

# Message from the Chair

When the nominating committee of our Section asked me to serve as an officer, I did not respond immediately. While I was honored to be asked, the thought of balancing the workload with all that was going on in my practice seemed daunting. In hindsight I would be even quicker to accept the offer. The office, however, has had its challenges. First and probably most impactful was the passage of the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019. This is likely the most significant piece of real estate-related legislation in New York in decades. In order to address the sweeping changes that are enacted by the new law, the Executive Committee has created a task force led by Mindy Stern, former chair of our Section and a practitioner with a passionate commitment to educating our Section about the law as well as possibly presenting some changes or clarifications for consideration by the legislature. Mindy has constructed this task force by recruiting experienced, knowledgeable practitioners who deal on a daily basis with the effects of this new law. She has reached out to and joined efforts with the New York City Bar in carrying out the purposes of the task force. Given the track record of those involved, I know their work will not only serve the needs of the community at large, but also those of our Section.

With respect to the changes effectuated by the Act, I would like to thank Ed Filemyr, who on less than a week's notice put together a presentation to give to the Executive Committee as well as to the CLE attendants at our summer meeting in Vermont. While it was too late to qualify for CLE credits, Ed did a wonderful job of explaining the highlights of the Act and touched upon numerous areas impacted by the law.

On the subject of our summer meeting, our First Vice-Chair, Ira Goldenberg, put together a series of wonderful social events along with CLE presentations that were timely, interesting and in some cases even provocative. On Friday, Joel Sachs, Heather Rogers and Rose Marie Cantanno updated us on New York's Zombie Housing Law; Dennis Greenstein discussed ethics and hot topics in condo and co-op law; Gil Hoffmann and Mitch Pawluk discussed the implications of cannabis under New York law; Peter Coffey spoke about statute of limitations issues in foreclosures and Ann Reynolds Copps treated us once again to her ever-popular ethics and chocolate. Her presentation was held in the old



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courthouse in Manchester. On Saturday, Nick Ward Willis discussed environmental considerations in residential real estate transactions; John Caffrey, Richard Larson and Jessie Larson spoke about conservation easements; Michael Greco presented on tax credit financing for affordable housing, and Michelle Wildgrube and Tim McLeron discussed implicit bias, inclusion and ethics in the practice of real estate law. The event was one of the better attended events in many years and Ira's passion for the Manchester area was obvious in all the wonderful events that he organized.

At our Executive Committee meeting we addressed a number of other issues. As you may have heard, this year NYSBA President Hank Greenberg is overhauling the New York State Bar Association's website and creating a Virtual Bar Center. Consistent with that effort, the Real Property Law Section is creating a task force to enhance our social media and online presence while attempting to better serve our membership and support the growth of our Section. That task force is being led by Susan Scarbach and Michael Stevens, who also head our Website and Electronic Communication Committee. The Executive Committee also appointed a temporary task force to be led by Peter Coffey, another former chair of our Section, to comment on COSAC's proposed changes to the Rules of Professional Conduct.

This year we had a number of first-time attendees at our summer meeting. We also had a number of members attend who had only recently been first time attendees. I would encourage everyone to place July 9-11, 2020 on your calendars and make a commitment to attend the meeting, which this coming year will be held in Montreal. We will likely again have specials for first-time attendees and, as others have found, the meeting is worth your being part of each year. I promise you will not be disappointed as the subject matter, the social events and the camaraderie are without equal.

**Gerard G. Antetomaso**