

Message from the Chair

By Catherine A. Christian

I am very proud to be a lawyer. I am a member of a profession that allows me the opportunity to perform public service every day. I have been fortunate to have found a career that has brought me professional fulfillment. My membership in NYSBA has contributed greatly to that fulfillment. I immediately said yes when President Seymour James asked me to Chair the Committee on Attorneys in Public Service (CAPS).



The majority of my career has been spent as a prosecutor in the New York County District Attorney's Office and the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York. When I became President of the New York County Lawyers' Association (NYCLA) in 2007, I received a congratulatory letter from John Buonora, who was the President of the Suffolk County Bar Association. John was then the Chief Assistant District Attorney in the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office. John wrote: "I have always believed that more prosecutors should be made aware that they are part of the larger family of lawyers represented by bar associations and that all lawyers have much more in common than some might think." I have frequently repeated John's comments to my colleagues and to other public sector attorneys.

As a member of the NYSBA House of Delegates, Executive Committee and past member of the Nominating Committee, I know that public sector attorneys are a much needed voice in discussions about policies and issues that are central to NYSBA's priorities, including recommendations for legislation that affect the practice of law in New York State. Much of my professional development as a lawyer has been obtained through the activities I have engaged in as an active bar association member. I have been fortunate that all three of my bosses, Robert M. Morgenthau, Cyrus Vance Jr. and Bridget Brennan, have supported my work as a bar leader. I encourage other public sector employers to be equally supportive of their attorneys' bar association activities.

I am honored to serve as Chair of CAPS and am looking forward to continuing the CAPS mission to serve New York public service attorneys lawyers by promoting the highest standards of professional conduct and competence, providing a network system to bring together public service attorneys to further their common interests, and highlighting the exceptional work done by public service attorneys.

The Committee is working on a number of initiatives and programs that will interest public service attorneys for 2012-2013. In September we had a well-received Citation

for Special Achievement in Public Service Program. This year the program was a luncheon held in New York City at NYCLA. The Subcommittee on Awards and Citations, co-chaired by Donna Giliberto and Terri Egan, originated the Citation award during 2008. The subcommittee solicited nominations for the citations, reviewed all nominations received, and identified the most worthy nominees. The subcommittee then presented a list of finalists to the full CAPS committee from which the citation recipients were chosen. Our 2012 Citation winners were Jonathan Darche, an assistant district attorney in the Queens County District Attorney's Office, and Karen Freedman, Executive Director of Lawyers For Children, Inc. Our guest speakers were *Times Union* reporters Casey Seiler and Jimmy Vielkind. Both gave an informative and interesting presentation on covering the passage of the landmark marriage equality legislation.

The Honorees for the 2013 Awards for Excellence in Public Service are the Honorable Carmen Beauchamp Ciparick, Honorable Judy Harris Kluger, and Deborah Liebman. The awards will be presented at a reception on Tuesday evening, January 22, 2013 at the New York State Bar Association Annual Meeting in New York City.

Our Subcommittee on Ethics, co-chaired by Hon. James McClymonds and Steve Krantz, will be working on updating the *Ethics in Government* publication and will continue to review the Rules of Professional Conduct and the rules most relevant for the public service attorney.

Our Subcommittee on the Administrative Law Judiciary co-chaired by Hon. James F. Horan and Hon. Elizabeth H. Liebschutz organized with the NYSBA Committee on Continuing Legal Education a Fall 2012 CLE Program, *Administrative Hearings Before New York State Agencies*. The program was held on November 27 in Manhattan and December 5 in Latham.

We have created a new Subcommittee on Outreach to Law Schools and Law Students. The subcommittee is tasked with providing law students with information about various public sector attorney positions, practical advice about securing positions and introducing the students to the various career opportunities available in local, state and federal government. CAPS members will participate in upcoming NYSBA career events at law schools.

Please join CAPS during 2012-2013 at one or more of our events. I invite you to join CAPS and meet other public sector attorneys and other members of the bar represented in NYSBA Committees and Sections.

Finally, a big thank you to Rose Mary Bailly for her continued dedication and tireless work as editor-in-chief of the *Government, Law and Policy Journal*. Rose Mary has assembled a stellar group of authors and informative articles for this issue dedicated to disability issues and law.