

**NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION  
MINUTES OF HOUSE OF DELEGATES MEETING  
NEW YORK HILTON MIDTOWN, NEW YORK CITY  
JANUARY 31, 2014**

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**PRESENT:** Aaron; Abdelhamid; Abella; Abernethy; Abraham; Ajaiyeoba; Alcott; Alden; Arenson; Ayers; Baker; Barnes; Barrett; Baum; Bauman; Beckford; Behrins; Bloom; Bracken; Brown, T.A.; Brown, T.; Buholtz; Castellano; Cecero; Chakansky; Chambers; Chase; Clark; Coffey; Cohen, D.; Cohn; Collins; Cooper; Davis, M.; Day; DeFelice; DeHaven; Denton; DeLorenzo; Desamours; Dorf; Doyle; Dunne; Edmunds; Ellerin; Eng; England; Eppler; Epps; Fahey; Fallek; Fay; Feinberg; Feinman; Ferris; Finerty; Fisher; Flood; Fox; Franchina; Freedman, H.; Friedman; Gaffney; Gall; Galligan; Genoa; Gerace; Gerstman; Getnick; Giordano; Gold; Goldenberg; Gordon-Oliver; Gorgos; Green; Gross; Grossman; Gutierrez; Haig; Harper; Hassett; Higgins; Hillman; Hollyer; Honig; Hoskins; Jaglom; James; Kahn; Kamins; Karson; Kearns; Kelly; Kenney; Kerson; Keschenat; Kiernan; Kirby; Klass; Klein; Kobak; Kretser; Lanouette; Lapp; Larose; Lau-Kee; Lawrence; Lawton-Thames; Leber; Lessard; Leventhal; Levin; Levy; Lindenauer; Ling-Cohan; Lugo; Madigan; Makofsky; Marangos; Marino; Martin, D.; Martin, E.; McCafferty; McCarron; McCarthy; McDonald; McEntee; McKeegan; McNamara; Meacham; Meislahn; Meyers; Miller, M.; Minkoff; Miranda; Modica; Moore; Moretti; Moses; Moy; Mulhall; Myers; Napoletano; Nathanson; Nowotny; Ogden; Ostertag; Parker; Pellow; Perez; Perlman; Pettit; Prager; Preston; Protter; Ranni; Reitzfeld; Rice; Richman; Riley; Risi; Rivera; Robb; Robertson; Rodriguez; Romero; Rosner; Rothenberg; Rothstein; Ruderman; Ryan; Sachs; Safer; Saleeby; Samuels; Scanlon; Schoenfeld; Schofield; Schraver; Schultz; Sen; Sheehan; Shulman; Sigmond; Silver; Silverman; Simmons; Singer; Slavin; Slezak; Smith, A.; Smith, S.; Standard; Stanislaus; Swanson; Sweet; Taylor; Tennant; Terranova; Tesser; Tilton; Tollin; Tully; Ugurlayan; Valet; Vigdor; Walker; Wallach; Weinberger; Welch; Wilkey; Wimpfheimer; Witmer; Wolk; Yeung-Ha; Young; Younger; Zuckerman.

Mr. Lau-Kee presided over the meeting as Chair of the House.

1. Approval of minutes of November 2, 2013 meeting. The minutes were deemed accepted as previously distributed.
2. Report of the Treasurer. The Treasurer's report for the preceding fiscal year, which had been presented by Treasurer Sharon Stern Gerstman to members of the Association at the Annual Meeting, was received with thanks.
3. Report of the Nominating Committee and election of officers and members-at-large of the Executive Committee. Stephen P. Younger, a member of the Nominating Committee, reported that the Committee had nominated the following individuals for election to the indicated offices for the 2014-2015 Association year: President-Elect: David P. Miranda, Albany; Secretary: Ellen G. Makofsky, Garden City; Treasurer: Sharon Stern Gerstman, Buffalo; and Vice Presidents: First District – Catherine A. Christian and Jay G. Safer, New York City; Second – Domenick Napoletano, Brooklyn; Third – Hermes Fernandez, Albany; Fourth – Rebecca A. Slezak, Amsterdam; Fifth – Stuart J. LaRose, Syracuse; Sixth – Alyssa M. Barreiro, Binghamton; Seventh – T. Andrew Brown, Rochester; Eighth

– Cheryl Smith Fisher, Buffalo; Ninth – Arlene Antoinette Gordon-Oliver, White Plains; Tenth – Scott M. Karson, Melville; Eleventh – Richard M. Gutierrez, Forest Hills; Twelfth – Richard S. Weisman, Mount Vernon; Thirteenth – Michael J. Gaffney, Staten Island. Nominated as members-at-large of the Executive Committee were Michael W. Galligan, New York City; Bryan D. Hetherington, Rochester; Elena DeFio Kean, Albany; Edwina Frances Martin, Staten Island; and Bruce J. Prager, New York City.

Mr. Lau-Kee announced that pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Association Bylaws, Thomas F. Liotti was nominated by membership for the office of President-Elect. There being no further nominations, a motion was adopted to close the nominations, after which a motion was adopted to elect those above-named individuals as officers and members-at-large of the Executive Committee, with the exception of the position of President-Elect.

Mr. Lau-Kee then asked Mr. Liotti and Mr. Miranda to address the House with respect to their qualifications, following which House members cast ballots to elect the President-Elect. Mr. Miranda received 193 votes and Mr. Liotti received 11 votes.

4. Report and recommendations of Committee on Law, Youth and Citizenship. Richard W. Bader, chair of the Committee, together with former Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye, presented the Committee’s report and resolution calling upon NYSBA to formally adopt a policy on civic education to address a decade of dramatic decline in civic education and knowledge on a state and national level. After discussion, a motion was adopted to approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the New York State Bar Association (“NYSBA”) established the Law, Youth and Citizenship (LYC) Program in 1974 to promote citizenship and law-related education in schools throughout New York State, by assisting educators in creating opportunities for students to become effective citizens able to participate fully in our democratic society;

WHEREAS, the LYC program has, to date, successfully been able to carry out its mission by directly reaching over 5,000 students a year through *We The People, Project Citizen*, its statewide Mock Trial Competition and Mock Trial Summer Institute, as well as thousands more indirectly through its training of hundreds of teachers each year;

WHEREAS, the state of civic education and civic knowledge in elementary and secondary school students in both New York State and throughout the nation has so dramatically declined that NYSBA then-President Vincent E. Doyle III “sounded the alarm” about the diminishment of civics education in New York, and the NYSBA publicly announced that “civics education is a top legislative priority for the New York State Bar Association” (NYSBA June 15, 2011 Press Release);

WHEREAS, the NYSBA has stated that “The State Bar Association is concerned about what appears to be a trend toward the weakening of New York's commitment to educating all students about civics” (NYSBA June 15, 2011 Press Release);

WHEREAS, in 2011 NYSBA then-President Vincent E. Doyle III cogently stated that: “A vibrant democracy needs engaged citizens who understand the rights and responsibilities of being an American” (NYSBA June 15, 2011 Press Release);

WHEREAS, the NYSBA firmly believes that an educated citizenry and understanding of basic civic principles adopted by the Founders of this nation is fundamental to the preservation of democracy and good government;

WHEREAS, NYSBA further concludes that civic education in elementary, middle and secondary schools is fundamental to the continued success of our form of self-government and to the preservation of the Rule of Law; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, with the support of the NYSBA, the ABA adopted its Policy on Civic Education incorporating several of the following resolutions;

NOW THEREFORE IT IS

RESOLVED, that the NYSBA shall encourage lawyers and judges to be personally and actively engaged in civic education in their communities and schools and to consider it part of their fundamental responsibility to ensure that all students experience high quality civic learning, including the study of law, government, and history in New York State; and it is

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NYSBA shall urge lawyers and judges to work to increase Americans’ understanding of the role of fundamental principles in our constitutional democracy; and it is

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NYSBA urges policymakers at all levels of government, including but not limited to the Governor, the New York State Legislature, the New York State Board of Regents, the Commissioner of Education and the New York State Department of Education, to ensure that all students experience high quality civic learning— including study of law, government, and history--- and that students’ civic learning is regularly and appropriately assessed; and that civic learning is accorded state educational priority on a par with reading and mathematics, by enacting statutes and regulations to require civic education in all grades for all elementary, middle and secondary students in the public schools of the nation and this State, and to provide appropriate funding for such programs as may be necessary to fulfill such requirements; and it is

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NYSBA urges the legal profession to seek support of policymakers, educators, the media, and the general public to ensure that subject matter to advance the civic mission of schools, including study of law, is included in the core K-12 curriculum and reflected in all standards, instruction, professional development, school funding decisions, and evaluation.

Mr. Brown abstained from participating in the discussion and vote.

5. Address by Hon. Jonathan Lippman, Chief Judge of the State of New York. Chief Judge Lippman addressed the House of Delegates with respect to the status of Unified Court System initiatives. He provided an update on the Judiciary budget; funding for civil legal services; funding for indigent defense services; juvenile justice; bail reform; and wrongful convictions. The report was received with the thanks of the House.
6. Presentation of the Ruth G. Schapiro Memorial Award. Mr. Schraver presented the annual Ruth G. Schapiro Award to Kathleen Donelli of White Plains in recognition of her contributions to addressing the concerns of women.
7. Report and recommendations of Committee on Diversity and Inclusion. Kenneth G. Standard, co-chair of the Committee, reviewed the results of the Committee's biennial 2013 survey, comparing those results to the Committee's previous surveys, as well as the Committee's recommendations with respect to ongoing efforts to further diversity in the Association. After discussion, a motion was adopted to approve the Committee's report and recommendations.
8. Report of Executive Committee re Mandatory Pro Bono Reporting. Scott M. Karson, a member of the Executive Committee, outlined a resolution endorsed by the Executive Committee for House action. The resolution would (a) adopt the amendment to the commentary of Rule 6.1 of the Rules of Professional Conduct as proposed by the Committee on Standards of Attorney Conduct at the November 2, 2013 House meeting; (b) reaffirm the Association's opposition to mandatory reporting of pro bono services and financial contributions to legal services organizations; (c) continue to express opposition and pursue further actions to seek repeal of the rule requiring reporting; and (d) reaffirm the Association's support for voluntary pro bono service and adequate funding for civil legal services. After lengthy discussion, a motion was adopted to postpone consideration of the resolution to the June 21, 2014 meeting on a standing vote of 87-73.
9. Report of Task Force on Gun Violence. The report was postponed to the April 5, 2014 meeting.
10. Report of President. Mr. Schraver highlighted items contained in his written report, a copy of which is appended to these minutes.
11. Report of Committee on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar. The report was postponed to the April 5, 2014 meeting.
12. Report of ABA State Delegate. Mark H. Alcott, ABA State Delegate, provided a brief update on ABA activity and deferred the remainder of his report to the April 5, 2014 meeting. The report was received with thanks.
13. Report of Secretary. David P. Miranda, Secretary, highlighted items contained in his written report, a copy of which is appended to these minutes. The report was received with thanks.

14. Administrative items. Mr. Lau-Kee reported on the following:

- a. NYSBA delegates to ABA House of Delegates. At the April 5, 2014 meeting, the House would be requested to elect six of the Association's 11 delegates to the American Bar Association House of Delegates. The Nominating Committee had nominated the following individuals: A. Vincent Buzard, Rochester; Michael E. Getnick, Utica; Kathryn Grant Madigan, Binghamton; David P. Miranda, Albany; David M. Schraver, Rochester; and Alena Shautsova, Brooklyn (Young Lawyer Delegate).

15. New Business.

- a. Past President Vincent E. Doyle III noted that Executive Director Patricia K. Bucklin has announced that she will leave the Association on March 31 and that this was her last meeting of the House of Delegates. A motion was adopted to approve the following resolution in recognition of her service:

WHEREAS Patricia Bucklin has served with distinction as the Executive Director of the New York State Bar Association for 13 years, successfully guiding the Association into the 21st century while helping to maintain and enhance the Association's standing as one of the preeminent bar associations in the world, and

WHEREAS Patricia Bucklin has served the Association with grace, dignity and professionalism, and has fostered an environment of respectful collaboration, contributing to the significant accomplishments the Association has achieved during her tenure, and

WHEREAS due to the steady, innovative and dedicated leadership of Patricia Bucklin the Association is in sound financial condition and has a robust membership, and

WHEREAS Patricia Bucklin has worked tirelessly to advance the interests of the Association, enhance its reputation and facilitate its efforts to support and improve the legal system and the legal profession, and

WHEREAS by her acts of kindness and selfless service Patricia Bucklin has earned the enduring friendship of past Presidents, leaders and members of the Association, it is hereby

RESOLVED that the New York State Bar Association hereby expresses its deep gratitude to Patricia Bucklin for her exemplary service as Executive Director.

- b. House member Joseph J. Ranni of White Plains advised that he would be proposing the creation of lawyers' clinics in law schools to assist solo practitioners and members of small firms to assist in times of crisis, such as in the event of disability. Mr. Lau-Kee recommended that he submit the proposal to Association staff so that it can be reviewed by appropriate committees.

18. Date and place of next meeting. Mr. Lau-Kee announced that the next meeting of the House of Delegates would take place on Saturday, April 5, 2014 at the Hyatt Regency Rochester in Rochester.
19. Adjournment. There being no further business to come before the House of Delegates, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David P. Miranda". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and "M".

David P. Miranda  
Secretary



**DAVID M. SCHRAVER**

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January 31, 2014

**President's Report to the  
House of Delegates**

Legislative Priorities

Each year the Association designates a series of Legislative Priorities intended to reflect the issues facing our legal community and society at large. In addition to the issues facing our home state of New York, we look beyond our borders and lend our advocacy to the issues facing our nation. I am pleased to report that our 2014 Legislative Priorities are as follows:

Our State priorities include ensuring adequate funding for the courts and civil legal services; creating more Family Court judgeships; expanding the number of veterans treatment courts; reducing wrongful convictions; restricting the use of solitary confinement; sealing certain criminal convictions; increasing voter participation; providing more civics education for New York school children; and revising the New York Franchise Act.

Federal priorities include ensuring adequate funding for the federal courts and the Legal Services Corporation; repealing what remains of the Defense of Marriage Act; supporting efforts to increase voter participation; opposing measures that would restrict the ability of states to determine how injured individuals can pursue legal remedies in the courts; addressing representation in immigration cases; and opposing efforts to amend the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure to reinstate a system of mandatory sanctions on an attorney, law firm or party without allowing ameliorative action by the courts.

We have begun our advocacy activities to promote the State Legislative Priorities based on the distinction between “budget issues” and “non-budget” issues. Accordingly, in the context of the proposed state budget, “funding” is the primary focus of our recent activity.

The budget process includes the following stages:

- Submission of the Judiciary Budget on November 29;
- Submission of the Executive Budget on January 21;
- Hearings on the Public Protection Budget, scheduled for February 5; and,
- Development of and debate over the Budget in February and March with a deadline for final approval by April 1.

Enactment of the Nonprofit Revitalization Act

I was pleased to announce on December 19, 2013, that the Governor signed the Nonprofit Revitalization Act, which modernizes the way New York regulates nonprofit organizations. It

was one of our 2013 legislative priorities. The State Bar Association has long advocated for meaningful reform of New York's Not-for-Profit Corporation Law. In June, the bill— which the State Bar Association helped draft—was passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in the Legislature. The State Bar was actively involved in developing the legislation, working closely with interested stakeholders, legislators, their staffs and Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman. Much of the thanks for the success on this issue is due to members of the Bar Association's Business Law Section who were very active in representing the Association to see this bill through to passage and enactment into law.

### Adequate Funding for Courts

One of our Association's fundamental beliefs is that the courts serve as the cornerstone for our democratic society. This guiding principle dictates that we must advocate tirelessly, ensuring that the courts receive the funding they require in order to carry out their critical and numerous functions.

### Federal

Immediate past president Seymour James, Jr. led our Association as one of the earliest advocates focused on sequestration and its destructive impact on critically important federal programs. Since then, our Association has continued down this path of advocacy. This past December, we traveled to Washington D.C. to express to Members of Congress from New York State our concerns over the negative impact of sequestration on the federal courts. On December 4, we met with key members of our Congressional delegation and again on December 20, we met with Senator Schumer. During these meetings we expressed our deep concern about the Fiscal Year 2013 sequestration cuts that imperiled the federal judiciary in its efforts to carry out its duties and responsibilities as set forth in the Constitution and by acts of Congress. Such cuts impact both criminal and civil proceedings in the federal courts, and the fair, efficient and effective administration of justice, which is the foundation of a free and democratic society, and which instills in the public the trust and confidence that is essential to preserve and protect the Rule of Law. I am pleased that our efforts had positive results. The Fiscal Year 2014 omnibus appropriations bill, which President Obama signed earlier this month, funds the judiciary at a level very close to the pre-sequester level, which is essentially the same level that the judiciary had requested.

### State

On November 29, the State Judiciary submitted its 2014-2015 budget proposal. The Judiciary's General Fund State Operations budget request totals \$1.81 billion, a cash increase of \$44.2 million, or 2.5%. After five years of essentially flat budgets this request continues to promote efficiency and fiscal restraint in the court system, while also addressing important needs. The State Bar supports the proposed budget and commends the Judiciary for including in its proposal \$55 million for civil legal service and \$15 million to support the Interest on Lawyer Account Fund. The State Bar Association has long supported increased funding for civil legal services to address the civil legal needs of low-income New Yorkers.

I also am pleased to report that the State Judiciary budget proposal includes funding for 20 new Family Court judges. As proposed, the funding would begin on January 1, 2015. As the Chief Judge rightly points out, the demand for Family Court services has far outpaced the growth in the number of judges needed to handle the increased caseload. Increasing the number of Family Court judges is another of the State Bar's legislative priorities for 2014 and was a key

recommendation of the report issued in November 2012 by the Bar Association's Task Force on Family Court.

On January 14, President-Elect Glenn Lau-Kee and I met in Albany with legislators and staff to promote our 2014 State Legislative Priorities. At this point in the session the budget priorities were the primary topic of every meeting. In these meetings we urged the Legislature and Governor to address the pressing needs outlined in the Chief Judge's budget message and approve the Judiciary's proposed budget in its present form. Throughout the state budget process, the State Bar will continue advocating for funding to make access to justice a reality for those vulnerable New Yorkers who truly require it. We also had preliminary discussions on some "non-budget priorities," such as expanding veterans courts, addressing wrongful convictions, sealing of criminal convictions and revision of the New York Franchise Act. We are planning follow-up meetings on these issues as the legislative session progresses.

### Legal Education and the Future of the Profession

There can be no question that legal education and the legal profession are in the midst of significant change. The cost of attending law school has grown exponentially while the number of legal positions has dwindled. The legal profession has moved away from traditional practices to accommodate changes in technology, globalization, and client expectation and demand, and, as legal practice evolves, so too must legal education. These two issues are entwined on almost every level; effectively addressing one requires careful consideration of the other.

As you are all aware, I have made legal education and the future of the profession a cornerstone of my term as president. We, as an Association have an obligation to play a dynamic role in bringing about the reforms that are so desperately needed to support attorneys, both of the present and of the future. In order to better understand the new challenges confronting legal education and our profession I have brought a new charge to our Committee on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar. Under the direction of Co-Chairs Eileen Millett, Eileen Kaufman, and new Co-Chair Ian Weinstein, the committee will assess these rapidly changing issues and recommend initiatives to help our Association facilitate change. Earlier this week, the Presidential Summit focused on these very issues and yielded thoughtful dialog from two panels of experts. Collectively the panels on legal education and the legal profession helped not only to illuminate the problems we face, but also to guide us as we develop solutions. I intend to carry forward this momentum we have gained. Later today we are hosting the Law School Deans Forum. President-elect Glenn Lau-Kee, Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, and Associate Judge Victoria Graffeo will be joining Deans or their representatives from each of the New York State Law Schools. The agenda will include various discussion topics related to legal education and admission to the bar, a discussion of the Presidential Summit, and our planned convocation on legal education to be held on May 22, 2014 at Pace University School of Law. The convocation, which we are coordinating with the New York State Judicial Institute on Professionalism in the Law, will employ focus groups of practicing lawyers and legal education experts in hopes of framing issues and continuing to develop solutions.

We hope that our focus on this issue will allow us to better understand the role that NYSBA can and must play to effect real change. We have spent our careers advocating on behalf of others, now we must advocate on our own behalf – not only for our own benefit, but for the benefit of those who will come after us.

## Pro Bono

As you are all aware, access to justice has long been a foundation of the New York State Bar Association's mission. Every year our members voluntarily provide tens of thousands of pro bono hours in addition to significant financial contributions to organizations that provide civil legal services. An excellent example of our Association's dedication to access to justice comes in the form of our Empire State Counsel<sup>®</sup> program. As of January 20th, 1, 234 NYSBA members are being inducted into the 2013 Class of Empire State Counsel and collectively they have performed nearly 200,000 hours of pro bono service. Since the program was first launched eight years ago by former Association president Mark H. Alcott, close to 10,000 members have earned the honorific designation of Empire State Counsel<sup>®</sup> for having performed 50 hours or more of free legal services to low-income, vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and families. These pro bono services have enabled countless persons to avoid evictions and foreclosure, escape abusive relationships, emerge from crushing debt, and flee persecution in their native lands. I am especially proud of the fact that Empire State Counsel<sup>®</sup> do not limit their volunteer efforts to just New York State. To the contrary, they do the public good in virtually every state of the United States, as well as in Africa and Asia.

I am also pleased to report that this past October, the Association co-sponsored a volunteer recognition program in New York City along with the New York County Lawyers' Association, the City of New York Office of the Mayor, and the New York State Unified Court System's Access to Justice Program. NYSBA honored participants in the New York State Attorney Emeritus Program, an initiative of New York State Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, which is administered by the Access to Justice Program. Emeritus volunteers can be active or retired, must be 55 years and older, have 10 years of experience, and be in good standing. They provide pro bono services either through court volunteer programs or approved legal services providers. Fifteen Emeritus volunteers were recognized for their contributions in helping to provide civil legal services to New Yorkers in need. Four Emeritus volunteers received special recognition for their outstanding service.

Another great stride was made on behalf of access to justice this past year when Chief Judge Lippman announced the new in-house counsel pro bono rule (§522.8), which allows in-house attorneys admitted to practice and in good standing in another state or territory of the United States or the District of Columbia to perform voluntary pro bono work on behalf of poor and underserved clients – including being able to appear before courts and other tribunals upon filing a notice of pro bono representation – provided such attorneys are properly registered with the New York Courts. The Association applauds the new in-house pro bono rule and believes it will go a long way to advance efforts to narrow the state's enormous access to justice gap by effectively leveraging the legal skills of thousands of highly skilled and experienced out-of-state attorneys who work in-house in New York. The additional pro bono service provided by in-house attorneys will benefit vulnerable New Yorkers in matters involving the essentials of life.

Along with our commitment to access to justice, our Association has, for nearly a decade, opposed a mandatory reporting requirement for pro bono hours. However, Chief Judge Lippman's amendments to Part 118 of the Rules of the Chief Administrative Judge were made without our input and in the time that has passed since the amended rule was announced, the decision has evoked strong reactions from our members and the legal community at large. Those of you in attendance at our November meeting of the House of Delegates will recall that the debate on this topic included impassioned arguments from both opponents and supporters alike. With that being said, our Association has taken the position that we oppose the mandatory

reporting requirement. After our November meeting I appointed a subcommittee of members of the Executive Committee to study mandatory reporting and asked that they prepare a report and recommendations to help guide the Association's continued involvement in the issue. The subcommittee's report will be presented to the House of Delegates following action on it by the Executive Committee.

### Civics Education

Included on today's House of Delegates agenda is consideration of the report and recommendations of the Committee on Law, Youth, and Citizenship. The report calls upon NYSBA to formally adopt a policy on civics education to address a decade of dramatic decline in civic education and knowledge on a state and national level. Specifically, the committee recommends that NYSBA encourage members of the legal profession and policymakers at all levels to personally and actively engage in civics education in their communities; work to further Americans' understanding of the fundamental principles in our constitutional democracy; and support the inclusion of civics education in the core K-12 curriculum nationwide.

In a recent letter to Governor Cuomo I highlighted these same issues, urging the Governor to consider the critical need for civics education as he and the Legislature develop the state's 2014-2015 budget. I noted that "[o]ne of the major shortcomings of today's curriculum is the failure to provide meaningful civics education to our state's students. Comprehensive civics education in all grades is critical if we are to have a citizenry that understands the role and functioning of our government. Moreover, without a solid understanding of government, our children will be unable to become effective and responsible citizens or full partners in our democracy ..." and emphasized that "[o]ur governmental institutions, including our legal institutions and justice system, depend upon the effectiveness of today's educational institutions to develop Americans who are educated and committed to the maintenance of the rule of law. We need future citizens who understand the institutions of constitutional democracy, including our system of law and justice. No institution in American society other than our schools can accomplish this civic mission, and the need is even greater today as we welcome new Americans to our land during an era of historic immigration levels."

This past September, Supreme Court Justice David Souter traveled to Albany speak about the critical importance of funding humanities education and scholarship on behalf of the New York Council on the Humanities. The need for change is clear and I urge you to join the Association in promoting civics education as a priority in 2014.

### CMS Website

When NYSBA's new website launched in September the Bar started using Google Analytics to measure traffic to the site, page views, and so on. In previous years the average page views per month ranged from 180,000 to 200,000. Following the launch of the new site those numbers increased and currently the site is averaging between 250,000 and 275,000 page views per month. Since the launch of the new site the number of returning visitors has climbed steadily. Currently about 40% of visitors are returning to the site and over time that number is expected to increase. The site is optimized for the mobile user experience and the analytics show that 75% of mobile users are on iPhones or iPads.

More than 50% of first time visitors to the site are coming through a search engine (mainly Google, followed by Yahoo). Close to 40% of visitors are coming to the site directly (such as

using the link [www.nysba.org/membership](http://www.nysba.org/membership)) and the remainder are arriving at the site due to referring sites such as Fastcase, Loislaw, JobTarget, Forbes and the NYS Unified Court System.

In addition to the complete overhaul and re-launch of the main [www.nysba.org](http://www.nysba.org) website the NYSBA also has rolled out new private, online professional communities. There are currently 26 active communities available to members with more launching each week. The available communities are a mix of general, all-member communities such as the Technology Community and the LawCoach Community and specific, topical communities such as those for the Membership Committee, the Pro Bono Partnership Conference Steering Committee and the Corporate Counsel Section Executive Committee. Throughout this Annual Meeting NYSBA staff has been signing members up for Communities, meeting with Sections and Committees to discuss how Communities work and encouraging all of us to fill out our profiles.

As we continue the rollout of Communities we offer our thanks to the Electronic Communications Committee and the Task Force on Gun Violence. Both groups were beta testers for the Communities software and provided valuable feedback and advice along the way.

#### Local Bar Association and NYSBA Section Events

Immediate Past President Seymour W. James, Jr., President-Elect Glenn Lau-Kee, and I were pleased to participate in many local bar association events this fall and winter. The events included a meeting with minority bar association leaders from across New York State, the Black Bar Association of Bronx County 30th Anniversary Dinner, the Onondaga County Bar Annual Dinner, the Dutchess County Bar Association Monthly Member Luncheon, the Brooklyn Bar Association Foundation Annual Dinner, the Broome County Bar Association Holiday Party, the New York County Lawyers Annual Dinner, and the Richmond County Bar Association dinner with Board of Directors, Past Presidents and Judiciary. We also had the great pleasure of attending many Section events since our meeting in Cooperstown; these events included: the Tax Section Summer Meeting in Philadelphia, PA; the Real Property Law Section Summer Meeting in New Paltz; the Family Law Section Summer Meeting in Cooperstown; the Trial Lawyers Section Summer Meeting in Killarney, Ireland; the Torts, Insurance & Compensation Law Summer Meeting in Annapolis; the Business Law Section Fall Meeting in Lenox, MA; the Labor & Employment Law Section Fall Meeting at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada; the Intellectual Property Law Section Fall Meeting in Bolton Landing; the Environmental/Municipal Joint Law Section Fall Meeting at the Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort; and the International Section Fall Meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam. We extend our thanks to these bar associations and sections for including us in their outstanding events and look forward to future occasions to join our colleagues.

#### ABA Annual Meeting

In August, I attended the ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco with President-elect Glenn Lau-Kee, Immediate Past President Seymour James, State Delegate Mark Alcott, and the rest of our New York State Delegation. We were privileged to witness the installation of our member and friend Jim Silkenat as President of the American Bar Association.

#### Changes Within the Association

Earlier this month Pat Bucklin announced that she will be stepping down from her position as Executive Director of NYSBA. We are grateful to Pat for her service of nearly thirteen years and wish her the best as she pursues other opportunities. We have formed a search committee and have retained the legal search firm of Young Mayden Connect to conduct a nationwide

search for a new executive director. We consider this a time not only of change but of opportunity. We look forward to building an even stronger and more vibrant Association as we look to the future together.

April Meeting of the House of Delegates

Our next Executive Committee and House of Delegates meetings will be held on Friday April 4<sup>th</sup> and Saturday April 5<sup>th</sup> in Rochester, New York. I hope you will join us.