

Message from the Chair

It is early August and the past week has been frenetic as the Section was pleased to officially release the report prepared by the Section's Task Force on Women's Initiatives, "If Not Now, When?" The Report, which is included in this edition of the *New York Litigator*, was immediately identified as significant and newsworthy by the *New York Law Journal*, the *Wall Street Journal*, Law360, BNA, WNYC and NPR. It even found its way to the front page of the *Daily Business Review* which is published in South Florida! The *New York Times* editorial board apparently concluded that it was an important enough topic to publish an Op Ed that was authored by our own former chair, Judge Shira Scheindlin (SDNY ret.).



I am not surprised by the attention to this report; it is evidence-based and includes a thoughtful analysis of peer-reviewed literature on the topic of gender inequality. The internet is already buzzing with discussion about the participation of women in the courtroom and in ADR proceedings. Fomenting discussion is a key component to making sure the report has impact; it is intended to be the jumping-off point for a newly framed discussion among all members of our community toward facilitating strategies to make sure women litigators are front and center in court and in ADR proceedings. To aid in this process, the Section has established a "Speakers Bureau" to provide leadership for discussions in legal departments, law firms and law schools—please contact me if you would like to invite one of the volunteers to speak at an event or meeting. The Section will also continue its partnership with the New York State Bar Association's

Committee on Women in the Law; stay tuned for details of the Committee's fall program.

This report was created because of the energy and enthusiasm of our former female Section chairs and our immediate past chair, Mark Berman. It is demonstrable evidence of the value and power of active engagement with colleagues around issues of common interest. While the report is significant for the Section and our community of commercial trial lawyers, it is, fortunately, not the only example of what actively engaged Section members can do for our legal community.

You need only read the other outstanding articles that are contained in this, and every other, edition of the *New York Litigator*, to see what we can do even when we are not being compensated to do it! I commend each author—current and prior—who has gifted their time to enhance the understanding of often complex and unwieldy legal issues. And I thank the members of our new Publications Committee for its efforts in getting this edition of the *Litigator* and our recent *Newsletter* together in such fine form. We have a stellar group of law students from several law schools, and new graduates, who have volunteered to write, edit and report to you.

I congratulate each committee that has taken on an initiative or an assessment of a quirky procedure, a proposed new rule or statute or a court decision that just does not seem right. The Task Force was formed for the purpose of studying a vexing and disturbing problem within our segment of the legal profession. To be sure, this is not the only challenge that is facing our community. I commend to each of you the privilege to identify a material issue or obstacle that you think should be addressed and raise it with your committee chairs or your officers. Commercial trial lawyers have proven repeatedly that they can figure out a way to tackle just about any issue. Get involved; make a difference.

Mitch Katz

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