

# Lawyer Referral

The Lawyer Referral and Information Service Newsletter



Vol.2 No. 1 Spring/Summer 2009

## Legal Project receives 2009 Angelo T. Cometa Award

*Albany organization provides services for domestic violence victims and children*

By **Brandon J. Vogel**

President Bernice K. Leber and the chair of the State Bar’s Committee on Lawyer Referral Service presented the Capital District Women’s Bar Association Legal Project, Inc. (“The Legal Project”) with the 2009 Angelo T. Cometa Award at the House of Delegates dinner on April 3.

The Legal Project, a private, non-profit organization, provides legal information and representation for battered woman and their children in family court, and also provides civil legal services for the working poor.

“Since its inception in 1995, The Legal Project has provided critical and creative resources for our working poor to obtain civil legal services so that domestic violence victims can live a better life,” said Committee on Lawyer Referral Service Chair Rajpatie Persaud-Billette. “I am pleased to honor its continued excellence in helping vulnerable citizens receive the quality legal services they richly deserve.”

Founded by the Capital District Women’s Bar Association, The Legal Project began as a grassroots effort

by a small group of women attorneys who recognized the need for legal information and representation for battered women seeking orders of protection, custody and support in Family Court. The Legal Project has grown to a staff of 12 and has a panel of more than 80 volunteer



Ava Charne, Jessica Lennon, Jill Dunn, Michelle Wildgrube, NYSBA President Bernice K. Leber and Lisa Frisch

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## LRIS Honor Roll

The following attorneys have been LRIS panel members for 15 or more years.

Richard M. Antokol	Stephen A. Johnston
Michael Basile	Edward G. Kaminski
Charles D. Becraft, Jr.	James E. Keable
James W. Betro	Ralph M. Kirk
Bruce Blatchly	Kenneth M. Lasker
Sam C. Bonney	Peter N. Littman
Timothy J. Buckley	Ralph C. Lewis, Jr.
Scott D. Cannon	Peter M. Margolius
Cristine Cioffi	David J. Marshall
Peter D. Clark	Robert B. McCutcheon
Scott J. Clippinger	Kevin J. McDonald
Peter V. Coffey	Mark M. McDonald
Peter M. Cordovano	William J. McDonald, Jr.
Gregory M. Dennin	Richard W. McVinney
James J. Devine, Jr.	Connie Fern Miller
Peter O. Einset	Andrea Moran
David P. Elkovitch	William H. Mycek
Dennis M. Englert	David J. Pajak
Antonio J. Faga	Fred G. Palmer III
William A. Favreau	George Panebianco
Timothy J. Fennell	Frank M. Putorti, Jr.
Steven Z. Feuer	Michael G. Putter
William S. Friedlander	Richard A. Reisman
Rod P. Futerfas	Dale C. Robbins
John J. Gilbert	Richard A. Rothermel
Frank J. Giruzzi	George Rusk, Jr.
Joseph Pennisi Giruzzi	Gerald S. Sacca
Lawrence W. Golden	Robert B. Schlather
R. Michael Goldman	Daniel E. Seaman
Lawrence M. Gordon	Arthur I. Seld
Stephen C. Greene, Sr.	Raymond J. Seligman
Richard W. Gunger	William R. Shaw
Thomas Hegeman	William R. Stevens
Daniel G. Heppner	Hon. Walter L. Terry III
William Dennis	Paul H. Tocker
Highland	Thomas N. Trevett
Peter W. Hill	Aaron Turetsky
Timothy J. Horigan	Rocco L. Versace
Paul F. Iaconis	Tina Wayland-Smith
Joseph M. Ingarra	Thomas D. Williams

## Note from the Chair



Thank you for renewing your Lawyer Referral membership for 2009. Your participation in NYSBA's LRIS enables us to help the public gain access to attorneys in

40 New York State Counties. In 2008 we received 22,961 calls from the public resulting in 2,815 attorney referrals.

### LRIS Radio Ads

The new LRIS radio ads, narrated by State Bar President Bernice K. Leber, have received a lot of notice from the public. Have you heard them in your area?

### Simple Ideas

The NYSBA Design Services Department created helpful file stickers for your LRIS referral cases. The idea behind the stickers is to have a quick way to flag a client file as a referral from the State Bar. Many other referral services throughout the US have been using this idea. We hope that you find it a useful tool for your office.

### LRIS Honor Roll

I am very proud to say that we have 79 attorneys currently on our referral panel that have been with our service for 15 or more years (see list of names in far left column). I personally would like to thank them for their long-standing commitment to the service.

If you have ideas or questions regarding the LRIS please contact Eva Valentin-Espinal, LRIS Coordinator at 1.800.342.3661 or 518.487.5700.

*Rajpattie Persaud-Billette,  
Committee Chair*

NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

# You Can Afford the Benefits of Membership...



...with help from NYSBA's Dues Waiver Program

For more information, including qualifications and how to apply, simply:

1. Call: 518.487.5577;
2. E-mail: [membership@nysba.org](mailto:membership@nysba.org); or,
3. Go to: [www.nysba.org/membership](http://www.nysba.org/membership) and click "Dues Waiver Program Information."





In an effort to assist you and your staff with some common inquiries below are answers to frequently asked questions.

### **What is the LRIS membership fee?**

LRIS panel members pay an annual fee of \$75 (\$125 for non-NYSBA members).

### **What is the referral fee if a client retains my services?**

LRIS panel members agree to remit 10% of their entire fee if the fee is \$500 or more.

### **Do I need to carry malpractice insurance?**

Yes, LRIS panel members are required to provide proof of malpractice insurance in the minimum amount of \$100,000.

### **How much should I be charging for the initial ½ hour consultation fee?**

The consultation fee is \$35.

### **What if I can't help a client who was referred to me?**

If you decline a referral for any reason, you should refer the client back to LRIS. A LRIS client can also be seen by another attorney in your firm but the referral will be tracked as a referral to you.

### **Do I have to have an office in the county that I want to receive referrals from?**

Yes, attorney members must have an office in one of our 40\* service counties to be eligible to participate in our referral panel.

\* Go to [www.nysba.org/joinlr](http://www.nysba.org/joinlr) for a complete list of service counties.

### **I can't remember exactly what I signed up for. How do I get a summary of my Areas of Practice?**

Just give our office a call at 1.800.342.3661 or send an e-mail to [lr@nysba.org](mailto:lr@nysba.org) with your request.

### **What are the different subject matter panels and how do I apply?**

Currently we have three subject matter panels: Major Criminal, Major Personal Injury and Medical Malpractice. Applications for the different subject matter panels must be submitted separately and in addition to the annual LRIS membership application. Membership on any of the subject matter panels requires approval of the LRS Committee. Once approved, the \$100 membership fee for each panel is good for five years. Download applications at [www.nysba.org/joinlr](http://www.nysba.org/joinlr).

### **How do I sign up?**

Download the LRIS application at [www.nysba.org/joinlr](http://www.nysba.org/joinlr) or call 1.800.342.3661 or e-mail [lr@nysba.org](mailto:lr@nysba.org) to have an application mailed to you.

### **Questions? Comments?**

Contact Eva Valentin-Espinal, LRIS Coordinator, at 518.487.5700 or [evalentin@nysba.org](mailto:evalentin@nysba.org).

## **NYSBA Launches New Blogs**

### **State Bar also creates Twitter feed**

The New York State Bar Association launched several new blogs designed to keep the legal profession and the public in touch with current issues. Guided in their creation by the Electronic Communications Committee, the blogs will cover a variety of issues and serve as an important resource for those seeking information on topics ranging from climate change to Court of Appeals decisions to lawyers seeking transition support.

In addition to the new blogs, the State Bar has also created a Twitter feed for members and the media to stay current with our breaking news and issues of interest. For further information, please visit: [www.twitter.com/nysba](http://www.twitter.com/nysba).

The following blogs have been launched:

- **Envirosphere**—devoted to recent developments in environmental law and climate change (<http://nysbar.com/blogs/environmental>)
- **Lawyers in Transition**—provides networking tips and resources for laid-off attorneys or attorneys returning to practice (<http://nysbar.com/blogs/lawyersintransition>)
- **Securities and Arbitration**—focuses on recent cases and developments in securities law and their effect on law practitioners and their clients (<http://nysbar.com/blogs/securitieslitigation>)
- **NY Business Litigation**—the State Bar's Torts, Insurance and Compensation Law Section sponsors the examination of litigation relevant to business practices and its impact upon the law (<http://nysbar.com/blogs/nybusinesslitigation>).

## Committee on Lawyer Referral Service

Rajpattie Persaud-Billette, Esq., *Chair*

Bamidele H. Alade, Esq.

Robert T. Booth, Esq.

Allen J. Charne

Anna K. Christian, Esq.

Peter V. Coffey, Esq.

James F. Dwyer, Esq.

Thomas J. Egan, Esq.

Cameron R. Elliot, Esq.

Timothy J. Fennell, Esq.

Alexander Korotkin, Esq.

David J. Pajak, Esq.

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S. Jason Teele, Esq.

Arthur N. Terranova, Esq.

E. Gray Watkins, Esq.



NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION  
Lawyer Referral

**Eva Valentin-Espinal**, Coordinator,  
Lawyer Referral and Information Service

[www.nysba.org](http://www.nysba.org)

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# Angelo T. Cometa Award

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attorneys providing pro bono services for battered women and their children in Family Court and in matrimonial proceedings.

The Legal Project serves more than 1,600 low-income residents of the Capital District, including those who earn too much money to qualify for indigent legal services programs, but who do not earn enough to pay the fees of a private attorney.

The Legal Project addresses the need for non-criminal legal services by providing innovative, cost-effective services that are collaborative in nature and focus on well-defined, but unmet needs in the community. Examples include its Bankruptcy & Credit program that provides free legal consultations and free or low-cost legal representation to individuals and families struggling with financial problems and debt. Another service is the uncontested divorce clinics, providing document assistance to low-income individuals who are representing themselves in a divorce matter.

## About the award

The award is sponsored by the State Bar's Committee on Lawyer Referral Service and recognizes individuals or groups in New York demonstrating an extraordinary commitment toward advancing the goals of the Lawyer Referral and Information Service (LRIS). The State Bar's service assists members of the public in obtaining information about the availability of legal services and other agencies, increasing access to attorneys, and/or providing legal services to clients.

Past winners include Allen J. Charne of New York (New York City Bar) and past State Bar President Angelo T. Cometa of New York. Cometa chaired the Committee on Lawyer Referral Service during the first year of LRIS operation. As committee chair, Cometa was instrumental in establishing the LRIS and increasing public access to attorneys. The award was created in 2007 in recognition of his extraordinary service efforts.

*Vogel is NYSBA's Media Writer.*

## Interested in expanding your client base?

Do you practice in one of these counties...?

Allegany, Cattaraugus, Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chenango, Clinton, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Livingston, Madison, Montgomery, Niagara, Oneida, Ontario, Orleans, Oswego, Otsego, St. Lawrence, Schenectady, Schoharie, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Ulster, Washington, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates

**Join the Lawyer Referral & Information Service**

**Give us a call! 800.342.3661**  
[www.nysba.org/joinlr](http://www.nysba.org/joinlr)

