

## **Speaker Biographies**



# DAVID R. ADAMS, ESQ.

## Biography

David R. Adams is a member of Hurwitz & Fine, P.C. Mr. Adams has extensive experience defending clients in construction accidents/New York Labor Law, construction defect, environmental toxic exposure, product liability, transportation negligence and other complex and catastrophic injury litigation. Mr. Adams heads the firm's New York Labor Law practice group and is the editor of the firm's monthly electronic newsletter *Labor Law Pointers*, which provides a review and analysis of the most current and significant New York State Labor Law cases. He also has significant experience handling environmental litigation and toxic exposure lawsuits, having handled matters including the initial and current Love Canal litigation.

Mr. Adams heads the firm's 24-Hour Emergency Response Team for construction site accidents and is a member of the firm's 24-Hour Emergency Response Team for trucking accidents.

Mr. Adams is a member and past President of the Western New York Defense Trial Lawyers Association, a member of the New York State Bar Association, (Trial Lawyers, Torts, Insurance and Compensation and the Labor and Employment Law sections), a member of the Bar Association of Erie County and a member of the Western New York Trial Lawyers Association.

He earned his Juris Doctor from the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Law where he was awarded the Connelly Award for outstanding performance in trial technique and was selected to the UB Law School National Mock Trial Team. Mr. Adams is a cum laude graduate of Canisius College.

Noted for his excellent reputation in Construction Litigation by New York Super Lawyers Magazine, Mr. Adams is a frequent speaker and lecturer on New York State Labor Law and risk transfer issues.



# **HON. THOMAS P. (TIM) FRANCIZYK**

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Thomas P. (Tim) Franczyk is a recently retired (December, 2017) Erie County Court Judge who serves as Co-Director of the Trial Advocacy Program at the University at Buffalo School of Law. He also coaches National Trial Teams and has taught Evidence, Professional Responsibility and Trial Technique. He has been an Adjunct Instructor of Law at the Law School since 1994. Judge Franczyk has overseen and coordinated the Buffalo Niagara Trial Competition (one of the largest competitions in the country) since 2004. He is also a member of the Judicial Advisory Committee on the Guide to New York Evidence.

Judge Franczyk also serves as the Director of CLE Training for the Assigned Council Program of Erie County. He has also presented on matters of substantive law, procedure and evidence to judges on behalf of the Office of Court Administration, to lawyers, (New York State Bar Association, New York State Trial Lawyers Association, Erie County Assigned Counsel Program, National Business Institute), to recent law graduates (Video Presentation on Evidence for the New York State Law Exam) and to law students.

Judge Franczyk was an Erie County Court Judge for ten years and a Buffalo City Court Judge for the preceding decade (1996-2006). In addition to presiding over criminal cases and some civil trials (as an Acting State Supreme Court Judge), he also served as Domestic Violence Judge in both courts. Before that, he was a prosecutor with the Erie County District Attorney's Office for 14 years.

In 1982, Franczyk graduated from Syracuse University College of Law where he was a member of the National Trial Team which was a national finalist in the National Trial Competition. He also received the Syracuse Defense Group Award for Excellence in Trial Advocacy.

Other recognitions include: Special Services Award (Erie County Bar Association 2019); Outstanding Jurist Award (Erie County Bar Association 2010); Award for Judicial Excellence (Western New York Trial Lawyers Association, 2017), Ken Joyce Award for Excellence in Teaching (UB Law School, 2014), Distinguished Non-Alumnus Award (UB Law School, 2010), Prosecutor of the Year Award (BPD Detective Sergeant's Association, 1992).

Franczyk resides in Buffalo with his wife, Michele, a retired school teacher. They have twin daughters, Clare and Natalie, age 31, who live in Richmond Virginia, and one granddaughter, Bella, age one, who is as her name describes in all relevant respects.

Franczyk is also a member of the Kensingtons Rock-and-Roll band which plays all over Western New York.



# SHARON STERN GERSTMAN

## Biography

Sharon Stern Gerstman is counsel to the Buffalo, New York law Firm of Magavern Magavern Grimm LLP. She concentrates in the areas of mediation and arbitration, litigation and appellate practice.

### Practice Areas

Appellate Practice (/practice-areas/appellate-practice/), Litigation (/practice-areas/litigation/),  
Mediation and Arbitration

### Experience

She has taught in the law schools of University of Toledo, University of Missouri-Kansas City, and University at Buffalo, where she taught New York Practice for 30 years. She is the author of numerous law review articles, is a co-author of *New York Civil Practice* (James Publishing), and is on the editorial board of Weinstein Korn and Miller, *New York Civil Practice: CPLR*.

In addition to law school teaching, Ms. Gerstman's professional experience includes 29 years of service as Court Attorney/Referee and Principal Law Clerk in New York State Supreme Court, where her primary responsibility was mediating civil cases to settlement.

### Court Admissions

She is admitted to practice in all of the state courts in New York and Pennsylvania and before the United States Supreme Court.

### Professional & Community Associations

Ms. Gerstman has served on the Board of Governors of the American Bar Association and continues to serve in its House of Delegates. She is Immediate Past President of the New York State Bar Association and serves in its Executive Committee and its House of Delegates.

She is a past director of the Bar Association of Erie County and a past president of the Erie County Bar Foundation and of the Women Lawyers of Western New York. She has received numerous awards from various bar associations and is a life fellow of the American Bar Foundation and of the New York State Bar Foundation. She is also an elected member of the American Law Institute.

### Education

Ms. Gerstman received her bachelor's degree from Brown University, her juris doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh, and her master's in law from Yale Law School.





# **RICHARD A. HALL, IV, ESQ.**

## **Biography**

I grew up in North Buffalo and currently live in Amherst with my wife and three children. My mother was a teacher in the city of Buffalo, and my father was a salesman with Proctor & Gamble. I graduated from Canisius High School where I was a standout on the football team. I obtained my undergraduate degree and law degree from SUNY Buffalo.

Early in my career, I did work for numerous insurance companies and big corporations, this experience changed my life for the better. I quickly learned that insurance companies and big corporations have only one goal: to put profits over people. I knew first hand that the insurance companies and big corporations were hurting far more people and families than they were ever helping. I became a plaintiff's lawyer because helping people should be a priority. Now I use my experience with the insurance companies and big corporations to help others, instead, of harming them.

Helping people and families that suffer when big companies break important safety rules has become my passion. As a community, we must hold companies accountable for breaking the safety rules that keep us all safe. Holding these companies accountable for the harm they have caused helps keep all of us and our families safe. As a community, we must deter these companies from breaking our safety rules because behavior rewarded is behavior repeated.

Since becoming a Plaintiff's lawyer I have obtained numerous verdicts in excess of a million dollars, some of the largest verdicts of their type in New York State. The juries that awarded those verdicts told me afterward that they understood the importance of their role on the jury as community leaders. Those leaders simply could not stand by while members of our community were harmed by safety rule violators. Those jury members knew that their verdict would help stop the safety rule violation from ever happening again. I focus my practice on the areas of construction accidents, Workers' Compensation, falls, and motor vehicle accidents.



# **PAUL K. ISAAC, ESQ.**

## **Biography**

Paul K. Isaac, Esq. is a former trial attorney and the Founder and Chief Counsel of Precision Resolution, LLC and Paramount Settlement Planning, LLC.

A strategic life planner, holding his life and health insurance license, as well as securities licenses in Series 6, 63, 65 and 7, Mr. Isaac's years of experience allow him to anticipate plaintiffs' long-term financial needs. During Mr. Isaac's time as a practicing attorney, he helped several clients obtain large settlements and favorable verdicts. In addition to assisting plaintiffs with the strategies for handling settlements from all types of personal injury lawsuits, Mr. Isaac is experienced in navigating the intricacies of complicated life care cases in which Medicaid and Medicare benefits must be preserved. He is also experienced in negotiating all types of liens associated with personal injury cases and their settlements.

Mr. Isaac earned both his undergraduate and law degrees from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



# **HONORABLE SHIRLEY TROUTMAN, ESQ.**

## **Biography**

Justice Troutman was designated to the Appellate Division, Fourth Department by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo on February 19, 2016. She previously served as a trial judge in New York State Supreme Court, assigned to the 8th Judicial District, where she handled matrimonials and general civil litigations matters. Prior to her election to Supreme Court, Justice Troutman was a County Court Judge, where she handled felony criminal cases, appeals and civil matters. Additionally, she served as a City Court Judge, where she presided over criminal and civil cases within that court's jurisdiction. She has served as an Adjunct Professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo Law School. She has served as a Lecturer of the New York State Judicial Institute, as well as CLE programs and seminars including serving as a Faculty Member for the National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence. Prior to joining the bench, Justice Troutman was an Assistant United States Attorney for the Western District of New York, Assistant State Attorney General and an Assistant District Attorney. Justice Troutman received a B.S. from the State University of New York at Buffalo and a J.D. from Albany Law School of Union University. She is also designated as an Advanced Science Technology and Resource (ASTAR) fellow, which is a program sponsored by the United States Department of Justice. As an ASTAR fellow she serves as a resource judge for members of the judiciary of New York State handling complex cases involving scientific evidence.

Justice Troutman also served as a member of the editorial board that published "New York State Public Health Legal Manual" in 2011 and authored a report on minority representation on juries in the 8th Judicial District which included recommendations on how to improve diversity in jury pools. Additionally, Justice Troutman serves as a Member of the Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics.

She has received the following honors: M. Dolores Denman Award - WNY Chapter of WBASNY, Legal Service Award - Minority Bar Association of WNY, Achievement Award - Committee on Women in the Courts and Local Specialty Bar Associations, and numerous other recognitions.

