



## Speaker Biographies

Christy Asbee

Christy Asbee is a staff attorney at Disability Rights New York. She serves NYS residents with disabilities receiving, interested in receiving, or having difficulty obtaining assistive technology. Christy has helped individuals receive devices such as motorized wheelchairs, speech generating devices, computers and training services, and the like through the VA, state and private health insurance providers, schools, employers, and other funding agencies. Her work helps people live independently, meet educational goals, and find and maintain employment.

Christy received her J.D. from Vermont Law School in 2011. Prior to law school, she received a B.S. from Elmhurst College in Chicago, IL, attended Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, Spain, and worked for two years in Akita, Japan.

Art Cody

Captain Art Cody, USN (Retired) is Deputy Director of the Veterans Defense Program of the New York State Defenders Association. In total, his active and reserve military career spans over thirty years and he is veteran of multiple combat zone deployments. He served aboard *USS Enterprise (CVN-65)* in the initial response to the 9-11 attacks and was most recently deployed to Afghanistan (2011-2012) as the Director of the Rule of Law Section, US Embassy Kabul. As a civilian lawyer, he has represented criminal defendants for over twenty years and currently chairs the Capital Punishment Committee of the New York City Bar Association. He frequently presents nationally on the defense of veterans, provides counsel to lawyers for veterans, and recently served as lead counsel in a veteran capital clemency hearing. A graduate of West Point, Art has a Master's Degree from the University of Southern California and graduated *magna cum laude* from Notre Dame Law School where he was the Executive Editor of the *Notre Dame Law*

*Review* and founded the Notre Dame Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. His military decorations include the Navy Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Naval Aviator Badge, and the German Armed Forces Parachutist Badge.

Benjamin Pomerance

Benjamin Pomerance, Esq., is the Deputy Director for Program Development for the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs. In this role, he serves as the Deputy General Counsel for the agency, as well as working as the agency's Legislative Liaison and overseeing several of the Division's programming initiatives. His work focuses on advocacy and assistance for Veterans, Service members, and their families on a wide range of federal and state issues. He also leads Governor Cuomo's Law School Consortium project, facilitating programs at New York State's law schools offering pro bono legal services for Veterans.

Apart from his work for the Division, scholarly journals at Albany, Belmont, Delaware, Florida Coastal, Gonzaga, Hamline, Ohio Northern, Marquette, and Maryland law schools have published or will soon publish Benjamin's articles on topics ranging from elder law to the federal judiciary to freedom of speech in post-revolutionary governments. He also contributed a chapter to an internationally published elder law anthology. The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims has cited his written work about the United States Department of Veterans Affairs' federal fiduciary system.

His recent speaking engagements include panel discussions at the 2016 and 2015 international Law & Society Conferences, the International Elder Law & Policy Conference, and the International Conference on Contracts, as well as leading and moderating programs in every region of New York State regarding benefits and services for Veterans and their families.

Benjamin graduated as the salutatorian of his class from Albany Law School in 2013. While at Albany Law, he founded and directed the school's Veterans' Rights Pro Bono Project, for which he received the "President's Pro Bono Service Award" from the New York State Bar Association. He served as the Executive Editor for Symposium for the *Albany Law Review*, led the school's student chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, and published a report about human rights concerns confronting America's aging prison population as an Edgar & Margaret Sandman Fellow with the Government Law Center.

Apart from his work in the law, Benjamin is an avid arts journalist with more than 500 published articles, a pursuit for which he has received first-place awards in feature writing from the New York State Press Association.