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Mary Ellen O'Connor obtained her Bachelors degree from State University on New York at Albany where she double majored in History and English. She then attended the College of Mount Saint Vincent where she obtained her Master's degree in Education. After obtaining her degree, Mary Ellen worked as a teacher for the City of New York. In 2001, Mary Ellen decided to return to school; this time as a student and not a teacher. Mary Ellen attended the City University of New York School of Law. She obtained her Juris Doctorate in 2004.

After Law School, Mary Ellen worked at a civil litigation firm. While there, she developed a love for insurance defense and became an experienced litigator. In 2005, Mary Ellen began working with the Special Funds Conservation Committee. She worked as defense counsel to dozens of insurance firms and learned the ins and outs of the Workers' Compensation system. In 2007, Mary Ellen worked for a plaintiff's firm where she not only represented injured Workers, but also represented disabled claimants fighting for Social Security Disability benefits.

In 2009 Mary Ellen launched her own firm, the O'Connor Law Firm. Mary Ellen was hired as special counsel to the Special Funds and work in this capacity until their closing in 2018. She trained new attorneys statewide and lectured extensively for Special Funds. Ms. O'Connor is dedicated to fighting for the rights of employees who have suffered work related injuries and disabilities.