



**Adrienne Arkontaky, Esq.**

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Adrienne J. Arkontaky is the Vice President of the Cuddy Law Firm and Managing Attorney of the White Plains office. Adrienne's practice focuses on special education advocacy and litigation, special needs estate planning including special needs trust administration and litigation, guardianship, Medicaid, OPWDD and other administrative appeals.

Adrienne's work is devoted to addressing the legal needs of families with loved ones with disabilities. Throughout her career, she has assisted families in obtaining appropriate educational services for their children with special needs. She also assists families to plan for the future by developing special needs estate plans that focus on the unique needs of the individual that protect access to government benefit programs. Using a holistic approach to planning, she discusses the potential need for guardianship and/or advance directives and special needs trusts. Adrienne also represents families in Medicaid, OPWDD and other administrative appeals.

Adrienne previously served as the Pro Bono Coordinator for a major law firm and a Medicaid Service Coordinator for Family Connection in Westchester, NY, an agency providing case management for families of children with disabilities. She founded and was supervising partner of a special education practice group of a New York-based law firm advocating for the rights of students with special education needs throughout New York State including New York City. She dedicates a portion of her practice representing underserved population and non-English speaking families in due process hearings.

Adrienne received her Juris Doctor degree from Pace University School of Law and received her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Iona College.

Adrienne is the Chairperson of the Special Education Committee and a member of both the Special Needs Planning Committee and the executive committee of the Elder Law and Special Needs Section of the New York State Bar Association, a Past Co-Editor of the Elder Law and Special Needs Law Journal, Co-Chair of the Education Committee and Past Co-Chair of the Lawyering and Parenting Committee for the Westchester Women's Bar Association. Adrienne is also a member of the Disability Rights Committee for the New York State Bar Association. She also serves as statewide chairperson of the New York State Special Education Law update, a statewide



continuing legal education program and a proud member of the Council of Parent Attorney and Advocates.

Adrienne was recently honored as an outstanding advocate by the PULSES organization of Orange County for her work on behalf of students with disabilities. In addition, she was named "A Rising Star" in Super Lawyers 2013 and one of the Top Attorneys in the Metro Region for 2014, 2015 and 2016.

In addition to her commitments to her clients, Adrienne is the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the John A. Coleman School with campuses in Yonkers and White Plains, NY.

Adrienne lives in Hawthorne with her husband, Pete. She has three wonderful daughters, one who is a Neonatal Intensive Care Nurse, one with severe cognitive and physical disabilities who lives at the Center for Discovery in Harris, NY and one who is a theater major at Roger Williams University in Rhode Island.



**Stephanie Burns, Esq.**

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Stephanie L. Burns is a member of the White Plains law firm of Keane & Beane, P.C. Her practice is concentrated in the representation of public school districts and municipalities in Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess and Rockland Counties. Ms. Burns has been with Keane & Beane, P.C. since 1997. Ms. Burns handles student disciplinary proceedings, appeals to the Commissioner of Education, impartial special education hearings and employee disciplinary proceedings.

Ms. Burns advises school districts and municipalities in all phases of construction, including general conditions, architect and management agreements, competitive bidding, change orders, arbitrations and litigations. She also advises public entities with respect to Freedom of Information and Open Meetings law issues, contracts and real property tax assessment.

Ms. Burns is admitted in the state and federal courts of New York and New Jersey. Ms. Burns has a B.A. (cum laude) from Colgate University (1992), a M.S. in Geology from Dartmouth College (1994) and a J.D. (cum laude) and Environmental Law Certificate from Pace University School of Law (1997). Ms. Burns is a member of the New York State Bar Association, Westchester County Bar Association (Immediate Past President), Westchester Women's Bar Association and New York State School Boards Association.

Ms. Burns resides in Patterson, New York with her husband Peter and two children.



**Jesse Cutler, Esq.**

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Jesse knew he would be entering the field of special education as early as high school when he was volunteering in a program for special education teenagers. He came to work for Regina Skyer while attending college and at that time began to learn about the legal process as it pertains to special education. While in college (S.U.N.Y. Albany) he worked in the New York State assembly, and still closely follows the legislature as it pertains to special education law.

Jesse joined our firm as an associate upon receiving his J.D. from Brooklyn Law School in 2002 and became a partner in 2004. He works closely with Regina on all aspects of firm management and is in charge of the Litigation and Appeal Team. Jesse works on all of the firm's federal court appeals and is admitted to practice in each of the federal districts of New York.

Jesse regularly lectures on special education policies, procedures and litigation strategies to parent and attorney groups. He has published decisions on the federal and state level.

Jesse lives in Brooklyn Heights with his wife, an editor and author of children's books, and his two sons.



**Michele Kule-Korgood, Esq.**  
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Michele Kule-Korgood has devoted more than twenty-three years in private practice to representing parents of children with disabilities in order to secure an effective education for their children. While studying psychology as an undergraduate, Michele became a personal care assistant for a classmate with cerebral palsy. Her classmate's refusal to be defined by his disability inspired Michele to pursue a career in teaching special education. Years later, as a special education teacher, Michele's efforts to help a student obtain assistive technology, so he could have a voice in the world, again changed the course of her life. In order to effect change for a greater number of people, she decided to attend law school and become a legal advocate on behalf of people with disabilities. Today, Michele is one of the most well-known, respected attorneys in the field and has successfully handled thousands of matters in special education, ensuring that every child receives equal access to the high quality education to which he or she is entitled.

Her experience working closely with other professionals in the field, as well as her extensive knowledge of educational programs, allow Michele to assist parents in finding and accessing appropriate placements and services. As a former special educator, Michele brings unique insight into the complex issues related to obtaining effective opportunities for children.

Nationally, Michele is highly sought after as a speaker on special education law and policy. She has chaired many conferences, and presented on various topics in special education law at numerous conferences, including those held by the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA), the New York State Bar Association, the Practising Law Institute, and Lehigh University, and at various agencies which provide education and advocacy services. Michele has argued and presented cases involving novel issues in the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals, Eastern and Southern District Courts, the Appellate Division and state Supreme Court (including as lead counsel, along with Greenberg, Traurig, in the landmark decision of *Mr. and Mrs. A v. N.Y. City Dep't of Educ.* (S.D.N.Y. 2011), holding that the exercise of rights under IDEA cannot be made to depend on the financial means of a disabled child's parents, and extending the right for direct tuition payment to schools for parents without economic means, pursuant to the *Burlington/Carter* analysis). She has a number of published decisions in various courts in special education and additional education-related areas of law.



**Kerry McGrath, Esq.**  
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Kerry McGrath is a senior attorney in the Firm's White Plains office. Her practice is focused on special education advocacy and litigation. Kerry is a graduate of Syracuse University (B.A., magna cum laude, Maxwell School of Public Citizenship), City College of New York (M.S., Ed.) and New York Law School (J.D.) and is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa national honor society.

Prior to beginning a career in special education law, Kerry was employed as a teacher in the New York City public schools and taught English as a Second Language at Intermediate School 52 as a member of the New York City Teaching Fellows Program. As a law student, she was a member of the Justice Action Center, participated in the civil rights clinic and participated in the New York Law School Street Law Program, in which she taught constitutional law to middle school students in the Bronx. She coached the winning team at the New York Law School Moot Court Competition.

Kerry resides in Washington Heights with her husband and her dog, Ginsburg.



**Lauren Mechaly, Esq.**  
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Lauren I. Mechaly focuses her practice on elder law, special needs planning, estate planning, and estate administration.

As an elder law practitioner, she assists seniors with a variety of legal issues, including estate planning and long-term care planning. This also includes establishing and maintaining eligibility for means-tested government benefits, assisting in nursing home admissions and obtaining homecare services for the elderly.

As a special needs practitioner, Ms. Mechaly assists individuals with special needs and their families in promoting the best quality of life for disabled individuals. She assists in establishing and maintaining eligibility for government benefits, and in obtaining community support and services for individuals with disabilities. She also assists financial institutions and corporate fiduciaries with judicial and administrative accountings, and offers counseling in the administration of special needs trusts.

As an estate planner, Ms. Mechaly deals with issues pertaining to estate and tax planning and asset preservation. She assists clients with the tax efficient transfer of assets during life and after death, crafting customized estate plans to meet the individual needs of her clients. This includes the preparation of estate planning documents such as Wills, Trusts and Advance Directives.

Ms. Mechaly has authored and/or co-authored articles relating to various matters in her practice areas.

Prior to joining Schenck, Price, Smith & King, LLP, Ms. Mechaly was an associate in the Private Clients, Trusts & Estates group of a large firm in New York City.





**Jeffrey Schiro, Esq.**

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Jeffrey J. Schiro is a New York State certified Impartial Hearing Officer with extensive experience in special education and student discipline matters. Prior to his certification, Mr. Schiro practiced in the field of education law for thirteen years where he regularly represented school districts at special education impartial hearings and appeals and before the Commissioner of Education. Mr. Schiro has also appeared before the Second Circuit and in the Southern District on claims alleging Section 1983, IDEA, Section 504 and ADA violations.

Mr. Schiro has lectured extensively throughout the state on legal issues affecting public education. He has spoken on the topics of emerging issues in special education and student discipline at seminars sponsored by the Practicing Law Institute and the New York State Bar Association.

Mr. Schiro is admitted to practice in the courts of the State of New York, the United States District Courts for the Southern, Eastern and Northern Districts of New York, the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and the Supreme Court of the United States.

Mr. Schiro is a cum laude graduate of Albany Law School of Union University and a magna cum laude graduate of Hamilton College.





**Rebecca Shore, Esq.**

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Rebecca Shore has served as the Director of Litigation at Advocates for Children of New York since 2008. After clerking in the United States District Court for the District of Maryland, she was a litigation associate at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP where she worked on numerous special education cases and class and individual lawsuits involving disability discrimination. Immediately prior to joining AFC, Rebecca was a staff attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & AIDS Project, working on disability discrimination lawsuits against corporate and governmental entities. As AFC's Director of Litigation, Rebecca oversees all impact litigation, including class actions, individual and group lawsuits, IDEA appeals, and state and federal administrative complaints. She has served as class and plaintiffs' counsel in, among others, *L.V. v. New York City Dep't of Educ.*, *D.S. v. New York City Dep't of Educ.*, *E.B. v. New York City Dep't of Educ.*, and *C.D. v. New York City Dep't of Educ.*



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Tracey Spencer Walsh is a 1994 graduate of the Fordham University School of Law and has also taught the "Special Education Law" course as an Adjunct Law Professor at Fordham Law School. Tracey also is the Co-Founder and is Chair of the New York State Bar Association's Committee on Special Education.

Tracey has litigated and settled hundreds of IDEA cases for private school tuition reimbursement on behalf of students with disabilities, such as autism, Down syndrome, genetic disorders, learning disabilities, and emotional disturbance. Tracey has also been successful in cases involving compensatory education.

Tracey also is experienced in arguing sophisticated special education law appeals in federal courts, including in the Circuit Courts of Appeals. Tracey is admitted to practice in New York and Connecticut and also is admitted to the U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York, the Second and Eleventh Circuit Courts of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court.

Tracey successfully argued *R.K. v. New York City Dept of Educ.* before the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, helping to define the limits of the "due deference" doctrine in New York, Connecticut and Vermont. Tracey also argued before the Eleventh Circuit in *R.L. v. Miami-Dade County School Board* in a case of first impression in the Eleventh Circuit involving the issue of "predetermination." In *R.L.* Tracey successfully argued that the school district denied R.L. a free appropriate public education ("FAPE") when it illegally predetermined the student's placement - an issue that had never been decided before by the Eleventh Circuit (which includes Florida, Georgia and Alabama).

Among numerous decisions in favor of students, Tracey also is responsible for a decision ordering the New York City Department of Education to not only "include" a student with Down Syndrome in a mainstream classroom but to hire an "inclusion specialist" and an independent Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

Tracey is widely published on a variety of special education law issues, including tuition reimbursement, funding for home services, and bullying. In addition to her writing, Tracey often is a featured speaker at national special education conferences as well as the annual conferences sponsored by the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates



(COPAA). Tracey has given presentations at COPAA's conferences and the Independent Educational Consultants' Association (IECA) conferences

Tracey has also worked on many pro bono matters, including amicus briefs filed on behalf of Autism Speaks. Tracey assisted with an exciting and important amicus brief on behalf of Autism Speaks - Ermini v. Vittori. This case involved a custody dispute under the Hague Convention. A couple, citizens of Italy came to the United States so that their son with autism could access applied behavior analysis ("ABA") intervention. The couple separated and the father returned to Italy and sought the court's intervention to return the children to him in Italy. The Second Circuit ruled that the child could remain in the United States with his mother so that he could continue his autism intervention through which he was making progress. Tracey is listed as a resource on the Autism Speaks website.



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IHO Mindy G. Wolman has been certified as an Impartial Hearing Officer for IDEA due process Hearings in New York State since 1999. She has presided at IDEA and Section 504 hearings in New York City and in all counties of New York State. Her law practice is currently limited exclusively to serving as an IHO. She has also served as an Arbitrator for the United States Postal Service and was appointed to the Register of Mediators for the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York.

IHO Wolman received J.D. from the Hofstra University School of Law and a B.A. in Psychology from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Prior to attending law school, she worked in the field of biomedical and professional ethics at The Hastings Center. Upon graduation from law school, she served as a Law Clerk in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York. She was in private practice for many years, including serving as partner in a general practice law firm. IHO Wolman also served as referee and guardian ad litem in the Supreme Court of the State of New York (Queens and New York counties), graded the essay portion of the New York Bar exam, and worked as a contract/free-lance author for Matthew Bender and Company and the New York Law Journal.

IHO Wolman has been a faculty member at IHO training and recertification programs, and has given presentations at the Practicing Law Institute special education law programs. She is admitted to practice in the courts of the State of New York and the United States District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York. IHO Wolman also served on the Executive Committee of the New York State Administrative Law Judges Association.