



Staff Memorandum

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE Agenda Item #23

REQUESTED ACTION: Approval of the recommendation of the Committee on Annual Award to present the Award for Outstanding Non-Resident Member posthumously to Rajpattie Persaud-Billette.

Attached is a memorandum from the Committee on Membership 's Subcommittee on Non-Resident Membership to the Committee on Annual Award recommending the presentation of the Award for Outstanding Non-Resident Member to Rajpattie Persaud-Billette. Ms. Persaud-Billette passed away unexpectedly in August; at the time, she was chair of the Committee on Lawyer Referral Service, a member of the Task Force on New York Law in International Matters, and a member of the Elder Law, Family Law and International Sections. The Committee on Annual Award approved of the presentation to Ms. Persaud-Billette at a meeting on January 17, 2012.

The establishment of this award was approved by the Executive Committee in November 2011; the criteria for the award are also attached.

The report will be presented at the January 26 meeting by John P. Bracken, chair of the Committee on Annual Award.



New York State Bar Association

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To: The New York State Bar Association Annual Awards Committee

From: Subcommittee on Non-Resident Membership of the NYSBA
Committee on Membership

Re: Nomination Letter for the Inaugural Award ---
Outstanding Non-Resident Member: Rajpattie Persaud –Billette, Esq.

Date: December 21, 2011

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It is with both heavy hearts and great honor that we posthumously nominate Rajpattie Persaud-Billette, Esq. for the inaugural Award for Outstanding Non-Resident Member.

Rajpattie passed away unexpectedly on August 1 after a brief illness; she was 64 years old and a solo practitioner in Montreal, concentrating in family law and trusts and estates law. She was survived by her husband, five sisters, two brothers, and other family and friends.

Born in Guyana, Raj (as she was affectionately known) was very proud to have lived on four continents throughout her life. She began her career as a banker before attending college in Arkansas to study medicine. She moved to Montreal in 1971 and became a Canadian citizen three years later. While living in Saudi Arabia from 1978-1983, she met a New York lawyer who persuaded her to enter the field of law. Raj returned to Canada and graduated from the McGill University of Law in 1990 when she was 43; admitted to practice in New York State in 1992, she became a New York State Bar Association (“Association”) member three years later. Her husband, Paul-André Billette, who frequently accompanied her to bar events, says she always viewed the Association as the “most prestigious Bar Association in the world!”

As a Non-Resident member, Raj was very active in the New York State Bar Association. She was the Chair of the Committee on Lawyer Referral Service; a member of the Task Force on New York Law in International Matters; and a member of the Elder Law, Family Law, and International Law Sections. A member of the Committee on Lawyer Referral and Information Service (LRIS) since 2000, Raj was greatly committed to her role as chair and attended every meeting in person; she was especially proud of presenting the committee’s Angelo T. Cometa Award at the House of Delegates Dinner in Albany every year. Raj also took time away from her solo practice to represent the Association at the annual American Bar Association Lawyer Referral Conference, always returning with a wealth of information to share.

“Her zeal for helping New Yorkers find the right attorney to address their legal problems was

remarkable, especially because her own legal practice was based in Montreal,” said President Vincent E. Doyle III; “she had an affinity for the underdog and a strong commitment to speaking out against injustice.” Raj was reappointed as LRIS committee chair in May 2011.

Dedicated to her community, Raj volunteered with Chez Doris, a women’s shelter in Montreal, for many years. A long-term Board member, she recently served as secretary of the organization.

We can’t think of anyone that is more deserving of the Award for Outstanding Non-Resident Member than Rajpattie Persaud-Billette. She is greatly missed!!

October 21, 2011

Establishment of a New York State Bar Association, Non-Resident Member Award

Background:

During the past decade, there have been an increasing number of attorneys from outside the state of New York who either have been admitted to the New York bar, or are interested in New York legal matters. This has had the positive effect of increasing the number of “non-resident” members of our Association. In 2011, 25% of the Association’s members are non-resident members. This includes 15,210 members from states and territories outside the state of New York, plus 4376 members from non-US countries.

Many of NYSBA’s 25 sections have significant numbers of non-resident attorneys among their members. The percentage of non-resident members in sections ranges from 1% (Judicial) to 51% (International). Among all sections, ten have over 25% of their members from outside New York state (Antitrust; Business; Corporate Counsel; Dispute Resolution; Entertainment; Food, Drug; Intellectual Property; International; Tax; Young Lawyers).

As a result of these developments, it is clear that the NYSBA has evolved into a “global” bar association, proudly representing members from all 50 United States and 118 countries. It is also evident that in many cases, non-resident members often make extraordinary efforts in order to participate in NYSBA activities. Such members demonstrate special dedication and commitment to service to the New York bar which should merit special recognition.

Proposal:

With the increase in the representation of non-resident members in the NYSBA in the past decade, it is an appropriate time to consider establishing an award to recognize the important and valued participation of non-resident members. As such, it is proposed that the NYSBA establish a “Non-Resident Member” Award, to be given out from time to time to recognize the growing impact and contributions of non-resident members on behalf of the Association.

Criteria:

Non-resident members who have made outstanding contributions through service in the Association’s House of Delegates or on sections and committees would be eligible for consideration for this award. To further qualify, a nominee must be admitted to practice in the highest court of a State, Commonwealth, Territory, Possession or the District of Columbia. Candidates would be sought from all NYSBA sections and committees, including the Membership Committee’s Subcommittee on Non-Resident Members, and members of the House of Delegates. Candidates would be sought from all NYSBA sections and committees, including the Membership Committee’s Subcommittee on Non-Resident Members, and members of the House of Delegates. An appropriate venue for presentation of this award would be selected.