

**The New York State Bar Association
Committee on Civil Rights**

2012 Haywood Burns Memorial Award Reception

Honoring

Bryan D. Hetherington

Chief Counsel of the Empire Justice Center in Rochester



Bryan D. Hetherington, Esq.

Bryan Hetherington has served as chief counsel of the Empire Justice Center in Rochester since January 2004. As Chief Counsel, Bryan is responsible for managing the legal work of Empire Justice. He previously was chief counsel of the Public Interest Law Office of Rochester, a nonprofit he founded in 1996.

Bryan came to Rochester in 1980 to serve as Litigation Director of Monroe County Legal Assistance Corporation. From 1980 through 1996 he also served as project director of the Western New York Disability Law Project, which provided disability advocacy in the 19-county Western District of New York.

Most of his career has involved complex litigation and other non-litigation advocacy with regard to social services programs, education, housing and civil rights.

He has litigated several notable court cases, including *Schisler v. [Secretary of HHS]*, which forced a review of almost 30,000 cases where federal disability benefits had been terminated, and *Catanzano v. Richardson, 89 CV 1127L* (W.D.N.Y), which forced the state to restructure its home health care system so it would provide the level of care ordered by the patient's doctor. His litigation has included cases invalidating durational residency requirements for public assistance benefits; invalidating a regulation that reduced benefits because of the presence of individuals receiving SSI benefits in public assistance households; restructuring special education services in Rochester so that students with disabilities can obtain high school diplomas; preserving and improving the consent decree governing minority police hiring in Rochester and challenging state requirements that lead to economic and racial segregation in New York schools.

Bryan is a graduate of LaSalle College and the Cornell Law School. Prior to moving to Rochester, he was the managing attorney of Mid-Hudson Legal Services, Inc. He began his career as a staff attorney with the Mid-Hudson Legal Assistance Project in 1975.

He serves on the boards of a number of not-for-profit health, affordable housing and community organizations. He served on the Advisory Committee to the State Commissioner of Social Services for 19 years. He is immediate past chair of the Greater Rochester Health Foundation and past co-chair of the Rochester Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning.

Bryan is currently president of the Monroe County Bar Association. Within the New York State Bar Association, Bryan is a member of the House of Delegates and the President's Committee on Access to Justice.