



# HISTORICAL SOCIETY *of the* NEW YORK COURTS

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## **The Courts Never Closed — Historical Society of the New York Courts Launches Digital Archive**

*Dispensing Justice from a Distance is a Journal of the New York State Courts  
During the 2020-2021 Pandemic*

White Plains NY (September 15, 2021) – The Historical Society of the New York Courts launches [Dispensing Justice from a Distance](#), its digital archive of nearly 40 interviews with judges and court staff (including public safety and tech support), documenting their real-time experiences to keep the courts open, both virtually and in person, during the months of lockdown in New York. A timeline tracks the court system’s major milestones during the pandemic with images and documents to complete the record.

In early March 2020, New York became the epicenter of the national COVID-19 pandemic, with lockdowns that dramatically affected court operations and the delivery of justice. Despite the widespread disruption, the New York State courts continued to function and provide access to justice throughout the pandemic. How they did so comes alive in this one-of-a-kind archive.

Chief Judge Janet DiFiore, who is interviewed, said: “The transformation of our court system from a massive, complex, in-person operating model into a functioning virtual model capable of safely providing access to justice in the midst of an unprecedented public health crisis was a remarkable achievement. I am grateful to the Historical Society for documenting that achievement through personal interviews with dozens of judges and court professionals who led the court system’s response to the operational challenges presented by COVID-19. *Dispensing Justice from a Distance* serves as an invaluable record of how our court system was able to overcome the challenges of the pandemic and honor our mission of ensuring access to justice and upholding the rule of law.”

Marilyn Marcus, the Society’s Executive Director stated: “We view these accounts as a living history archive that captures for generations to come the visceral feel of what it was like to figure out how to keep the courts operating during the pandemic. Guided by the Chief Judge and Chief Administrative Judge, aided by the remarkable work of the technology staff, administrative and sitting judges, chief clerks and security officers learned new ways to work together while they were forced to be apart. These are their compelling personal stories.”

**Visit the Society’s website to watch these personal accounts of the impact of the pandemic on the court system: <https://history.nycourts.gov/dispensing-justice/>**

## **About Historical Society of the New York Courts**

The Historical Society of the New York Courts is a non-profit organization founded in 2002 by then NYS Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye. Its mission is to preserve, protect and promote the legal history of New York, including the proud heritage of its courts and the development of the Rule of Law. The Society promotes its mission through educational outreach to New York State students, programs open to the public, and publications on these themes which inform our knowledge and role as citizens today. The Society supports its programs through contributions from its members, gifts and grants from foundations, corporations, law firms and individuals. For more information about the Society, please visit [history.nycourts.gov](http://history.nycourts.gov).

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