

# Message from the Incoming Chair

With the holiday season (as wonderful as it was) now in the past, and the new year (with all of the promise that it brings) upon us, the officers of our Section and I wish you the very best for 2019. We hope that you enjoy a year of health, happiness, and personal and professional growth, and that our Section contributes to making 2019 a success for you.



Apropos of our recent Annual Meeting, I would like to thank my predecessor, Natalia Murphy, for her excellent service as Chair of our Section in 2018. Natalia provided thoughtful, focused leadership to our Section, and set a wonderful example for the Section members with whom she worked closely and tirelessly. Thank you, Natalia, and congratulations on a job well-done!

In addition, I would like to congratulate Hon. John M. Czygier, Jr. for receiving the Chair's Award at the Annual Meeting. Having practiced before Surrogate Czygier for ten years, I can personally attest to the excellent job that he did as the Surrogate of Suffolk County, running a user-friendly court that has a wonderful staff and a fine reputation. I can also attest to the fact that Surrogate Czygier is a dedicated member of our Section who is active on our Executive Committee and has been for many years. We appreciate Surrogate Czygier's contributions to our Section and salute him for his excellent tenure as a judge.

Before concluding, I would like to update you on the many exciting plans that the officers and I have for 2019. We anticipate that the next year will be a busy one for our Section.

Angelo Grasso, Brian Corrigan, and I have planned an exciting Spring Meeting, which will take place at the Ritz-Carlton in Naples, Florida from May 16-19, 2019. The 2019 Spring Meeting will address trust-related topics and feature the following speakers: Natalia Murphy (socially responsible prudent investing for trustees); Elisa Rizzo (minimizing trustee risk); Michael Schwartz and Amy Beller (Florida trust issues about which the New York practitioner should be aware); Hon. Vincent W. Versaci, Gary Freidman and Frank Santoro (successfully litigating trust contests); Hon. Theresa Whelan and Eric Penzer (ethics); Toni Ann Kruse (state income taxation for trustees, which

is a hot topic and will be considered by the United States Supreme Court later this year); Hon. Acea Mosey (resolving litigation through trusts); and Surrogate Czygier, Hon. Peter Kelly, Hon. Margaret Reilly, and Hon. Stacy Pettit (Breakfast with the Surrogates).

The Section's officers and I are pleased to share that, with the assistance of Michael Schwartz and Lois Bladykas, the Section has established its Rising Star Fellowship Program. We are delighted to welcome Sarah Pickering as the Section's inaugural Rising Star Fellow.

Later this year, our Section will host cocktail parties in Manhattan, the Capital District, and Long Island. The first of those events will take place on March 12, 2019, at Al Pastor in Manhattan. We hope to see you there!

Last but certainly not least (under the wonderful leadership of Georgiana Slade, the chair of the Section's Legislation and Governmental Relations Committee), our Section will continue to advocate for new legislation, including but not limited to the enactment of a New York Trust Code and a directed trust proposal (which Professor Ira Bloom has spearheaded). Hopefully, we will be able to report legislative successes to you as the year proceeds.

Thank you for your involvement in our Section. I look forward to updating you on our Section's successes as 2019 ensues. If I can help make your experience as a Section member even the slightest bit better, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Robert M. Harper**

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