

Message from the Chair

It is always a pleasure to look through *New York Dispute Resolution Lawyer*. It continues to be a great credit to the Section, for which we are all very grateful to Edna Sussman, Laura Kaster and Sherman Kahn who have tirelessly edited it for so many years. I am especially pleased to emphasize their work this year because we are looking forward to a further step which will be to collect many of the best articles from the publication, which, like the Section, is in its tenth year, and to publish them in a single volume. Efforts are under way to review the great writing that has been provided over the years and to compile a timely collection.

In addition to reflecting on how outstanding the papers in this publication have been over the last 10 years, I think this is an appropriate time to recognize what an extraordinary job has been done by those who brought our Section into existence 10 years ago and have so ably developed its offerings to members. Starting with the Section's first Chair, Simeon Baum, those who have served as Chair before me and those who have chaired the many committees and activities of the Section have made it exceptionally successful. Due to their work the Section's benefits include its continually successful Fall and Annual Programs; very interesting committee meetings, including guest speakers and important initiatives such as our numerous diversity programs, diversity scholarships and rule and legislative recommendations; outstanding training programs in both Arbitration and Mediation; the very successful annual Fall Arbitration Moot Competition among the State's major law schools; a national writing competition inaugurated in 2017; and the recent addition of the Resolution Roundtable blog permitting significant exchanges on important dispute resolution issues and this great publication. One need only go to a committee meeting or program to appreciate the vitality of the Section.

This year we have added still more to the list of Section activities and initiatives. In the spring of 2017 we joined with the Commercial and Federal Litigation (ComFed) Section for a very successful program. We are now moving not only to make such a joint program



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with ComFed a regular Spring feature but also to develop closer ties with ComFed so as to expand the exchange of ideas and benefits between the Sections. We are trying to bring advocates and neutrals together more often so that they can benefit from common exchanges and a better understanding of their respective roles. As a potentially very important part of that effort, an outstanding working group composed of advocates, in-house counsel and neutrals, coordinated by our Chair-Elect, Debbie Masucci, is working on a new training program for advocates in mediation. Both ComFed and the Corporate Counsel Section are joining us in that effort. We hope to roll out that new program in 2018.

Another important initiative is to increase the benefits of the Section to those living upstate. There have been very significant advances in ADR upstate in recent years that reflect its importance there, but members upstate have not had as many opportunities as they should to benefit from Section offerings. To address that shortfall, we have begun a program of webinars that will benefit members throughout the state, with two in the Fall and two in the Spring. We expect to provide a webcast of our Spring Program with ComFed so that it will be available throughout the state. We are increasing cooperation with the CLE office of the State Bar to develop multiple live programs upstate, and we are taking steps to draw from upstate members recommendations of additional ways in which we can improve the Section's offerings for them.

Consistent with the better use of webinars and webcasts, we are also in the process of significantly enhancing use of social media, including both Twitter and Linked-In, to improve communication and outreach.

My hat is off to those who have brought the Dispute Resolution Section to where it is and I very much look forward to the work of the Chairs who follow me who will, I am sure, be superb stewards for a Section of which we should all be proud.

Dan Kolb