

# Message from the Chair



I write this message shortly after returning from a successful Section meeting held at the NYSBA Annual Meeting in January. In addition to opportunities for CLE and collaborating on projects, the Annual Meeting was an opportunity to recognize a few of the accomplishments of some of our Section's members.

At our Executive Committee meeting we recognized Lisa Stenson Desamours, District Representative for the 9th District. Lisa has organized many social and educational events for members of her district—most recently a workday for Habitat for Humanity. In November, Metropolitan College of New York named Lisa as a “Phenomenal Woman of Power.”

At our business meeting Michelle Wildgrube was elected Secretary for the Section. She will assume this position in June. As the District Representative for the 4th Judicial District, Michelle has collaborated with other district representatives, both from our Section and other Sections, to offer continuing legal education programs and social events to members in her district. She also serves as one of our Section's representatives in the House of Delegates and as Vice-Chair of the NYSBA Committee on Membership.

During the business meeting scholarships were awarded to law school students. Two scholarships were established by our Section to honor past Section chairs, Lorraine Power Tharp and Melvyn Mitzner, both of whom were active and valued members of our Section and the greater legal community. Marissa MacAneney, a student at St. John's School of Law, and Lauren Richardson, a student at New York University School of Law, were each awarded a scholarship. We look forward to great things from both of these women in the future.

At the business meeting we also recognized Diane Lowenberger as “Contributor of the Year” to the *Digest* on our Section's Community Page. The *Digest* is an invaluable resource for sharing information. Diane regularly responds to questions raised by other members. If you are not signed up for the *Digest*, I encourage you to do so. To those who are signed up, please use it. Your questions, responses to other's questions and posts of relevant information make this a more useful and interesting forum for all of us.

At our luncheon Richard Fries was recognized with the Real Property Law Section's Professionalism Award. This is the highest award given by our Section. It recognizes an attorney who has demonstrated an outstanding level of competence, legal ability and achievement, made a strong contribution to the improvement of the practice of law, engaged in mentoring and maintained the highest ethical standards. Congratulations to Richard. His countless contributions to our Section and to our profession make him truly deserving of this award.

With the Annual Meeting behind us, we now look ahead to future Section activities. Members, in conjunction with the CLE Department, will be presenting a seminar entitled “A Guide to Real Estate Closings.” This program will cover the basics of residential real estate closings and will be offered live in five locations across the state during the month of June.

Our Committee on Condominiums & Cooperatives has formed two subcommittees. One of these subcommittees will be reviewing and updating forms for governing documents contained in condominium offering plans. The other subcommittee will be working to create a Tax Cuts and Job Acts—compliant attorney's income tax opinion for new offering plans. If you are interested in working on either of these projects, contact Amy, our staff liaison, at [ajasiewicz@nysba.org](mailto:ajasiewicz@nysba.org) and she will add your name to the subcommittee of interest to you.

Antar Jones, co-chair of our Diversity Committee, is planning to host a reception in April. Several of the District Representatives from the greater metropolitan area are working on plans to offer a CLE and reception this spring as well. So watch for notices about these events.

Jerry Antetomaso is finalizing plans for our Summer Meeting. This year we are headed to Water's Edge Resort & Spa in Westbrook, Connecticut. This is a beautiful beach resort on the Long Island Sound. There are activities for everyone at the resort, and many attractions to explore in the surrounding area. Our destination meetings are casual. They offer a unique opportunity to meet and get to know colleagues from across the state. Jerry is planning two mornings CLE programs for us as well, which I'm sure will be interesting and informative. If you have never attended our Summer Meeting in the past, please inquire about any discount to be offered this year to first-time attendees. So mark your calendars for July 26-29. I hope to see you there.

**Trish Watkins**