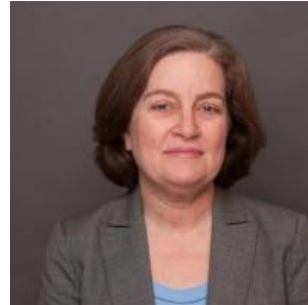




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Jean Marie Brescia, the firm's Senior Litigating Attorney, is a graduate of Harvard Law School and is admitted to practice in New York and the U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York. After graduating from law school, Jean Marie worked as an associate at Sullivan & Cromwell. From 1988 to 1994, Jean Marie was a staff attorney in the Civil Division of the Legal Aid Society in New York City and then an appellate attorney in its Juvenile Rights Division. Jean Marie received The Legal Aid Society's Pro Bono Service Award for her work in the area of juvenile rights. Since 1995, Jean Marie has been an active New York impartial hearing officer (IHO), presiding over and deciding more than 500 special education due process hearings. In addition to her highly respected work as an IHO, Jean Marie has been an Adjunct Professor of Law at New York Law School, teaching Special Education Law and Practice. At Mayerson & Associates, Jean Marie litigates at all trial and appellate levels. Most recently, she was instrumental on the appellate work in *T.K. v. DOE*, a landmark "bullying" case decided by a unanimous panel of the Second Circuit on January 20, 2016. She also devotes a portion of her time to acting as a mentor to more junior attorneys and law interns. Jean Marie served for many years on the PTA in her community, focusing much of her work on ensuring adequate provision of educational resources to English language learners and economically underprivileged children.



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Andrew K. Cuddy is the founder and managing attorney of the Cuddy Law Firm. He is an alumnus of The College of the Holy Cross (B.A., Philosophy) and upon graduation received a commission as an officer in the United States Marine Corps. He served on active duty for nearly five years and is a combat veteran of the First Persian Gulf War. Remaining in the Marine Corps Reserves while attending law school, he was recalled to active duty for service in Somalia and attained the rank of captain. He completed his legal studies at SUNY Buffalo Law School (J.D., 1996).

Andy initially practiced criminal defense law. In 2001, a case with overlapping special education issues introduced him to the challenges faced by the families of children with special needs. Special education cases soon became the major focus of his law practice. He has initiated due process hearings against over 100 school districts in New York State; speaks widely on special education topics to parents, educators and health care professionals; and is the author of *The Special Education Battlefield: A Guide to the Due Process Hearing and Other Tools of Effective Advocacy*. The Firm expanded in 2012 to other areas of disability law, including special needs planning, guardianship and appeals of decisions of the New York State Office of Persons with Developmental Disabilities. He serves as a member of the board of directors of Unity House, Inc., a nonprofit agency that provides transitional and permanent housing, respite care and rehabilitative and employment services to adults with mental health challenges, chemical dependencies and developmental disabilities. He resides in Auburn with his wife and two sons.



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Barbara J. Ebenstein, Esq. is a parent and an attorney with law offices in New Rochelle, New York. Her practice focuses on the representation of parents in special education, general education, and related matters. Barbara is an adjunct associate professor at New York University where she teaches the graduate courses in Education Law. Barbara served as a member of the Disability Policy Committee of the presidential campaign of Barack Obama, and she served as one of the surrogates speaking on disability issues on behalf of the campaign.

Barbara also serves as an impartial hearing officer in New York City and Long Island, and as a Vocational Rehabilitation hearing officer. She represent families in Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, and all other counties outside New York City and Long Island. Barbara has extensive experience conducting CLE for attorneys and workshops for parents, advocates, school personnel, and other professionals from Hawaii to New Hampshire. She served as the lead instructor for the New York pilot site of the SEAT Project (Special Education Advocacy Training) and she serves as an attorney skills trainer for the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA). Barbara has authored articles on special education law from the parents' perspective for numerous national publications. Barbara served as Chair of the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA) from 2005 to 2006. Barbara J. Ebenstein holds a J.D. from Pace University Law School, a M.A. in Education from Teachers College of Columbia University, and a B.A. cum laude from Boston University. Complete curriculum vitae is available on request.



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Tara Moffett concentrates her practice in the area of education law with a focus on special education. She is experienced in the field of special education, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Her practice includes consultation, negotiation, mediation, litigation and appellate work in state administrative proceedings and federal court. She is a frequent presenter on special education law and current issues affecting students with disabilities. Ms. Moffett provides guidance and training to school districts on general education matters such as confidentiality of student records, residency issues, bullying and discipline. She also provides training and guidance on issues related to school district board policies, employment policies, investigation of discrimination and sexual harassment and related concerns.

Ms. Moffett is admitted to practice before the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York and in the State of New York.

Ms. Moffett is a cum laude graduate of the State University of New York at Albany and a graduate of Albany Law School of Union University. In law school, she completed a concentration in international law and received the Disabilities Law Clinic Prize.

Ms. Moffett is a member of the Executive Board for the New York State Special Education Task Force, and is a member of the Capital Region Special Education Task Force. She is the immediate past chair and current member of the Committee on Disability Rights for the New York State Bar Association, and is on the School to Prison Pipeline Task Force for the State Bar Association. She recently served on the Executive Board and as a Board member for the Colonie Youth Center. Ms. Moffett participates annually in fundraising for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and the Community Hospice. Ms. Moffett is a member of the Albany-Colonie Chamber of Commerce Capital Leadership Alumni Association and a 2004 graduate of its Leadership Program.



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Karen Norlander, has served special counsel to Girvin & Ferlazzo, P.C. since 1999, representing individual school districts in special education matters and supports the firm's special education law practice through the development of training programs and preventive law initiatives. She also is counsel to the statewide Council of New York Special Education Administrators (CNYSEA) and legal advisor to the National Publishing Resources, for which she developed the first in a series of DVDs on Response to Intervention (RTI) and laminates on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Ms. Norlander began her legal career in Westchester County, where she served as general counsel to Student Advocacy, Inc., and represented families and children in family court matters. In 1989, Ms. Norlander moved with her family to Albany, NY to join the Office of Counsel as a managing attorney in elementary, middle and secondary education at the New York State Education Department. In 1995, she became general counsel to Statewide Youth Advocacy, Inc., where she wrote and lectured extensively on children's rights issues and resumed an active practice in the family courts.

Ms. Norlander has successfully represented school district in hearing, appeals, and litigation in cases involving children with disabilities and civil rights. Most recently, as a consultant to Southern Westchester BOCES, Ms. Norlander developed and delivered professional development training for administrators and professional staff responsible concerning the implementation of the Dignity of All Students Act. She has also taught graduate level courses at the College of St. Rose and the State University of New York at Albany, and has taught an undergraduate course at Russell Sage College. Ms. Norlander is a frequent presenter and faculty member at statewide conferences on matters involving students and educational entitlements.



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TARA ANNE PLEAT, Esq., co-owns the law firm Wilcenski & Pleat PLLC. She practices in the areas of special needs estate planning and administration, traditional estate planning and administration, long-term care planning, and elder law. Tara graduated *cum laude* from Albany Law School with honors in the Estate Planning concentration and earned her undergraduate degree from the State University of New York at Albany.

Tara is the Vice-Chair of the Elder Law and Special Needs Section of the New York State Bar Association. Tara is the co-editor in chief of the publications committee of the Elder Law Section of the New York State Bar Association which publishes the Elder and Special Needs Law Journal on a quarterly basis. She is also an active member of the Trusts and Estates Law Section, where she serves as District Delegate for the Fourth Judicial District. She is honored to be a member of the Special Needs Alliance, an invitation-only, national network of leading attorneys dedicated to the practice of disability and public benefits law. She is also a Member of the Academy of Special Needs Planners and the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys.

In March of 2016, Tara was elected as a Fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC). ACTEC Fellows are selected on the basis of experience, professional reputation and ability in the fields of trusts and estates and on the basis of having made substantial contributions to these fields through lecturing, writing, teaching and bar activities.

Tara is a Past President of the Board of Directors of the Estate Planning Council of Eastern New York. In addition, Tara is a graduate of the 2006 class of Leadership Saratoga, sponsored by the Saratoga Springs Chamber of Commerce, and currently is a member of the Leadership Saratoga Advisory Board. Tara is a Member of the Board of Directors of AIM Services, Inc., a disability service organization based in Saratoga Springs, New York. She is a Member of the Board of Directors of the Wesley Community, a continuing care community for seniors in Saratoga Springs, New York as well serves on the Board of the Wesley Foundation. Tara also chairs the Planned Giving Committee of the Wildwood Foundation, an organization that supports Wildwood Programs, a school for individuals with disabilities in Albany, New York.





In the fall of 2012, Tara was appointed as an adjunct professor of law at Albany Law School, where she teaches a course in the spring semester on estate and financial planning for the elderly and individuals with special needs.

### **Recent Presentations**

*Drafting Special Needs Trusts*, New York State Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Program for Attorneys, December 2013, Albany, New York

*Life Planning for Families of Students with Disabilities*, New York State Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Program for Attorneys, November 2013, Albany, New York

*The Changing Landscape of Planning for Individuals with Permanent and Significant Disabilities*, Albany Law School Continuing Legal Education, August 2013, Saratoga Springs, New York

*Probate & Trust Law*, 2013 NYS Paralegal Education & Leadership Conference, May 2013, Saratoga Springs, New York

*Legal Duties and Responsibilities of a Guardian under Article 81*, New York State Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Program for Attorneys, May 2013, Latham, New York

*Guardianship Probate Proceedings*, New York State Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Program for Attorneys, December 2012, Latham, New York

*Introduction to Special Needs Trusts*, Albany Law School Continuing Legal Education Program for Graduates, November 2012, Albany, New York

*Retirement Planning with Trusts*, New York State Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Program for Attorneys, May 2012, Latham, New York

*Medicaid Application Process and Medicaid Estate Recovery*, National Business Institute Continuing Legal Education Programs for Attorneys, May 2012, Albany, New York

*Medicaid Home Care*, Schenectady County Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Program for Attorneys, March 2012, Scotia, New York

*Retirement Benefits and Supplemental Needs Trusts*, New York State Bar Association Elder Law Section Annual Meeting, January 2012, New York, New York

### **Recent Publications**

*State Court Case Puts Trustees of Special Needs Trusts on Alert*, Estate Planning Magazine, March 2014, co-authored with Edward V. Wilcenski, Esq.



*ABLE ACT of 2011: Good Intentions, Questionable Results*, New York State Bar Association Elder and Special Needs Law Journal, December 2012, co-authored with Edward V. Wilcenski Esq.

*A Summary of Medicaid Waiver Programs: Available for Individuals with Special Needs and Their Families in New York State*, New York State Bar Association Elder Law Section, January 2010

*Special Needs Trusts and Retirement Benefits: Compromises and Opportunities When Disability and Distributions Collide*, Estate Planning Magazine, February 2009, co-authored with Edward V. Wilcenski, Esq.





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Kenneth S. Ritzenberg maintains an extensive education law practice. His primary focus is special education, and he has represented over 20 school districts and hundreds of families in administrative proceedings and in federal court throughout New York State. He is the founder of the Capital District Special Education Breakfast Group.

In addition to his education practice, Ken has represented clients in almost every aspect of private and public sector labor and employment law for over 20 years.

He graduated cum laude from Syracuse University College of Law following a 10-year college teaching career.