of the judiciary. We then hosted a holiday/new year party where our members learned to make specialty cocktails, paired with delicious appetizers. The Board sponsored a free event for Go Red Month, with members and friends at a yoga studio. After our members got their flow on, we indulged in wines paired with cheese. Our annual meeting was set to host the newest members of the Appellate Division Third Department Justice Molly Reynolds Fitzgerald and Justice John P. Colangelo to discuss their new roles. This meeting will be postponed until the fall. No longer the newest kid on the block, Del-Chen-O is proud of its growth and its continued success and leadership role in its community. We are proud to be members of WBASNY.

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## **Finger Lakes**

Finger Lakes Women's Bar Association (FLWBA) had an active 2019-2020 year despite COVID-19. We held a well-attended installation dinner in June 2019. In July, we co-hosted an evening social with the Tompkins County Bar Association in Ithaca. We opened our year with a network membership meeting where members were able to introduce themselves and learn more about each other. In October, there was a full-house for our Immigration CLE. Our member, Jacki Kelly-Widmer taught the CLE and Legal Assistance of Western New York (LawNY) co-sponsored the event. This CLE inspired people to get involved in Immigration issues. In November, FLWBA was one of four chapters sponsors for WBASNY's Seneca Falls Women's Suffrage tour and dinner. We also offered to contribute to the fees for up to six Cornell Law School students to attend. FLWBA gave a donation to Second Wind Cottages to recognize Veterans Day. In support of WBASNY's President, Deirdre Hay 's mission, we held a viewing and discussion of the film Equal Means Equal. Continuing our relationship with LawNY, we co-hosted an Unemployment Insurance Benefits CLE in December provided by our member, Kelly McGovern. We started off the new year with a membership meeting regarding Financial Planning. Our member, Cynthia Rivera, along with others from John G. Ullman & Associates, provided us with information on how to start/continue to plan for retirement, save for children's college, and/or pay for school loans.

We were planning for a larger showing of Equal Means Equal and Voting Registration event with Tompkins County League of Women Voters in Ithaca. We were also going to duplicate the event in Corning/Bath in conjunction with Bath Women's Association. We would like to reschedule similar events over the summer or early fall if permitted. We are looking to try to convert our planned activities to virtual platforms where we can.

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## Mid-Hudson

We are proud to present our 2019-20 Annual Report, which highlights the events and activities of our Chapter during the past fiscal year. This past year started out very active, but was abruptly interrupted in the Spring by the public health pandemic that affected all of us, and prevented us from continuing the momentum we had in terms of presenting in-person CLEs and networking events. We have had to refocus our attention to supporting our members by providing them with information about changes to our justice system and Court protocols during this unusual era. In that way, we have managed to remain relevant to our members and to provide a service that we had not previously anticipated.

We started the 2019-20 fiscal year by sending out a Survey to all of our members, so that we can understand how we can best serve our supporters. The survey asked about the type of events they are most interested in, and asked them to let us know what compelled them to join WBASNY and our Chapter. The results were synthesized into a spreadsheet, and shared with the Board. The majority of responses reinforced our understanding that long-term members were most interested in educational events and volunteer opportunities.

We also decided to update the process for selling tickets to events. In the past, we took reservations by emails and required attendees to send hard checks to our PO Box, or bring checks to the event. This year, we began accepting credit cards for events through Paypal, and then also began using the Eventbrite platform, which linked up with our Facebook page. This has not only increased participation, but simplified the record-keeping process and minimized the need to visit the bank to make check deposits.

Our events included:

On July 18, 2019, we joined with the Orange Sullivan Chapter for an outing to watch a Hudson Valley Renegades baseball game at Dutchess Stadium.

On September 25, 2019 – We held our Annual Membership Drive at The Ice House in Poughkeepsie, where we had a guest speaker, Cheryl Roberts, Esq., the Executive Director of the Greenburger Center for Social and Criminal Justice, which advocates for reforms to the criminal justice system.

On September 12, 2019, we presented a CLE focused on the jury selection process, which was led by long-time member and former ADA Jessica Segal, Esq. The CLE took place in the comfortable Board room at the Dutchess County Chamber of Commerce.

On October 20, 2019, we invited members to join our team and participate in the Breast Cancer walk at Woodbury Commons.

On November 15, 2019, we held a brown bag lunch with a judge, hosted by Hon. Sarah McGinty, newly-elected Ulster County Surrogate's Court Judge, in which we discussed new Surrogate's court procedures and best practices for appearing in Judge McGinty's courtroom.

On December 11, 2019, we held our Annual Holiday event at Garvan's Gastropub in New Paltz, Ulster County. At this event, we held our first awards ceremony, presenting a New Lawyer's Award to Alex Berke, Esq. of Berke-Weiss Law PLLC and an Emerging Leader award to Danielle Strauch, Esq. from VandeWater & VandeWater LLP. We also offered sponsorships which included a presentation at the event to describe the services that each sponsor offered. We were fortunate that seven companies and individuals stepped up as event sponsors, including five at the Gold level and two at the Silver level.

In January 2020, we prepared a nominations package to WBASNY nominating Danielle Strauch as a WBASNY Emerging Leader and nominating Alex Berke, Esq. for a New Lawyer Award.

On January 29, 2020, we hosted a CLE in Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County entitled LGBT Litigation in the United States Supreme Court. The CLE was presented by Stephen Bergstein, Esq. who was part of the Supreme Court litigation team in the case of Zarda v. Altitude Express, which is currently awaiting a decision.

On February 11, 2020, we held a brown bag lunch with a judge, hosted by Hon. Christi Acker, Dutchess County Supreme Court Justice, who is also a WBASNY member and long-time supporter.

On April 14, 2020, we held our Annual Meeting by Zoom, in which we updated our members on current events and future plans and held a vote on the new officers.

On April 2020, the Board has approved the start of a Lawyer Directory for referral purposes, containing contact information and practice areas of our members who wish to appear in the directory. We have created a questionnaire that will be distributed to member, to request information that will enable us to create the Directory. We hope to have this done in the upcoming month.

Throughout the year we have maintained a consistent Treasury balance.

Membership this year has been on the upswing, and we have *almost* reached 100 members.

Our Installation Dinner for the 2020-2021 year will be held on a date to be determined, which we hope will be in July or August 2020. The prescheduled date in June 2020 has been adjourned due to the pandemic.

We have had to adjourn several events, to be rescheduled at a future date, including a Bankruptcy CLE; the Earth Day volunteer cleanup activity; and other in-person events, such as “Bench Meets Bar”, Annual Meeting and Installation. However, as we become more adept at online platforms, such as Zoom, we hope to offer more electronic-based events, if necessary, in the upcoming year.

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## **Mid-York**

The Mid-York chapter of the Women’s Bar Association of the State of New York is a small upstate chapter that now covers three counties (Herkimer, Madison and Oneida) that have small populations and a vast region separating them. We currently have about 15 members. As a small chapter, we are focused on supporting each other and we have monthly luncheons/meetings that members attend when we are available. At our luncheons, we discuss what is happening at the State level of WBASNY and any “hot topics” such as legislation or upcoming events in our area or sister chapters that are near us. This year, our monthly luncheons happened in new places including lunch with a judge, graciously hosted by Hon. Julia Brouillette. We also sponsored a book signing by local author, Patricia Seidel, at the Barnes & Noble in Utica, NY.

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## **Nassau**

This year our association platform was “Empowered Women Empower Women.” This theme was present in everything we did and we enjoyed a successful year filled with informative programs, fun events, collaborations with other local bar associations, and fundraising for local and national fundraisers. Our membership drive was successful and we maintained our 4 WBASNY Delegates and proudly welcomed new members. Participation of our members was high as was enthusiasm of among our board members.

### **July**

We started off the year with a school supplies drive that benefitted the Mary Brennan Inn and the Safe Center Long Island. Collection of supplies and gift cards took place from July-August and the items were delivered the first week of August. Along with several bags of school supplies, hundreds of dollars in gift cards were donated.

On July 17, 2019 we held our first ever Wine and Style Networking Event. Approximately 25-30 of our members got together at Anastasia’s Salon in Garden City where everyone received a complimentary styling and enjoyed delicious food and drinks. We held several member registration incentives such as “the first 15 people to sign up and renew or join NCWBA receive a complimentary styling” and at the event anyone who joined or renewed their membership was entered into a raffle for a basket of beauty supplies. All that were in attendance either joined or renewed their membership.

## **August**

Our first Board meeting was held on August 2, 2019 at my home. I chose to hold the first meeting at my home as this was the way early Presidents of our Chapter held their first meeting – a barbecue at their home to kick off the year. We had a great time. Many past presidents were in attendance. Our more institutional members assisted with training the new board members. Spirits were high, many great ideas were shared and all were enthusiastic about the then upcoming year.

## **September**

On September 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> we celebrated “Constitution Day” by having several of our members do a book reading and play “Constitution games” in various schools in Nassau County. Both the students and our members had a great time.

On September 24, 2019 the NCWBA hosted its Annual Membership Cocktail Party and Salute to the Judiciary at the Nassau County Bar Association. The event was well-attended by members of the Judiciary from Supreme, County, Family, and District Courts, as well members, supporters and sponsors.

Our Vice President of Programs, Cherice Vanderhall, also arranged a group trip to the Dr. Oz show where members were able to participate as audience members of two tapings for the show.

On September 26, 2019, NCWBA members participated in a mentoring event with Hofstra Law School, entitled “Dinner with a Lawyer”. At this event, students were paired with lawyers and were able to discuss in a “less formal” setting their interests and aspirations.

## **October**

We kicked off the month by co-sponsoring an event with the Nassau County Criminal Court Bar Association entitled, “Meet the Candidates” night at the Davenport Press restaurant. At this event, members were able to network with one another. They also listened to short speeches from the candidates running for election in November of 2019.

In October, the NCWBA also co-sponsored an event in Nassau Supreme Court with the Long Island Hispanic Bar Association, Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association, and Nassau County Bar Association to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. The event recognized and celebrated the contributions made by and the important presence of Hispanic and Latino Americans in the United States. The event was well attended and everyone was able to enjoy the traditional instrumental music and vocals by local high school students. The traditional food was also delicious.

On October 19-20<sup>th</sup> NCWBA held its first ever Weekend of Cures where we participated in both Light the Night and the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk at Jones Beach. Together we raised over \$5,000 for the causes.

We also held a CLE through our Matrimonial Committee: “Detecting Deception at Trial and Throughout Litigation” presented by our Matrimonial Committee Co-Chair Jacqueline Harounian, Esq. and Private Investigator Lisa Ribacoff. The lunchtime CLE was very well attended.

On October 28, 2019, we partnered with the Safe Center Long Island to present a CLE on Domestic Violence in Matrimonial Cases, in addition to presenting myself, our Corresponding Secretary Veronica Irwin also presented. Also amongst the speakers was a survivor which provided a very important perspective.

## **November**

In honor of Veteran’s Day, we held a special CLE program: “Veteran’s Cultural Competency.” This was 1.5 credit CLE and was co-sponsored by the Nassau County Bar Association Veterans and Military Law Committee. Our very own Board Member Heather Kalachman coordinated this event.

We also paired up with our sister chapters Suffolk and Queens to host a day trip to the vineyards. We were very happy that members from the Brooklyn and Staten Island Chapters also joined us!

On November 12, 2019 the Nassau County Women's Bar Foundation held its annual Scholarship Luncheon, wherein deserving law school students were presented with scholarships. The key note speaker was Nassau County Executive, Laura Curran.

## **December**

On December 3, 2019, the NCWBA hosted its Annual Holiday Cocktail Party, which was once again a great success. We had over 135 people in attendance to enjoy the evening. Through the generosity and support of our members, sponsors and other supporters, we raised over \$12,000.00 for the Safe Center Long Island, benefitting domestic violence victims.

For the first time, our Board Member Faith Getz Rouso coordinated a gift card drive with the Nassau County Department of Social Services for teenaged children in the foster care system. This was a very successful drive as over 115 gift cards, each for \$25.00 were handed out at the DSS Annual Holiday Party.

## **January**

We kicked off the year with a very important movement - on January 12, 2020 we proudly joined local BAR Associations, political leaders, and residents of Nassau County in a March Against Anti-Semitism.

On January 15, 2020, the NCWBA had a General Membership Meeting. The meeting was well attended. Our Board Members Jacqueline Harounian and Faith Getz Rouso presented an informative CLE: "New Frontiers in Family Law and Parenting: Adoption, Surrogacy, fertility and Reproductive Technology."

## **February**

February was heart healthy month and we were proud to partner with Mineola Fit Body Boot Camp and offer our members a free Boot Camp Class – all who attended were given a free one week pass to return and attend more classes.

The NCWBA co-sponsored an event in Nassau Supreme Court with Amistad Long Island Black Bar Association, Long Island Hispanic Bar Association, and Nassau County Bar Association to celebrate Black History Month. The contributions of well deserving recipients were recognized and celebrated. The event was well attended and everyone enjoyed the program. This year the theme was "Our Journey to the Vote." We donated several picture boards that we created with various scenes from history chronicling the "Journey to the Vote." Our boards were admired by many and are now hanging in the Nassau County Family Court.

Also in February, our Diversity Committee, led by the Honorable Maxine Broderick and Solange Humphreys, S.M. joined the Long Island Hispanic Bar Association and the Nassau County Association in putting together a CLE: "Microaggressions in the Workplace." Our very own Vice President Cherice Vanderhall was a panelist and made us proud with the wealth of knowledge and experience she brought to the panel.

## **March**

On March 1, 2020 our chapter for the first time participated in "Cycle for Survival." It was a great team building experience. We raised over \$2,000.00 for rare cancer research and did relay-style spin classes alternating our riders on three different exercise bikes.

On March 2, 2020 we were invited to give remarks at the opening of the exhibit entitled, "Cecelia Goetz: The Aggressive War Chief of Nuremberg" at the Nassau County Court, Rotunda. Cecelia Goetz was Native New Yorker, and the only female prosecutor to deliver an opening statement at the Nuremberg Trials. She redefined a woman's role in the courtroom on the international stage. Her dedication to her work earned her the reputation of "*Aggressive War Chief*".

On March 3, 2020, the NCWBA held its Meeting of the Association - Nominations. The event was well-attended and turned out to be a great opportunity for more seasoned members of the NCWBA to meet and get to know newer members. We also held a CLE that evening: "Cybersecurity: Are you and your firm compliant? A checklist for lawyers."

The NCWBA and Nassau County Bar Association was set to co-host its annual “Dressed to a Tea”, on March 26, 2020 but due to the Covoid-19 pandemic we have rescheduled this event to a date which has yet to be determined (we anticipate Spring 2021).

### April

In April we continued to adapt to our new office and courtroom surroundings. We kept our members informed with almost daily updates and by circulating the latest orders and Court Memos. We also held our annual meeting on Zoom which was well attended and voted in our new Officers and Board.

### May

We are closing out the year with a final Board Meeting, continued updates for our members and some fun activities. This month we are looking forward to hosting a family Zumba program on Zoom and also a cooking class!

### The Mary Brennan Inn

The NCWBA continued participation in the monthly pro bono clinic at the INN, led by our Past President Irene Villacci, Vice President Lisa Cairo and Treasurer Allyson Burger. The INN is a not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization, which provides a broad variety of essential services to assist those challenged by hunger, homelessness and profound poverty. They partner with those in need in a dignified and respectful manner to help them achieve self-sufficiency.

### Closing

This year, we worked really hard and achieved many great successes. The strength and comradery of our Association never shined brighter than it did in the face of the global pandemic where our Association came together to support each other, to provide information and to continue our mission.

It has been my pleasure and my honor to serve my Chapter and to serve on the Executive Committee of WBASNY. I treasure the friendships that I am leaving with and look forward to continuing to serve my chapter in the future. To all the Officers, Directors, Delegates, Committee Chairs, and Members – I am truly humbled by your support and I thank you for a wonderful year. Congratulations to both the WBASNY and the NCWBA incoming President, Officers, Directors, and Delegates who I know will continue our mission and make us proud!

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## **New York**

As we celebrate our 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, I am proud to report that the **New York Women's Bar Association** ("New York Chapter") had a special, albeit unprecedented year. Up until March, 2020 our Association hosted several of our signature events, such as our 2019 Annual Awards and Installation Dinner, Membership Reception and Judiciary Reception, as well provided over 20 free CLE credits for our members, all of which are popular draws for lawyers, judges and court personnel.

Since March 13, 2020 we have experienced the complete shutdown of our City—the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, and State, resulting in the closure the Courts, non-essential businesses, disruptions to our practices, and most tragically, the loss of thousands of lives. Our members have displayed remarkable perseverance and support for our colleagues, friends and family afflicted with the virus and its complications. We have remained in touch, through emails, telephone calls and Zoom, with each other and have tried, as best as is possible to retain the spirit, albeit virtually, of all our Chapter has to offer our members. We have already presented four CLE programs on web platforms on topics highly relevant to the times—such as if not the actual format of. Several of our members have held CLE programs on web platforms, including Nicole Hyland’s program entitled “Practicing Law in a Pandemic: Remote Lawyering in the Age of COVID-19”.

As many of you know from the last WBASNY board meeting, the NYWBA Committee Chairs rose to the occasion and in conjunction with our Newsletter Committee and Executive Director published the “Pandemic Newsletter” which remains available on our website. This Newsletter is a reminder of our Chapter’s fortitude and resilience in times of crises. We held our Annual Meeting via teleconferencing and while we had initially postponed our Annual Awards and Installation Ceremony to September, we will hold it as planned on June 9, 2020 on Zoom and issue our Journal to commemorate this wonderful event. Our Incoming President, Amanda B. Norejko, Officers and Directors will be sworn in by Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin and I will be privilege to present the Doris S. Hoffman Service Award to Michael W. Appelbaum, a long-standing member of NYWBA who chaired some of more integral committees such as the Judiciary, Membership and Dinner Committees.

In keeping with past practices, this report contains a summary of what our Chapter did before the Pandemic; however, I cannot help but wonder when, or even whether we will be able to host our signature events that so many of our members, other attorneys in the City, along with Judges and Court personnel have come to enjoy. While some of our activities, such as our leading CLE programs can be moved to web platforms, we will certainly suffer from the separateness such programs require; the comradery that exists will be tested; and the mentoring that our events inspire will be challenged. As many of our members bore personal witness to in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attack in our City, changes had to be made that seemed inconceivable we could ever adjust to—tighter building security measures, stanchions and concrete blocks circling many of our government, commercial and even residential buildings; officers with specially trained dogs along with armed National Guard soldiers patrolling our train stations; and bag searches at the theatre as well as metal detectors at our local sports arenas.

Not surprisingly, we did adjust and these and many other changes are now part of our fabric of everyday life here. What the post-COVID-19 changes will be is anyone’s guess at this time but surely there will need to be changes made in our Chapter such that we can retain our relevance for our members and legal community without sacrificing the benefits membership in our Chapter brings.

I am confident that our incoming President, Amanda B. Norejko, and her Officers as well as our Board of Directors will tackle these issues with the creative energy our predecessors used after Hurricane Sandy, September 11 and the Great Recession to name just a few of our challenges.

- Our NYWBA Annual Awards and Installation Dinner was held at Three-sixty Degrees (360°) in Tribeca on June 13, 2019. At the Annual Dinner:
  - ❖ We presented the **President’s Special Award to Honorable Judy Harris Kluger**, Executive Director of Sanctuary for Families Inc., and prior to that a New York State Supreme Court Judge.
  - ❖ We presented the **Joan L. Ellenbogen Award to Honorable Laura E. Drager**, an Acting Supreme Court Justice of the New York State Supreme Court presiding over matrimonial cases since 1999 and a member of the OCA Matrimonial Practice Advisory and Rules Committee.
  - ❖ We presented the **First Betty Weinberg Ellerin Award of Excellence to Justice Betty Weinberg Ellerin**, currently Senior Counsel with the firm of Alston & Bird, retired from the bench on December 31, 2005 after service as a Justice of the Appellate Division, First Department for over 20 years.
  - ❖ We installed the incoming NYWBA Officers (2019-2020), NYWBA Directors, and NYWBA members of the WBASNY Board of Directors (2019-2020).
  - ❖ We held a Silent Auction and Raffle to benefit the NYWBA Foundation and its Grant Programs (including the Betty Weinberg Ellerin Fund).
- Our annual “*Martha E. Gifford Summer Program*” for summer associates and interns, law students, law school graduates awaiting admission, and attorneys in their first few years of practice, entitled “***What It’s REALLY Like to Practice Law in New York City as a Woman,***” was held July 11, 2019.
- The annual **NYWBA Membership Reception** took place on September 16, 2019. This is free for members and prospective members. Notably, we used the Reception to bring attention to Period Poverty and solicited donations for the Manhattan Family Justice Center, an organization that supports women who are victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. Blank Rome hosted this program at their new offices in Times Square.
- Our annual **Judiciary Reception** Honoring Newly Elected, Re-Elected and Newly Appointed Judges in New York County at the Yale Club in February 25, 2020.
- NYWBA has an excellent history of maintaining sound financial footing with our steady membership numbers along with the events mentioned above that enable us to not simply cover the costs but earn additional funds. Our major expenses for 2019-2020 included payments to our Executive Director, the cost of our Annual Award

and Installation Dinner, membership dues to WBASNY, and the costs for our annual Judicial and Membership Receptions. We also continue to manage the endowment bequest to the NYWBA by our late Founder and Past President Hon. Florence Perlow Shientag, and we use the proceeds from this endowment to underwrite the costs of providing free CLE to members.

- As of April 9, 2019, NYWBA had 675 members. Although we lost one delegate to the WBASNY Board we are immensely proud of the fact that we had **over 180 new members**. During this time of reduced bar association membership across the State of New York, NYWBA's ability to attract new members is a testament to our strength and appeal to women in the profession—particularly in our crowded city with numerous competing bar associations.

We thank the outgoing President, Deidre L. Hay (2019-2020) and all of the WBASNY Officers for their support. We congratulate and wish the best to incoming WBASNY President Joy A. Thompson, and her sister officers, including Deborah G. Rosenthal, a past NYWBA President, who will be a Vice President. We look forward to working with everyone in the coming year. In so doing, we remember the friends, family and colleagues we have lost and together we will remain strong and committed to our goals of strengthening women in the legal profession and our community in the face of the COVID-19.

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## **Orange-Sullivan**

The Women's Bar Association of Orange and Sullivan Counties has 131 members. We began our year with our Membership Kickoff at Pamela's on the Hudson. This year, we have increased our presence on social media. Eve Lincoln has done an outstanding job keeping our membership up-to-date on our facebook page and Michele Babcock has revamped our website and maintains our calendar.

### **Lunch with a Judge**

We began our "Lunch with a Judge" series this year by hosting a luncheon for the Honorable Craig Brown, Orange County Court Judge and Acting Surrogate. We also hosted luncheons for the Honorable Robert Onofry, Supreme Court Judge; the Honorable Sandra Sciortino, Supreme Court Judge; the Honorable Timothy McElduff, newly-elected Orange County Surrogate; and the Honorable Steven Milligram, newly-elected Supreme Court Judge. During these luncheons, the Judges inform our members about their courtroom practices and "pet peeves." Sadly, Judge Milligram, who was a long-standing member of our chapter, recently passed away from the coronavirus.

### **Continuing Legal Education**

We presented the following CLEs: Recent Updates to New York State Employment Law, presented at a business breakfast by Alexandra Berke, Esq.; The Pregnancy Project - Workplace Rights for the Modern Mom, presented by Alexandra Berke, Esq; and Uncontested Divorce: Get it Right the First Time, presented by our member Amy Littman. Our annual Ethics Update, presented by our member Sarah Jo Hamilton, has been postponed to later this year.

### **Book Club and Mentoring**

Our Book Club, led by Kelly Pressler, with assistance from Amanda Tarallo, meets on a monthly basis at local restaurants and members' homes and remains very popular with our members. Recently, the Book Club has been meeting via Zoom.

Our Mentoring group, led by Christina Randazzo, also meets on a monthly basis and has been extremely supportive during this difficult time. Mentoring is also continuing to meet by Zoom.

### **Fundraising/Philanthropy**

Our Annual Golf Outing, held in September at Winding Hills Golf Course, was chaired by Kelly Pressler and Michele Babcock. Despite torrential rain, this outing raised over \$9,000.00 for our chapter. For those who did not want to play golf, the Honorable Robert Onofry was our "guest pro" and offered lessons for the novices. For the third time, the winning foursome was the Honorable Anthony Kane, the Honorable Mark Meddaugh, Danielle Jose-Decker, Esq., and Scott Russell, Esq.

Every year, our chapter sponsors the "WBASNY Walkers" for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk at Woodbury Commons. This year, we raised \$2,200.00 for breast cancer research.

For the past several years, our chapter has sponsored an Attorney Build Day for Habitat for Humanity. This year, the build day was held in conjunction with Habitat's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a celebration for donating their 100<sup>th</sup> home in Newburgh, New York. Several of our members, and two children of a member, participated in the build day.

During the holidays, our chapter "adopted" two families in Orange County through the Orange County Youth Bureau and two families in Sullivan County through Safe Homes. The families have children ranging from 4 months old to 15 years old. On behalf of our chapter, Kelly Pressler purchased numerous items of clothing, outerwear, toys, books, candies and other gifts for each family.

At our annual Holiday Party, we collected items to be donated to the Children's Center at the Orange County Courthouse including diapers, wipes, and toys.

Two of our members, Danielle Jose-Decker and Meagan Galligan, participated in Read Across America Day at the Benjamin Cosor Elementary School in Fallsburg, New York.

Recently, our chapter made a donation to Meals for our Medical Warriors that provided 40 meals for the OR staff at Orange Regional Medical Center.

### **Judicial Screening**

Our Judicial Screening Committee, chaired by Michele Ellerin, screened five candidates for Supreme Court Justice in the Ninth Judicial District, two candidates for Orange County Surrogate, and two candidates for Sullivan County Court for the November 2019 election. The ratings of the Screening Committee were issued to the local media in a press release.

### **Awards**

Our member Karen Riley was awarded the WBASNY Juvenile Justice Award. We are hopeful that Karen will receive this award at a future WBASNY event. Karen is the Chief Attorney/Executive Director of the Children's Rights Society for Orange County, representing children in the Orange County Family Court.

Our chapter awards are given at our Annual Dinner, held in April each year. This year, we cancelled that event and plan to present the awards at a future event. The award recipients are: Outstanding New Attorney - Christina Randazzo; Public Interest Attorney - Gillian Menza; Distinguished Attorney - Anne Hunter

For Law Day each year, our chapter presents the Liberty Bell award at a ceremony that is held in conjunction with the Orange County Bar Association. The theme for this year's Law Day was "Your Vote, Your Voice, Our Democracy: The 19th Amendment at 100." We planned to honor our member and past president Risa S. Sugarman with this award. Risa serves as the Chief Enforcement Counsel, Division of Election Law Enforcement for the New York State Board of Elections. Law Day was cancelled for this year and it is uncertain whether the award will be presented to Risa at a future Law Day event or at one of our future chapter events.

Kelly Pressler was recognized as our chapter's Emerging Leader for WBASNY.

### **Membership Events**

We have a Judicial Reception each November, which is always well attended by the judiciary from Orange and Sullivan Counties.

Each year, in January, we have a "Beat the Blues" event. This year's event was a brunch and mini spa day organized by Eve Lincoln. We had mini facials, express manicures, and hand paraffin treatments, along with yoga and neck and shoulder massages. We got great feedback and may have a similar event in the future.

We also have a Family Fun event in the wintertime that is geared toward children. We rented lanes at Quinzz Pinz for an afternoon of bowling and pizza. There was also an arcade for kids of all ages.

Our Installation Dinner has been postponed. We are planning a virtual installation for our incoming Board members.

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## Queens

The Queens County Women's Bar Association had a great year of robust programming and successful events as seen below.

*August 1, 2019* - Multi Bar Cruise on the Skyline Princess  
*August 6, 2019* - Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Kickoff Event  
*August 10, 2019* - QCWBA Summer Board Meeting at The Douglaston Club  
*September 12, 2019* - QCWBA New Member Reception – Rooftop at Bourbon St.  
*September 21, 2019* - WBASNY Board Meeting in NYC  
*September 22, 2019* - Excursion to Sculpture Exhibit at Old Westbury Gardens and Brunch  
*October 3, 2019* - Private Law Committee Breakfast Round Table  
*October 4, 2019* - Voter Registration Drive at Parson/Archer Subway Hub  
*October 7, 2019* - Voter Registration Drive at Far Rockaway/Mott Ave Subway Hub  
*October 15, 2019* - Presumptive ADR Discussion Presented by Hon. George Silver & Hon. Anthony Cannataro  
Cosponsor Queens County Bar & Columbia Lawyer Association  
*October 20, 2019* - Making Strides Breast Cancer Walk at Flushing Meadows Park  
*October 29, 2019* - CLE Recent Significant Decision and Development from our Highest Appellate Courts  
*November 2, 2019* - Annual Networking at the Wineries Cosponsors Nassau Court Women's Bar Association and Suffolk County Women's Bar Association  
*November 7, 2019* - Private Law Committee Breakfast Round Talk  
*November 15-16, 2019* - WBASNY Board Meeting in Seneca Falls and Syracuse  
*November 19, 2019* - Judiciary Night at the Helen Marshall Atrium Keynote and Judicial Honoree Hon. Jeremy Weinstein  
*December 9, 2019* - QCWBA Literary Night at Kew & Willow Bookstore  
*December 12, 2019* - Joint Bar Association Holiday Party  
*January 8, 2020* - QCWBA Board Meeting at Merc Restaurant  
*January 29, 2020* - A Special Martin Luther King Jr. Day Tribute: Cosponsor Brandeis Association and Macon B Allen Bar Association  
*February 9, 2020* - Private Law Committee Breakfast Round Table  
*February 28, 2020* - A Collection of African Heritage Program at the Queens Museum  
*April 30, 2020* - QCWBA Annual Meeting and Elections

## Upcoming Events

*June 23, 2020* - Virtual Installation of Officers

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## Rochester

Despite the extremely challenging circumstances the COVID-19 pandemic has presented us with since March 2020, and some of the difficult decisions we've had to make as a result thereof, GRAWA has had a very successful year.

Last June, our newly installed Board of Directors started off the new Bar year by having a fun and informative "retreat" at our Treasurer Hinna Upal's lovely home. During our retreat, Board members had a pot luck dinner, got to know each other better by sharing some personal fun facts, did a team building exercise that involved spaghetti and marshmallows (yes, you read that correctly!), and engaged in our first Board meeting of the year. Our retreat set the tone – and laid out a Blue Print – for a successful year to come.

I'd like to highlight some of the wonderful programs and events that we held this past Bar year. As you're about to read, GRAWA was busy every month, providing events and resources to our members.

### June:

- We kicked off the Bar year with the Family & Careers Committee's Summer Picnic. It was a great event and a nice way to start the Bar year by bringing our members' families together for a fun evening and cookout at a local park.
- Later in June, our Diversity Committee hosted the Diversity Clerks Wine Cruise. We enjoyed a lovely evening aboard the Sam Patch Tour Boat – it was a great way to meet the Clerks from the Diversity Clerkship Program who were in Rochester last summer.

**July:**

- GRAWA held its inaugural “Renew with a Brew” event at Swiftwater Brewing Company! This was an opportunity for members to renew their GRAWA memberships for the new Bar year, while enjoying a delicious craft beer with fellow GRAWA members. It was a well-attended event and we successfully engaged several new members.

**September:**

- GRAWA participated in the Suffragist City Parade – several members marched proudly throughout downtown, holding our GRAWA banner.
- Later in September we held our annual Open House and new member reception at the lovely new office space at Woods Oviatt. The reception drew a huge crowd, our Committee Chairpersons did a fantastic job of highlighting their respective committees and obtaining new members for their committees, and it was wonderful to meet and introduce our new members who were in attendance.

**October:**

- In early October, our Board of Directors participated in an Implicit Bias Training program, which was presented by GRAWA member Dr. Kate Cerulli. This was the first time GRAWA’s Board of Directors took implicit bias training as a Board, and it is now in our Strategic Plan to continue giving implicit bias training each year for each new Board of Directors.
- Also in early October, our Judicial Evaluation Committee held its Judicial Candidates Luncheon. This important luncheon gave members the opportunity to ask questions to a panel of judicial candidates about their qualifications, plans, and goals if elected. We received good feedback on the event, as it was enjoyed by both the judicial candidates and the members who attended.
- Additionally in early October, our CLE committee partnered with the MCBA to put on our first CLE of the year: “Recognizing Implicit Bias and MicroAggression,” which included certain GRAWA members as speakers on the panel.
- Later in October, our Family & Careers Committee participated in a fun Halloween event, namely the AI Sigl walkabout at Eastview Mall. It was such a treat to see our members’ children in their Halloween costumes trick or treating around the mall!

**November:**

- Our Women’s Health Committee hosted its first complimentary Yoga class with complimentary smoothies and juices afterwards. This was the first of many wonderful complimentary classes that the Women’s Health Committee held this past year – throughout the year, they held yoga classes, a barre class, spin class, mindfulness and stress relief class, and a Virtual Yoga class via Zoom conference during COVID-19.
- In mid-November, GRAWA joined WBASNY in Seneca Falls to Celebrate Women’s Suffrage, and was one of the sponsors of the dinner event that was held at the event. A good time was had by all who attended.

**December:**

- In early December, our Newly Admitted Women Attorneys Committee (a.k.a. “NAWA”) held a Holiday Happy Hour at Native. It was a really nice event with drinks and appetizers.
- GRAWA’s Family & Careers Committee also held a holiday luncheon, and participated in an “Adopt a Family -- Gift Giving” opportunity through the YWCA, which helped provide a wonderful holiday to a family in need here in our community.
- In mid-December, GRAWA’s Annual Holiday Party was held at Past President – and current Nominating Chairperson – Denine Carr’s beautiful home. Denine generously – and bravely – opened up her home again to GRAWA, for the second year in a row, for the holiday party. The party was packed as usual and everyone had a fantastic time!

**January:**

- In early January, GRAWA attended the Fourth Department Swearing In Ceremony, where we spread the word about GRAWA and attempted to recruit new admittees.
- On Martin Luther King, Jr Day: GRAWA’s Diversity Committee offered two Martin Luther King Day of Service volunteering opportunities. The first event gave members the opportunity to serve breakfast at the Samaritan House Crisis Center. The second event assisted the Junior League of Rochester Diaper Bank, by wrapping diapers into packages for distribution to families in need. Both of these special volunteer service opportunities were very well attended, members enjoyed participating, we helped important organizations, and GRAWA received really positive feedback and we were even featured on the news!

**February:** February was an extremely busy month for GRAWA! We had numerous events and programs, including:

- NAWA Lunch Program with the Hon. Ann Pfeiffer re: the “Early Years of Practice.”
- NAWA Galentine’s Day Happy Hour at TRATA restaurant.
- CLE Committee hosted the CLE: “The Suffrage Struggle in New York: Why It Took So Long” with a networking reception afterwards. The Hon. Richard A. Dollinger presented the CLE. Very well attended and really good feedback.

- Women’s Connections Committee organized the “Girl Scouts Day at the Courts.” The troop toured the Halls of Justice and did a mock trial exercise – they also toured the Monroe County Crime Lab
- Women’s Health Committee: Organized a Mindfulness and Stress Relief class at the beginning of the month, and put on our annual “GO RED” event at the Vesper at the end of the month. GO Red was a big success which raised over \$800 for the American Heart Association.
- GRAWA also partnered with the University of Rochester, the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House, and AAUW for a Pre-Concert Reception of the February 8<sup>th</sup> Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Concert “The Mother of Us All” (which was about Susan B. Anthony).

**March:** Thank Goodness February was busy and active because life as we know it began to unravel very quickly and very seriously in March due to COVID-19.

- Luckily, at the very beginning of the month, before things started to spiral due to the coronavirus, the CLE Committee held a wonderful CLE: “Cultural Humility and Competence: Serving Your Clients Better,” which was presented by GRAWA member & current WBASNY Recording Secretary Heather Neu.
- Our Family & Careers Committee also held a Committee Lunch at GRAPPA, which I believe was the last in-person event or meeting that GRAWA has been able to hold during this Bar year, as a result of COVID-19.

**April:** In April, despite the challenges of COVID-19, GRAWA was still operating, providing resources and programs to our members. Specifically:

- The Women’s Health Committee held a Virtual Yoga class.
- The Family & Careers Committee held a Virtual Happy Hour.
- GRAWA’s Annual Meeting was held via Zoom conference – it was very well attended.

Aside from the highlights above, GRAWA’s various committees held monthly meetings all year long. Above was a sampling of the wonderful programs and events GRAWA held throughout the year.

WBASNY:

- Throughout the year, GRAWA’s officers and Delegates participated in WBASNY’s Committee and Board meetings. We attended WBASNY meetings in New York City in September and January, in Syracuse in November, and participated on a state-wide Zoom Board meeting in March. Two of our members currently serve as WBASNY Officers – Greta Kolcon is WBASNY’s immediate past president, and Heather Neu is Recording Secretary. We also have several other GRAWA members who Co-Chair WBASNY’s state-wide committees. Specifically:
  - Access to Justice: Leigh Ann Chute
  - Permanent Convention: Katie Courtney
  - Wellness: Kim Duguay
  - Labor & Employment Law: Carey Ann Denefrio
  - Nominations: Hon. Marilyn O’Connor

GRAWA has a strong voice and presence at the state-wide level. GRAWA enjoys a very good relationship with our WBASNY sisters, and we look forward to connecting with them throughout the year.

As we all began to work from home and self-quarantine this past March, GRAWA made the tough decision to cancel certain upcoming events, such as the Women’s Connections Trailblazer Lunch, the Day 2 of Girl Scouts Day at the Courts, our in-person Annual Meeting, our inaugural Sweet Success event which was to be held at Native to celebrate and toast the many successes of our members this past Bar year, as well as to postpone our Installation Dinner to a date to be determined. Though our ability to gather in-person for events, meetings and programs has been temporarily halted, GRAWA is still up and running, our Board and Committees have been meeting through Zoom conferences, we are still available to our members, and still looking for ways to provide benefits and resources. GRAWA’s website has recently been updated to provide a COVID-19 resource page should anyone want to quickly access recent Executive Orders, various court rules, etc.

As discussed above, throughout the year GRAWA provided numerous events, programs, CLEs, and important resources and benefits to our members. Our Board of Directors and Committee Co-Chairs worked hard all year to provide valuable programs and resources to enhance our members’ lives. I’m so grateful for the hard-working and dedicated Board members and Committee Chairs I’ve had the pleasure of working with all year. I’m proud of the things GRAWA accomplished this year. It has been a privilege to work alongside my wonderful colleagues at GRAWA, as well as my strong and accomplished sister leaders at WBASNY. It has been a pleasure and an honor leading GRAWA as President this past year, and I’m so grateful to have had this opportunity.

## Rockland

This year was a busy and exciting year for the Rockland chapter. We kicked off our first board meeting in August at a beautiful dinner which was graciously hosted by Irene Graff and Eric Thorsen. At this meeting we planned our annual events and meetings. This event is a great opportunity for everyone to get together as summer is ending and catch up and discuss in more detail our Board's goals for the upcoming year.

One of our biggest accomplishments this year was the fine tuning of our web site. We want our site to empower women while providing information about our board members, upcoming events, important legislation as well as a link to WBASNY's page and information. It was a challenge to keep up with member contact information changes and it is still a work in progress but it is working. Also, when the pandemic hit we posted Court updates as well as press releases from the Governor and our County Health Department which many people, both members and nonmembers, seem to really appreciate.

This year was filled with great events. We hosted numerous Continuing Legal Education Seminars both independently and in conjunction with the Rockland County Bar Association and the Center for Safety & Change. We also partnered with the Rockland County Legal Aid Society and the Anti Trafficking Task Force. In December we celebrated the holiday season with our annual Holiday Party.

In January we hosted a CLE entitled Marriage, Divorce and the Family Business as well as our annual Judicial Reception, both events had a great turn out!

In May we celebrated Law Day remotely, which this year's theme was a celebration of the anniversary of women's right to vote. Each year we present a \$1,000 scholarship for the best essay submitted by a Rockland County public high school student and this year the award went to Rita Kohout, a brilliant and inspiring future woman lawyer and senior at North Rockland High School. We also gave all other applicants (there were 7) a \$100 scholarship each for their efforts during this difficult time of remote learning.

As our year comes to a close, we are preparing for our Annual Installation Dinner which will hopefully virtually be held on June 18th. This year we had planned to honor Senior Rockland Judge Robert Berliner as the recipient of our Belle Mayer Zeck Award. We hope to honor Judge Berliner later in the year when we can gather to celebrate.

In closing, it has been another great year for building friendships, donating to various organizations and causes, and celebrating the RCWBA!

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## Staten Island

### **Swearing in of the Officers and Board of Directors 2019-2020 with a luncheon reception- June 14, 2019**

Officers were sworn in by Surrogate Matthew Titone in the ceremonial Surrogate's Court with the court officer color guard and God Bless America being performed to commence the ceremony. A luncheon reception followed in the courthouse. Judges, Dignitaries, Colleagues, Family and Friends were in attendance. A good time was had by all. There were over 150 people in attendance.

### **Annual Membership Mixer- September 24, 2019 at Bocelli's Restaurant**

An opportunity for old and new members to attend a cocktail reception and mingle. A meet and greet for all members giving them the opportunity to join or renew their membership. There were over 40 members in attendance which ultimately allowed us to continue our membership of more than 100 members and maintain 2 WBASNY delegates.

### **Breast Cancer Awareness Breakfast- October 8, 2019 at Supreme Court Richmond County**

Annual Breakfast in honor of breast cancer awareness month. We had over 40 people in attendance and our guest speaker was Tihesha Wilson, MD Chief of Breast Surgery at Richmond University Medical Center.

### **American Cancer Society Breast Cancer Walk on October 20, 2019 at Midland Beach**

Annual Breast Cancer walk for "Team Legally Pink." We made a banner and wore team t-shirts for the walk. We had a record high 16 people walking led by the Honorable Barbara I. Panepinto. We raised over \$3,500.00 for the cause, a team record.

**CSI Lifetime Achievement Awards Ceremony Honoring Yolanda Rudich-Past President on October 24, 2019 at the College of Staten Island**

We were co-sponsors of this event and had an opportunity to meet students from the internship program in the legal studies department that we would be mentoring in the various Courts in Staten Island.

**Meditation Program- Guided Meditation For Health and Healing on October 29, 2019- Snug Harbor Cultural Center**

A Meditation and Yoga program led by Denise Nizzare from NLP Center of NY Hypnosis and Meditation Leader and Yoga certified instructor. We were taught to relax using breathing exercises, Yoga, and meditation to combat the stresses involved for attorneys and balancing a family life.

**Centennial Celebration and dedication of the Supreme Court Richmond County located at 18 Richmond Terrace, SI, NY on November 1, 2019 located at the Courthouse.**

Ceremony led by Chief Justice Janet DiFiore and the other Chief Judges to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Supreme Court building. The Bar Associations of Richmond County all co-sponsored the ceremony and were part of the planning for the celebration. It was a whose who in the Court system as well as Richmond County.

**Free Mammogram Van Sponsored by SIWBA and JALBCA- November 6, 2019**

The van was parked in front of the Supreme Court at 18 Richmond Terrace giving free mammograms for anyone who wanted to be tested. The van helped diagnosis a few participants who were able to get treatment.

**100th Anniversary of the Suffragette movement presented by the New York State Bar Association with a luncheon sponsored by SIWBA- November 18, 2019.**

It was a presentation on the movement that was given by the NYSBA with a travelling exhibit that remained on display in the court house from the end of October through November for tourists and court personnel to see.

**CLE on DWI Matters and New Bail Reform Law on November 25, 2020 at Bocelli's Restaurant**

The CLE was given by Criminal Court Judge the Honorable Mario Mattei and Former Prosecutor and Civil Court Judge Elect Matthew Blum, The Judges spoke about how to handle a case when a client has a DWI issue from the initial call to the prosecution and the new bail reform laws for criminal matters that were going into effect at the beginning of the new year.

**Our Annual Judicial Gala honoring Supervising Judge of the Family Court Helene Sacco on December 3, 2019 at the Hilton Garden Inn**

SIWBA had an incredible gala with over 40 Judges present including the supervising Judges of the Family Court from all 5 boroughs as well as some other supervising Judges from other Counties in the State of New York including the Honorable Jeanette Ruiz, Supervising Judge for the entire City of New York. There were over 200 people in attendance and representatives from all the local bar associations in Richmond County. As part of this event we also always do a toys for tots toy drive for children in the military and this year we collected toys prior to gala and a week after the gala for the children. We also invited two members from the military to attend the event as our guests as well as made a presentation to them of the toys that were collected for the children. This is our big event every year and we are known for kicking off the holiday season for the Courts in Richmond County with this gala.

**Wine and Wellness Event for Women's Heart Health Month held at the Vino Da Vino Winery in SI, NY on February 25, 2020**

This is our annual wine tasting event at the SI winery that we do every year to promote Women's heart health month. Our own resident Meditation and Yoga instructor Denise Nizzare did a short meditation program and taught us breathing exercises to help relax. It is a causal event which gives the members and their families an opportunity to mix and mingle.

**Voter Registration Drive at the College of Staten Island on March 16, 2020**

Event done in conjunction with the legal studies program and Professor Michael Paris to help boost voter registration among young voters headed by our young lawyers committee. 16 new registrants were signed up during the event and many students took pamphlets home to sign up online. It was a successful events for our young lawyers committee

### **CLE on Ethics and Civility in the Courtroom on March 12, 2020 at Bocelli's Restaurant**

This was a CLE given by Deborah Scalise, Esq. and the Hon. Barbara I. Panepinto. This was our last event for the year because then everything closed down for the coronavirus pandemic. We contemplated cancelling but went through with it with a smaller attendance than usual but the event was successful because of caliber of our speakers. The participants learned how to deal with Ethical dilemmas as lawyers, updates in ethics decisions and proper attorney behavior and conduct in the courtroom.

### **The annual meeting and 40th Anniversary celebration on April 23, 2020 at Casabelvedere**

This was cancelled due to the pandemic. We hope to reschedule it sometime in September but are waiting to see what happens to make sure that it is safe to have the event. The annual meeting did take place by Zoom on April 23, 2020 so the new slate of officers could be voted on and announced. The WBASNY and SIWBA slates were voted on unanimously by the members. We had enough people sign in so that we had the required number of votes and the new SIWBA officers and board members were introduced during the Zoom meeting. It went well under the circumstances.

An event in April that was cancelled because of pandemic that will be held once allowed will be a Family bowling fund raising day that is being organized by the young lawyers committee.

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## **Suffolk**

Our Focus this year – Rebuilding and Reconnecting to our “Why”.

The SCWBA has lost many members over the past few years, so we agreed that this year would be about going back to basics and seeing what our membership wanted and why our members joined or didn't re-join. We focused more on what we could give the membership. We are pleased to report that we were able to increase the membership and retain our delegates to WBASNY. Knowing that cost is a factor to many of our members, we also concentrated on obtaining sponsorships to keep the cost of the programs low and to bring much needed funds into the treasury. In addition, over the past few years, many of our programs had been operated at a loss. We are pleased to report that we were able to break even or even had extra sponsorship dollars from each program so we were able to give back to the community through various sponsorships and programs.

Installation Dinner

Our annual Installation Dinner and Judiciary Night was held on June 10, 2019, where the new board and officers were installed. Surrogate Theresa Whelan installed the officers and directors, and gave the key note speech.

### **Monthly Networking Luncheons**

Our Co-Chairs of the Networking Luncheon Committee, Pamela Greene and Lisa Pomerantz, put together many terrific programs for our monthly luncheon, which were mostly well attended. The topics ranged from practice development to financial matters affecting the attorney and/or their clients. Several programs were underwritten by Gail Hollingsworth of Prudential. On February 5, 2020, we hosted Professor Irene Kull of the University of Tartu, Estonia and her husband Estonian Supreme Court Justice Ants Kull, for a very interesting lecture on the judicial system of Estonia.

### **Summer Program**

We held a joint “Paint and Sip” program with NALS (National Association of Legal Professionals) at Pinot's Palette on July 25, 2019. We raffled several baskets off and the proceeds were split between the two organizations.

### **September 2019**

We held our annual Membership Cocktail party on September 10, 2019. Our guest of honor was the new Dean of Students at Touro Law School, Elena Langdon. We have a very good turnout of over 50 people, and the program was underwritten by two sponsors.

### **October 2019**

We teamed up with the Suffolk County Bar Association to put on a multi-part program on domestic violence awareness. We started with an evening program, entitled “Domestic Violence – The Case from Start to Finish”, and then had 3 “lunch and learns” at the Central Islip Courthouse main jury room. Each program focused on a different perspective of domestic violence.

We also held our annual Breast Cancer Awareness breakfast, on October 15, 2019, with the Suffolk County Bar Association. Our key note speaker was Dr. Joyce Au of Northwell Health Cancer Institute at Huntington Breast Cancer Associates.

### **November 2019**

We held our ever-popular and well attended Join Bar Association Networking at the Wineries trip. We had three sponsors and it was our best attended trip ever. This year, we had WBASNY members from Suffolk, Nassau, Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island.

We also held a program for our members about

### **December 2019**

Our annual Holiday party was held on December 10, 2019, at the Bonwit Inn. We raised over \$400 from raffles for the upcoming Read Across America program spearheaded by Margery Weinroth. We also had a terrific program on stress-reduction at a spa in Centereach.

### **January 2020**

On January 14, 2020, we held a program entitled "Tax Law Changes and Life Insurance Simplified". This program was underwritten entirely by the National Tax and Financial Services (Margaret Hart, Rachel Heege and Kathleen Ferguson) and was free to our members.

On January 30, 2020, our past-president Linda Morrone retired and a party was held for her by the Surrogate's Court and was well attended.

### **February 2020**

We held a program on strategies to maximize your retirement income in light of the changing social security landscape, with Kim McCurry CPA and Nicole Clarke of New York Life. The program was free to members and entirely underwritten by NY Life.

### **March 2020**

On March 2, 2020, several members of our chapter celebrated Read Across America Day with the Central Islip Head Start children. The program was co-chaired by Margery Weinroth and Val Manzo, and we were able to purchase enough new books to hand out to each of the children at the Head Start after we read to each class. The books were purchased with funds from our sponsors, and our raffles, as well as Barnes & Noble giving us a 15% discount.

On March 5, 2020, the annual "Cohalan Cares for Kids" Event was held to benefit the EAC Network's Suffolk County Children's Center at Cohalan Court. As always, SCWBA sponsored.

### **Women's History Month Celebration**

We were planning a huge event to commemorate the 100th year of Women's Suffrage, to be held on March 26, 2020. This event was co-sponsored with 6 other bar associations in Suffolk County as well as Touro Law School and the NYS Attorney General Leticia James was our key note speaker. Before we had to postpone the event due to the pandemic, we had sold over 250 tickets and had well over a dozen sponsors. We are hoping to have the program in October of this year.

We had several other programs that we were going to promote before the end of the year, including a Women's Build for Habitat for Humanity. Our installation dinner was to be held in June, 2020, but has been postponed until September to coincide with our annual membership cocktail party.

### **Awards**

We are so very pleased that two of our members received honors from WBASNY this year – Margery Weinroth received the Marilyn Menge Award and Dawn Lott was our chapter nominee for the Emerging Leader award.

## Miscellaneous

We stepped up our social media presence, and established a LinkedIn and Twitter account, as well as contracted with a social media consultant to run the pages, and streamline our email blasts.

## Closing

I was very pleased by the response of our members to recharge our chapter. So many people stepped up to energize the members and create unique programming. It really was my honor to step up once again and be the President of this wonderful chapter.

Congratulations to both the WBASNY and the SCWBA incoming President, Officers, Directors, and Delegates who I know will continue our mission and make us proud!

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## Thousand Islands

The Thousand Islands Chapter of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York is pleased to report another successful year, adding Lewis County to our chapter's jurisdiction this year. Our membership meetings have been well-attended, usually with one-third to one half of our total membership. At many meetings, we select a charitable partner where members bring money or in-kind donations.

This year, our chapter launched a sponsorship drive for advertisements in our upcoming membership referral directory in an effort to promote and boost our membership while raising funds for the chapter. Additionally, a large event with a Wine CLE and boat tour of the 1000 islands is in the work, though both of these endeavors have been postponed due to the public health crisis. We look forward to picking them back up or brainstorming alternative plans in the coming months.

Last month, TIWBA elected its new Board, and I am proud to introduce and announce Ashley Lyon as the new president of the TIWBA. As the founding president of our chapter, it has been a joy and a challenge getting our efforts of the ground, and I am excited to see where Ashley takes us in the future. On behalf of the TIWBA Board and membership, I extend sincere gratitude for all the guidance, assistance, and support we continue to receive from the officers and other chapters, and congratulate all the WBASNY officers for a wonderful and successful year.

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## Westchester

Looking back this has been a busy year for our Chapter. We quickly transitioned to virtual programs and events for our members once the pandemic hit. We are most pleased that we were able to convert our traditional Annual Law Day/ Take your Children to Work Day to a virtual event! In collaboration with the SDNY, we presented a live webcast program to students throughout our county which included a Mock Trial team presentation on *US v. Phoenix Jones* where Magistrate Judge Lisa Margaret Smith presided, student participants from the Rye Neck High School Mock trial team played the roles of prosecutor, defense attorney and witnesses and the student attendees throughout the county participated as jurors and casted a live electronic jury vote at the end of the trial. In addition, there were presentations by civil and criminal attorneys on the practice of law and an FBI agent on federal investigations. The program ended with participants being presented with a Proclamation as a remembrance of their participation in the "Your Vote, Your Voice, Our Democracy: The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment." The program was also recorded with closed caption for the hearing impaired. It was huge success with over 300 attendees and will be saved in the 2d Circuit Educational Archives.

Included in our virtual events was a Zoom CLE program entitled: What Employers and Employees Need to Know about New Covid-19 Employment Laws and Government Resources. Proudly, we were able to timely advise our members of the new law and government resources which included the PPP loans and other possible grants to help lessen the financial and economic hardships faced by our members. We also shared some of this information in a checklist circulated in WBASNY ENews. Another timely virtual program entitled Mediation and Settlement Procedures in the Southern District of New York While Social Distancing familiarized members with the new telephone conferencing and Zoom mediations being held in the federal courts.

We also well recognized the stress and anxiety caused by the pandemic and offered several virtual wellness programs to help our members including free Restorative Yoga sessions and a *New Coffeehouse Conversation program* where members share their experiences practicing law during Covid-19 and ask questions about best practices and wellness. Members remarked these were such welcomed events and requested more! Restorative Yoga continues with more sessions and our *Coffeehouse Conversation* is now scheduled for every two weeks.

Our newly established Mentorship Program is in its second year and continues to be very successful. Our members are mentors assigned to a law student mentees attending the Pace/Elisabeth Haub School of Law. The pandemic brought new challenges for students including school work, housing and employment. Our members assisted by providing advice for students and also in making donations to assist them with financial needs.

Our work also reached out into our communities. We started a Covid-19 Local Hospital Donation Match Campaign and with the help of our Foundation, raised over \$10,000 for the ER staff and front line workers in 8 local hospitals in our county which provided meals and other relief services.

Before the pandemic, we enjoyed each other's company at many in person events! These included a relaxing Mentorship Get-Together welcoming new mentees and discussing legal careers. Our yearly Red Hat event was a pleasant evening on the water with a beautiful sunset and good company! Having learned of the needs of Foster children in our 9th Judicial District, we proudly donated canvas duffle bags to the children for their belongings. Our monthly book club continues to attract more members with lively discussion graciously hosted at a member's home and turned into a virtual event. We co-sponsored several breast cancer awareness initiatives and our members participated in a yearly Breast Cancer Walk. Our wellness initiative also included a heart healthy lecture and slide presentation given by the American Heart Association. We presented our first CLE on Animal Rights and quickly learned that cruelty to animals is often associated with other crimes involving domestic violence and abuse of the elderly. Our Holiday Party in December at the White Plains Women's Club is an event all look forward to each year and it was a great time once again. We generously made holiday gift donations to the Cardinal McCloskey Community Services Mission, a local temple and food pantry. We worked very hard on voter registration and through the dedication and perseverance of our student member proudly achieved First Place among the WBASNY chapters. We chose our then Vice President Amanda Fried as our chapter's WBASNY Emerging Leader and in June, she will become our new President Elect. My chapter bestowed upon me the great honor of being nominated for the New York State Bar Association's Attorney Professionalism Award and I was selected by the NYSBA and presented with the award at the NYSBA Annual meeting in NYC in January 2020.

Our diverse range of programs and events including CLEs are listed below:

### **Westchester Chapter Events for 2019-2020**

June 07, 2019 - First Fridays - Women in Professional Transition  
June 12, 2019 - 2019 WWBA Annual Dinner  
June 18, 2019 - 10th Annual Goin' Cajun BBQ & Blues Networking Event  
July 23, 2019 - WWBA Book Club  
July 31, 2019 - WWBA - Board of Directors Meeting  
August 15, 2019 - Cocktails & Conversation at Red Hat Restaurant  
September 04, 2019 - WWBA - Board of Directors Meeting  
September 04, 2019 - GMM: Expanded Mandatory Employer Obligations in New York Harassment Laws  
September 24, 2019 - The 9th Judicial District Presumptive Mediation Programs: What You Need to Know  
September 25, 2019 - WWBA Book Club  
October 2, 2019 - WWBA - Board of Directors Meeting  
October 2, 2019 - Wellness & Heart Health Event  
October 3, 2019 - Perspectives on the First Year of Implementation of Raise the Age  
October 20, 2019 - Making Strides Against Breast Cancer - Team ORBACH  
October 30, 2019 - Judges & Lawyers Breast Cancer Alert (JALBCA) Lunch and Learn  
October 30, 2019 - A Night of Networking – Mentor Program  
November 4, 2019 - What's It Worth to You: Valuation of Businesses in Divorce and Commercial Settings  
November 6, 2019 - WWBA - Board of Directors Meeting  
November 6, 2019 - General Membership Meeting: All About Animals: A Review of the Civil and Criminal Aspects Pertaining to Animal Matters  
November 13, 2019 - Lunch with the Judges series featuring the Honorable Linda S. Jamieson and Special Guest Hon. Terry Jane Ruderman  
November 18, 2019 - WWBA Book Club  
November 20, 2019 - What Every Trust and Estate and Elder Law Attorney Should Know Before Preparing a Deed  
December 3, 2019 - How to Avoid Malpractice When Dividing the Retirement Benefits

December 4, 2019 - WWBA - Board of Directors Meeting  
December 11, 2019 - Lunch with the Judges series featuring the Honorable Linda S. Jamieson and Special Guest Justice Charles Wood, JSC.  
December 11, 2019 - WWBA Holiday Party 2019  
January 08, 2020 - WWBA - Board of Directors Meeting  
January 15, 2020 - WWBA Book Club  
February 5, 2020 - WWBA - Board of Directors Meeting  
February 5, 2020 - GMM: Ethics Tune-up: A Refresher on Retainer Agreements and Fee Sharing  
February 13, 2020 - LUNCH AND LEARN: ARBITRATION – It May Not Be What You Think It Is  
February 13, 2020 - Professional Compensation in Surrogate's Court and Adult Guardianships  
February 19, 2020 –Lunch with the Judges series featuring the Honorable Linda S. Jamieson and Special Guest Honorable Nancy Quinn Koba  
March 2, 2020 – Participation of Members in *Read Across America*  
March 04, 2020 - WWBA - Board of Directors Meeting  
April 2020 – Campaign to Support Local Hospitals and Front line workers during Covid-19  
April 01, 2020 – VIRTUAL WWBA - Board of Directors Meeting  
April 07, 2020 - Restorative Yoga - A Virtual Class Experience  
April 09, 2020 –VIRTUAL: What Employers and Employees Need to Know About New Covid-19 Employment Laws and Government Resources  
April 20, 2020 – VIRTUAL: WWBA Book Club  
April 28, 2020 – VIRTUAL Coffeehouse Conversation  
May 04, 2020 – VIRTUAL Law Day/Take Your Children to Work Day 2020  
May 05, 2020 – VIRTUAL Mediation and Settlement Procedures in the Southern District of New York While Social Distancing Program  
May 06, 2020 – VIRTUAL WWBA - Board of Directors Meeting  
May 12, 2020 – VIRTUAL Coffeehouse Conversation  
May 12, 2020 – VIRTUAL Restorative Yoga - A Virtual Class Experience  
June 15, 2020 – VIRTUAL WWBA Book Club  
June TBA- VIRTUAL Installation of Officers

### WWBA NOMINATIONS & AWARDS

WBASNY Judith Kaye Access to Justice Award 2019 – Judge Sondra Miller nominated.

NYSBA Professionalism Award 2020 – Angela Giannini nominated and selected for the award which was presented by the NYSBA in January 2020.

WCBA Outstanding Mentor Award 2020 – WWBA nominated Kim Berg.

Westchester Joseph Gagliardi Award- Renee S. Motola, Esq. nominated and selected for the award.

American Inns of Court Professionalism Award for the Second Circuit 2020 – Kim Berg selected as WBASNY nominee; nomination being submitted 5/15/2020.

NYSBA Root Stimson Award 2020 – Lisa Denig selected as WBASNY nominee; (NYSBA was contacted in September 2019 and we were told that a submission date would probably be set for mid-April. NYSBA has not posted a nomination form for 2020 and has not responded to email inquiries in March and April requesting information, we assume due to the COVID-19 lockdown).

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## **Western New York**

The Western New York Chapter of WBASNY has had quite an interesting and memorable year! We began the 2019-2020 term with a **visit from U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg**, which was certainly a highlight of the year. WBASNY WNY sponsored Justice Ginsburg's visit along with the Bar Association of Erie County, the Minority Bar Association of Western New York, and the University at Buffalo Law School. Justice Ginsburg met with WBASNY members before her talk for questions and photographs. I had the tremendous honor of introducing Justice Ginsburg on stage at Kleinhans Music Hall on behalf of WBASNY WNY.

Our Chapter also celebrated our 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. President-Elect Beth Solek and the Installation Committee organized a joint **Installation of Officers & Directors and 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration** in October at Asbury Hall (better known as Ani DiFranco's "Babeville"). The event was a smashing success and one of the high points of the year. We awarded WBASNY WNY's highest honor, the M. Dolores Denman Lady Justice Award, to

one of our founding members and the first president of our Chapter, New York State Senator Shelley B. Mayer. Awards were also presented to Cindy Odom, Chief Community Impact Officer at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo and Chair of the WNY Women's Foundation, and Brittany Jones, Associate Attorney with the Mental Hygiene Legal Service, Fourth Judicial Department. Two of our board members, Anna and Anastasia McCarthy, kicked off **WBASNY WNY's oral history project** by interviewing more than a dozen Past Presidents of our Chapter and creating a wonderful anniversary video that we debuted at Installation. We look forward to continuing this project with additional interviews.

Thanks to the funds raised at Installation, we were able to offer extensive and varied programming to our membership. We also raised funds for the Denman Scholarship, which is provided to a graduating law student to defray the costs of childcare while studying for the bar exam.

Our Chapter offered a variety of programs and events to our members this year, including many free or low-cost programs. We held a summertime **Committee Mixer** at a local restaurant for members to learn about our Chapter's various committees and mingle with the board and committee chairs. We held a free **Women's Self-Defense Class** at the Training Edge, a local Krav Maga studio, and a free **financial wellness seminar** over breakfast ("Empowering Women for Financial Freedom"). We also organized a presentation on **Trauma and the Intersection with the Practice of Law** featuring Amy Fleischauer, LMSW, from the International Institute. Ms. Fleischauer spoke about the effects of trauma, how to make clients and witnesses feel comfortable when discussing traumatic events, and the impact of trauma on memory.

Our Chapter co-sponsored a full-day **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Conference** in the fall for medical and legal providers and advocates for sexual assault victims along with Erie County Medical Center and the University at Buffalo. Topics included sexual assault on college campuses and Title IX, human trafficking, collecting and preserving evidence, and preparing to testify at trial.

In November, WBASNY WNY co-sponsored the **Celebration of Women's Suffrage** in Seneca Falls, NY. The event included a visit to the Women's Rights National Historical Park and a presentation by Dr. Sally Roesch Wagner on Women as Presidential Candidates in 1872 and 1884. Liz Kraengel, our Past President and current co-chair of WBASNY's Equal Opportunity in the Profession Committee, organized the event. Liz has also been representing our Chapter on the **WNY Women's Suffrage Centennial Celebration** Committee, which had been planning a full-day event at Daemen College in August. That event has now been postponed until 2021, but we appreciate Liz's involvement and commitment to this event.

Past President Anne Joynt organized and hosted a **Poker Lesson**, a first-time event that was very popular with our members and lots of fun. Myrna Young, an experienced poker player and a past recipient of our Chapter's President's Award, taught us how to play Texas Hold 'Em as we shared drinks and snacks. We hope this will be an annual event!

To continue the momentum from last year's signature "**How to Get Involved in Politics**" event, we launched a mini-series to tackle specific topics relevant to political involvement. We kicked off the series with a breakfast presentation about "How to Host a Political Event" and held a "Petitioning 101" lunch and learn before the start of petitioning season. Thank you to board members Kelly Gotham, Christine Vogel, and Anastasia McCarthy for their hard work on those programs.

We also sponsored or co-sponsored several **continuing legal education** programs, including a breakfast briefing on recent amendments to the New York State Human Rights Law, Digital Wills and Assets, Introduction to Family Law, Recognizing Mental Illness and Dementia and What to Do, and Presumptive ADR.

We continued to provide our members with unique opportunities to interact with members of the judiciary through our **Judge's Choice** and **Chamber Chat** series. We hosted Chamber Chats with Family Court Judge Kevin Carter, County Court Judge Suzanne Maxwell Barnes, Appellate Division Justice Shirley Troutman, Court of Appeals Judge Eugene Fahey, and U.S. District Court Judge Larry Vilaro. We also hosted a Judge's Choice Dinner with Niagara County Court Judge Erin DeLabio and a Judge's Choice Luncheon with U.S. District Court Judge Elizabeth Wolford. Thank you to Kelly Gotham and Ashley Lowry for spearheading those events!

We were also active in the community. WBASNY WNY sponsored the 9th Annual “Okay 5k” walk/run to support **Preventionfocus**, Inc., which provides children, teens, and adults with the skills and information they need to make safer and healthier choices. We co-sponsored a **Voter Registration BBQ** with the Minority Bar Association of Western New York, the NAACP, and the American Constitution Society in September at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. We partnered with other local bar associations to sponsor the Eighth Judicial District’s annual **Judicial Welcoming Ceremony** and **Celebration of Black History Month**. And we co-sponsored the University at Buffalo’s 44<sup>th</sup> Annual **Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Event** featuring Dr. Yusef Salaam, member of the exonerated Central Park Five and a criminal justice advocate.

We also organized the “**Positivity Project**” at UB Law School for Wellness Week, which takes place in the weeks leading up to final exams. We supplied WBASNY-branded sticky notes for students, faculty, and staff to write uplifting messages. The sticky notes were posted on bulletin boards and bathroom mirrors throughout the law school. We hosted our eleventh annual **Eight-Minute Mentoring Event** at UB law school in February, organized by UB Law Liaison Kinsey O’Brien. At our annual holiday party and **toy drive**, spearheaded by President-Elect Beth Solek, we collected cash and toys to benefit Journey’s End Refugee Services and the Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo. And our Chapter was a proud sponsor of All Access, a benefit for **Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York**.

Our committees were incredibly active and responsive to our membership this year. A few highlights:

- The **Awards Committee**, chaired by the inimitable Kelly Gotham, nominated 15 members for various state and local awards. Many of our members have received awards as a result, including Kara Addelman (Business First’s 40 Under 40), Elizabeth Fox-Solomon (Business First’s 40 Under 40), Marissa Hill Washington (Business First’s 30 Under 30), Anna Marie Richmond (WBASNY’s Hanna S. Cohn Pro Bono Service Award), and Ashley Lowry (WBASNY Emerging Leader).
- The **Book Club** and **Diversity Committees** collaborated on a “Diverse Voices” Book Club Series featuring books by authors of color. The series included a discussion of *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *American Spy* by Lauren Wilkinson, and *Kite Runner* by Khalid Hosseini. Thank you to Nicole Komin and Gabrielle Markle, our Book Club Chairs, and Carin Gordon, our Diversity Chair!
- The **Domestic Violence Committee**, chaired by Judith Olin, organized a coffee hour donation drive to support the Family Justice Center and Haven House, a shelter for survivors of domestic violence. The Committee also tabled at the Walden Galleria Mall for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
- The **Membership Committee**, chaired by Elise Cassar, held our annual Membership Kickoff event at Big Ditch Brewery and our third annual *Come Aboard and Meet the New Board* event on the Moondance Catamaran.
- The **New Lawyers Committee**, chaired by Brittany Jones and Amanda Prince, hosted a summertime golf lesson and a winter Barre & Brunch event.
- The **Public Sector & Non-Profit Committee** and the **Working Parents Committee** hosted a fall family-friendly event at the Great Pumpkin Farm in Clarence. The Public Sector Committee also organized a tour of the Erie County Correctional Facility.
- The **Pro Bono Committee** co-sponsored a Power of Attorney Clinic with the Center for Elder Law & Justice at the Genesis Center, a soup kitchen and food pantry in South Buffalo. Volunteer attorneys drafted and supervised the execution of powers of attorney and healthcare proxies for seniors.
- The **Judiciary Committee**, chaired by Sharon Swift and Erin McCampbell Paris, is currently hard at work on our judicial ratings, reviewing writing samples and interviewing candidates for judicial office via Zoom.

We also formed two new committees this year: A Wellness Committee to tackle the critical issues of mental health and wellness in the legal profession, and an LGBTQ Committee to bring together LGBTQ attorneys and allies to promote equality in the law on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation. The **LGBTQ Committee** held its kickoff event in March with approximately 40 members, students, and allies in attendance.

On March 13, our Chapter made the difficult decision to cancel all in-person programs due to the coronavirus pandemic. Those programs included a family friendly networking event, a tour of the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center, our popular Headshot Happy Hour event, and a Night at the Theatre with the Second Generation Theatre Company. We also had several exciting programs planned for April and May that we were forced to cancel, including our biennial Employment Law CLE, media training for lawyers, and a program on New Frontiers in Reproduction and Parenting. I am hopeful we will be able to present these programs in-person in the future.

Since COVID-19 struck, our Chapter has pivoted to providing virtual events for our membership, holding committee meetings, wellness check-ins, happy hours, and coffee hours via Zoom. The **Wellness Committee**, co-chaired by Nicole Komin and Jessica Keltz, has been particularly active, organizing virtual programs such as Family Yoga, the Strength Project, Self-Care in Stressful Times, and Mindfulness for Lawyers. We also co-sponsored a virtual CLE entitled *Advance Directives in the Age of Coronavirus* that attracted nearly 100 participants. Upcoming virtual events include an additional Book Club meeting (*Educated* by Tara Westover) and a Membership Mixer and Happy Hour.

We have already started laying the ground work for the 2020-2021 WBASNY year. Incoming President Beth Solek met with several Past Presidents to discuss creative ways to celebrate Installation, swear in our new officers and directors, and keep members engaged during continued social distancing. I look forward to a wonderful year under Beth’s leadership.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve WBASNY and the WNY Chapter.