



NYSBA

# Women's Community

A publication of the New York State Bar Association

## Message From the President

by David M. Schraver



We at the State Bar are pleased to announce and welcome you to the NYSBA Women's Community. Our generation has seen more women in the legal profession than any before us – women constitute over one-third of practicing attorneys and this year's law school graduating classes were made up of women and men in nearly equal numbers.

Unfortunately, however, we do not see proportionate gains among women when we look ahead to subsequent career stages. Although women constitute nearly half of incoming associates at law firms, they make up only 20% of partners and 15% of equity partners at firms.<sup>1</sup> Among the higher ranks at large law firms, the numbers drop even more precipitously, with women represent-

ing only 4% of managing partners at the largest 200 firms.<sup>2</sup> These trends are not limited to law firms. Just under 22% of general counsels to Fortune 500 companies and about 21% of law school deans are women.<sup>3</sup> While historical underrepresentation in the profession may explain some of these disparities, there have been recent reports that the representation of women in certain sectors is actually dropping<sup>4</sup> and, even where women have risen through the ranks, they make significantly less on average than their male counterparts and that gap widened between 2010 and 2012.<sup>5</sup>

We all face challenges in the practice of law, and many women continue to face unique challenges. The New York State Bar Association has long supported gender equity in the legal profession, and we have supported measures proposed in the New York State

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## Featured Event

### "Women on the Move" and NYSBA Women's Community Kick-Off Event

October 17, 2013 – Bar Center, Albany, NY

Join us for the "Women on the Move 2013" program, followed by a reception to kick off the NYSBA Women's Community! This terrific program, which is sponsored annually by NYSBA's Committee on Women in the Law, will feature a CLE program and networking opportunities. The event will take place on October 17 at NYSBA's headquarters in downtown Albany. For more information, go to [www.nysba.org/womenscommunity](http://www.nysba.org/womenscommunity). We hope to see you there!



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# Online Resources

## Newly Redesigned Website

by Barbara Beauchamp

We are excited to be launching a redesigned website ([www.nysba.org](http://www.nysba.org)) this fall! With a sleeker look, the new website will feature enhancements that include the following:

- a women's online resource center ([www.nysba.org/womenscommunity](http://www.nysba.org/womenscommunity));
- private online professional communities (an enhanced listserv network with a member directory and other online features); and
- personalized access to CLE and membership records.

NYSBA members can log in with their usernames and passwords. If you need help logging in, please e-mail us at [webmaster@nysba.org](mailto:webmaster@nysba.org) or call us at 800-582-2452. ☞

*Barbara Beauchamp is NYSBA's Manager of Internet Services.*



# A Profile in Leadership

## Lillian Moy

by Sarah E. Gold, Esq.

*Lillian M. Moy is the executive director of the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern NY. She is NYSBA's Vice-President for the Third Judicial District. Lillian recently received a Diversity Trailblazer Award from NYSBA's Committee on Diversity and Inclusion.*

**Q: Lillian, what attracted you to public interest law? What has motivated you to continue in this field?**

**A:** I'm a natural advocate, and I have been socially conscious since I was young. When I was a teenager, I read *To Kill a Mockingbird* and was inspired to become that kind of lawyer. During law school, I worked in a public defender's office. I've found fulfillment through advocacy, doing the right thing and being a force for good. Thirty years later, I still believe in the work that I do, and that is a wonderful thing to say at the end of the day.

**Q: How have you learned to deal with professional challenges?**

**A:** As an Asian woman, I have encountered racism and sexism at different times, and I've had to figure out how to handle it. I learned that when serious problems like that arise, you have to find a way to talk about them. This can be done in a relatively lighthearted way, which people may find easier to respond to. Problems should not be left to fester.

I also learned to reach out to other attorneys for help with problems. I have received incredible support from very diverse mentors throughout my career, and I have learned just as much from my mentees. A few years ago, I was matched with a young Latina attorney who is a "techie." I asked her if she kept a journal, and she responded, "Do you mean a 'blog'?" Once we bridged this "language barrier," we were fine!

**Q: How has your involvement with NYSBA developed?**

**A:** I've been a member for about 15 years. Early on, I became involved with committees that relate to my work, such as the Committee on Legal Aid and the President's Committee on Access to Justice. I later became active in other committees, such as the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion and the Committee on Leadership Development. In 2005, I was selected to be a diversity delegate in NYSBA's governing House of Delegates, and that led to additional leadership roles.

**Q: As a diversity trailblazer, why do you think that diversity within the legal profession is important?**

**A:** Diversity is important because it helps people believe in the work that we do. When litigants see diverse lawyers and judges, they are more likely to feel that our justice system reflects them, and it increases public confidence in the rule of law. NYSBA continues to accomplish a great deal in terms of diversity and provides models for leadership for women and people of color, which enhances the Association's work and improves our profession. ☞

*Sarah E. Gold, Esq., practices at the Gold Law Firm and is a member of NYSBA's Committee on Women in the Law.*



# Practicing Law, Practically

## Your First Court Appearance

by Hon. Margaret J. Finerty

It is only natural to have butterflies the first time you appear in court. Here are some tried and true steps to help your presentation go smoothly.

### 1. Establish Your Goals for the Court Appearance

Think through your goals beforehand. Every time you appear in court, you should take steps to move your case forward. What do you hope to accomplish during this particular court appearance? Do you wish to persuade the court to grant your motion or to issue a temporary restraining order? Do you wish to bring helpful evidence or case law to the court's attention? Are you seeking to resolve or adjourn the matter? Answering questions like these will help you to plan effectively.

### 2. Be Prepared

The time you spend preparing will serve you well. Of course, it is essential to know the facts and applicable law. If there is a particular document that you wish to present, bring courtesy copies for the court and opposing counsel. Make a checklist of your goals and talking points. Know the local court rules and the judge's individual practice rules. Speak with your colleagues about the judge to learn how he or she runs the courtroom. If possible, visit the courtroom beforehand to observe.

### 3. Be Professional, Respectful, and Considerate

Some attorneys do not conduct themselves in a professional,

respectful, and considerate manner, and they do so at their peril. Be on time, and dress professionally. Be courteous to the court staff, who can be very helpful to less experienced attorneys. Carry contact information for the court and your adversary so that you can notify them if you are unavoidably detained. Speak in a loud, clear voice, in case the proceedings are being recorded. Always interact with the judge in a respectful manner, even though he or she may disagree with your arguments. And of course, treat your adversaries professionally, even if they are not behaving that way.

### 4. Make Your Points

Be certain to share with the court the information that is necessary to accomplish your goals. This may be challenging if you are in a busy courtroom or if you have an adversary who is trying to dominate the proceeding. Be forceful, but respectful, and do not leave without making your points on the record. Also, be flexible and responsive to unanticipated concerns. However, it is important to know when to stop speaking. If the judge has agreed with you, you have won and do not need to go through your arguments.

Following these basic rules will not ensure a win in your case. But it will ensure that you have given your best effort, served your client well, and enhanced your professional reputation. ∞

*Hon. Margaret J. Finerty is a former judge, a partner at Getnick & Getnick LLP, and a member of NYSBA's Executive Committee.*

# Women's Wellness

## Stress and the Secure Oxygen Mask

by Patricia Spataro

When flying, we are reminded that in the event of an emergency we should secure our own oxygen masks before helping those around us. Many women may be appalled at the thought of helping themselves first. This tendency to put ourselves last can make stress impossible to manage.

Stress overrides our normal coping mechanisms and impairs our ability to think clearly, make good decisions, be confident, be responsible, and – most importantly – breathe. Although we can

survive months without food and days without water, we can survive only minutes without air.

Securing our oxygen masks – in other words, breathing properly – is a simple and effective strategy for managing stress. Think of it as "STOP":

**S**top, step back, and remember the importance of self-care.  
**T**ake a slow, steady, deep breath in, and exhale completely.  
**O**ptions – review the options you have, and choose the best.  
**P**roceed in the best way possible.

It can work anywhere – at your desk, with a client, in the courtroom, across the table from your teenager, or in a traffic jam.

So, the next time you are stressed, remember to STOP. Securing your own oxygen mask comes first! ∞

*Patricia Spataro is the director of NYSBA's Lawyer Assistance Program.*



# Career Advancement

## “Re-zooming” with NYSBA’s Help

by Debra Vey Voda-Hamilton, Esq.

I’m a “re-zoomer,” having recently resumed my legal career after a 13-year break as a stay-at-home mom. Despite my background as a government attorney, I decided to move in a completely new direction. I hung out my own shingle and created a niche practice that is focused on conflicts about animals. These conflicts arise in a variety of contexts – including civil, criminal, disability, divorce, estate, and real estate matters – and I use mediation and collaborative law techniques to help resolve them.

As a re-zoomer with a fledgling practice, I recognized that building relationships and enhancing my credibility would be key. But how could I accomplish these goals? I decided to increase my bar association involvement. I had been a NYSBA member for 29 years, but had only used my membership for continuing legal education purposes. I jumped in with both feet to see how active participation could help me and my new practice.

I started by attending NYSBA’s 2010 Annual Meeting, which offered dozens of programs. I attended three programs that were sponsored by the Committee on Animals and the Law, the Dispute Resolution Section, and the Committee on Women in the Law. These programs provided up-to-date legal information for me and the other attendees, who had similar interests. We wanted to connect with like-mind-

ed professionals and expand our horizons. We were there to learn for our own benefit, yet many of us felt afterwards as if we might be able to “give back” as well.

Inspired, I volunteered and was selected to help put together a 2011 Annual Meeting program sponsored by the Committee on Women in the Law. I suggested speakers on mediation-related topics, and I co-moderated a panel discussion on trial tactics. In 2012, I co-moderated a panel discussion on ethics for women trial and appellate lawyers. I am now helping to plan committee programs for 2014, including one for the Annual Meeting in January.

What have I learned along the way as a re-zoomer? My multi-faceted experience is a real asset to fellow NYSBA members and my clients. My practice has benefited because I have been able to build longstanding relationships and enhance my credibility. I have gotten to know outstanding lawyers whom I otherwise might not have met because of our differing practice areas. By working together on educational programs, we each have been able to enhance our credibility. In retrospect, I am pleased with my decision to begin actively participating in NYSBA programs, rather than just attending them. As a result, my practice is zooming right along! ☺

*Debra Vey Voda-Hamilton practices at Hamilton Law & Mediation, PLLC, and is a member of NYSBA’s Committee on Women in the Law.*

# What Do You Think About...?

by Richard Martin and Connie Schin

We asked some of you: *As a woman attorney, which career-related issues are of greatest concern to you?* More than 1,000 of you expressed greatest concern about these three issues:

- Work-life balance
- Pay equity
- Self-advocacy and negotiating issues, such as salary and promotions

What do you think? If you are a NYSBA member who wants to discuss this in our private online professional community for women, go to [www.nysba.org/womenscommunity](http://www.nysba.org/womenscommunity) and click on the relevant link. You’ll be prompted for a username and password. If you need help logging in, just e-mail us at [webmaster@nysba.org](mailto:webmaster@nysba.org) or call us at 800-582-2452.

*Richard Martin is NYSBA’s Assistant Executive Director, and Connie Schin is NYSBA’s Marketing Manager.* ☺

# A Benefit for Members

## New Free Legal Research Resources for Members

NYSBA recently launched an exciting new partnership with Fastcase, a legal research service with a comprehensive national law library as well as primary law from all 50 states.

Starting this month, all NYSBA members will receive free and unlimited access to the following libraries: Decisions of N.Y. Court of Appeals, 1950-present; A.D. Decisions, 1955-present; Misc. Decisions, 1950-present; N.Y. Consolidated Laws; N.Y.C.R.R.; N.Y.S. Constitution; U.S. Code; 2d Cir. Decisions from 1924; and Supreme Court Decisions.

Fastcase also offers a full subscription with access to other federal libraries and resources from all 50 states, which is typically available for a list price of \$995 per year. Through this exclusive agreement, NYSBA members can subscribe to the full Fastcase library for only \$195 per year – a discount of 80%.

In addition, new attorney members (those in their first two years of admission) will receive access to the full Fastcase library free of charge as a NYSBA member benefit.

Fastcase has garnered praise from attorneys who value its user-friendly search engine, easy downloads and printing, and ability to quickly locate relevant resources.

To sign up, visit [NYSBA.org](http://NYSBA.org), log in to your NYSBA member account, and click the Fastcase button on the upper right-hand corner of the site. ∞



# Join/Renew

## Your NYSBA Membership!

Join NYSBA or renew your NYSBA membership by November 15, 2013, and you'll have a chance to win one of two iPads! Just call us at 800-582-2452 or e-mail us at [membership@nysba.org](mailto:membership@nysba.org) to join or renew, and provide this source code: MBNOV15. We look forward to hearing from you!

## President's Message continued

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Legislature to improve wage transparency and pay equity. We are proud of the diversity of our governing bodies and leadership, including the prominent representation of women, and we continue to explore new ways to provide relevant and valuable support to women in the law.

It is our hope that the NYSBA Women's Community, this newsletter, and the other resources that we will roll out on the website this fall, will provide new opportunities for women – and all lawyers – to connect, share their experiences and strategies for success, and work toward greater equality in the legal community. We hope

you enjoy this newsletter and the other resources we have added to our website, and we look forward to your feedback. ∞

1. American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, *A Current Glance at Women in the Law* (February 2013), 2.

2. *Id.*

3. *Id.* at 3-4

4. Press Release, NALP, Representation of Women Among Associates Continues to Fall, Even as Minority Associates Make Gains (Dec. 13, 2012).

5. Major, Lindsey & Africa, *Partner Compensation Survey (2012)*, 7, available at <http://www.mlglobal.com/partner-compensation-survey/2012/FullReport.pdf>.



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WOMEN'S COMMUNITY

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A publication of the New York State Bar Association

*Connecting women attorneys  
with NYSBA and with each other  
for professional success.*

