



September/October 2014

Volume 56, No. 5

www.nysba.org



LAW, YOUTH & CITIZENS

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COMMERCIAL AND FEDERAL LITIGATION SECTION PROFILE

Section Chair Paul Sarkozi explains how members have an impact on national and state issues.

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NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

State Bar News

Talks on mandatory reporting moving forward; President may propose House amendment

By Patricia Sears Doherty

President Glenn Lau-Kee is continuing to pursue a series of what he describes as "productive" discussions with top Judiciary officials in an effort to find a workable accommodation to the State Bar's strenuous objections to a 2013 rule that mandates attorneys report their pro bono hours and charitable contributions on their biennial registration forms.

In those discussions, Lau-Kee said his goal is to ensure that any information about an individual attorney's pro bono work or charitable donations would be collected on an anonymous basis and that all data would be released only in the aggregate.

At press time, Lau-Kee said that the meetings with court officials over the summer have been promising.

"I am quite comfortable with everything that we've talked about," he said.

Lau-Kee said he and President-elect David P. Miranda expect to meet again in September and October with Chief Administrative Judge Gail A. Prudenti and Helaine Barnett, chair of the Chief Judge's Task Force to Expand Access to Civil Legal Services, to "solidify the progress that has been made on this issue. I am optimistic that a solution will be agreed upon."

Assuming the talks with the Judiciary continue to be productive,



Talking of rules—President Glenn Lau-Kee takes a microphone on the floor of the House of Delegates meeting in June. At his request, the House postponed action on a resolution about the mandatory pro bono reporting rule until November so he could pursue talks with top court officials. [Photo by Marty Kerins, Jr.]

Lau-Kee expects, at the November 1 House of Delegates meeting, to propose an amendment to the Executive Committee's pending resolution concerning the mandatory reporting rule

and a ministerial change to a comment to Rule 6.1. of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

In June, the House voted to post-

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Class of 2017: Newest law school students already committed to profession's purpose

By Brandon Vogel

Today's law students go to law school with a purpose: they actually want to be lawyers, say law school deans and admissions officers.

Although fewer in number than recent years, applicants for the class of 2017 seemed to have a career plan in mind before enrolling. They are not there to bide their time.

Applications to ABA-accredited law schools have dropped 39.9 percent since 2004, according to the Law School Admissions Council. Applications gradually decreased each year until slight increases in 2009 and 2010.



Crowding Law Service Day—New 1L students gather to participate in St. John's University's School of Law Day of Service and Reflection in August. [Photo by St. John's University School of Law]

Applications since 2010 have fallen 32.2 percent.

However, some New York law schools have defied the downward

trend and have seen an uptick in the number of applications.

St. John's University School of Law
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Mandatory reporting talks moving forward

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pone action on the resolution in order to allow Lau-Kee time to find a solution to the disagreement.

"I think it is very unusual for the court administration board to amend a rule," said Lau-Kee, "but I think this is an appropriate way for us to proceed."

Continuing debate

Lippman announced the mandatory rule during his State of the Judiciary address in February 2013.

Under the amended Rules of the Chief Administrator (Part 118), attorneys are required to report their pro bono hours and charitable contributions on their biennial registration forms. At the same time, Rule 6.1 was amended to increase from 20 to 50 hours the amount of time attorneys should aspire to perform pro bono work.

Lippman said that the rule, which became effective May 1, 2013, would allow the court system to better assess how the civil legal needs of low-income New Yorkers are being met.

However, many State Bar members have objected to the rule as an invasion of privacy and noted that the

Association has been on record as opposing mandatory reporting of pro bono since 2004.

In addition, a group consisting of members of the Committee on Legal Aid, the President's Committee on Access to Justice and the Pro Bono Coordinators' Network examined aspects of the mandate. Members of the joint working group presented an informational report at the Cooperstown House of Delegates meeting.

Among the report's recommendations:

- Collected information gathered from the attorney registrations should be made public only in the aggregate;
- The State Bar should assist in developing a comprehensive plan to promote pro bono service and contributions;
- That the Office of Court Administration be asked to broaden its definition of pro bono work.

The House of Delegates will meet on November 1 at the State Bar Center in Albany. ♦

Sears Doherty is State Bar News editor.

"Justice is....."

What is it to you? Hon. Gerard Alonzo of Geneseo will create a sculpture on that theme based on definitions offered by members like you. What is "Justice" to you?

Send to Jerry Alonzo, P.O. Box 101, Geneseo, NY 14454, or jerry.alonzo+justice.is@gmail.com or the State Bar News, psearsdoherty@nysba.org.

Correction

A caption under a photograph in the July/August 2014 issue depicting Executive Committee member Elena DeFio Kean speaking at the House of Delegates meeting in Cooperstown incorrectly stated her position on an Executive Committee resolution seeking changes to Rule 6.1 of the New York Code of Professional Conduct. She urged the delegates to vote immediately on the resolution, rather than postponing the outcome until the November House of Delegates meeting. ♦



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Stay up-to-date on the latest
news from the Association



Trailblazing president—On July 16, the New York County Lawyers' Association (NYCLA) and the Asian American Bar Association of New York (AABANY) honored Glenn Lau-Kee for becoming the 117th President of the New York State Bar Association, the first Asian-American to hold this position. Representatives from federal, state and city government attended. The Governor's Office was represented by Mecca Santana, chief diversity officer, who presented the governor's greeting. Sandra Ung, chief legislative assistant for U.S. Rep. Grace Meng, presented a commendation. Jimmy Yan, chief deputy general counsel for New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer, offered congratulations. L-R, Lew Tesser, NYCLA president; Hon. Debra James; Hon. Eileen Bransten; Hon. Lillian Wan; Hon. Gary F. Morton; Presiding Justice Hon. Randall T. Eng; Lau-Kee; Hon. Sheila Abdus-Salaam; Sandra Ung, special assistant to Hon. Grace Meng; Yang Chen, executive director, AABANY; William Wang, president-elect, AABANY; Vincent Chang, NYCLA Foundation chair; Margaret Ling, NYCLA Asian Practice Committee chair and AABANY board member.