

Women's Bar Association of the State of New York

# WBASNY

Western New York Chapter



Local voice. Statewide impact.



*Annual Installation of Officers & Directors  
and Awards Ceremony*

**Thursday, October 19, 2023**  
**The Forbes Theater, Buffalo, N.Y.**





Above the Bar Marketing

608-440-8518

info@abovethebarmarketing.com

# Let's Grow Your Law Firm

- Website Design
- Call Tracking
- Social Media
- PPC Advertising
- Search Engine Optimization
- Google Local Service Ads
- Reputation Management



Starting out, or hanging out your own shingle? **See what the ATB Academy can do for you!**



SCAN ME

## WHERE DO-IT-YOURSELF DOES NOT MEAN DO IT ALONE.



## PROGRAM

**Welcome and Introduction** .....Marissa H. Washington  
**of Officers and Directors**

**President's Remarks** ..... Kinsey A. O'Brien

**Presentation of Crystal Buffalo** ..... Anastasia M. McCarthy

**Presentation of Awards**

*Carol A. Condon Outstanding New Lawyer Award* ..... Marina A. Barci

*M. Dolores Denman Lady Justice Award*..... Anne E. Joynt

*President's Award*.....Planned Parenthood of Central and WNY

*Diversity Leadership Award*..... Jamila A. Lee

**Closing Remarks** ..... Marissa H. Washington

*Please join us following the program for drinks and desserts*



The Western New York Chapter of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York

Not a member? Visit [www.wbasnywny.org](http://www.wbasnywny.org) for more information.

## OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

<b>PRESIDENT</b>	<b>KINSEY A. O'BRIEN</b>
<b>PRESIDENT-ELECT</b>	<b>MARISSA H. WASHINGTON</b>
<b>TREASURER</b>	<b>GABRIELLE D. MARKLE</b>
<b>DEPUTY TREASURER</b>	<b>KARA M. EYRE</b>
<b>SECRETARY</b>	<b>BRITTANY A. JONES</b>
<b>STATE DELEGATES</b>	<b>BRITTANY A. JONES</b> <b>ASHLEY R. LOWRY</b> <b>GABRIELLE D. MARKLE</b> <b>ANNA S.M. McCARTHY</b> <b>MARISSA H. WASHINGTON</b>
<b>LOCAL DIRECTORS</b>	<b>CHRISTINA AKERS-DICENZO</b> <b>FLORINA ALTSHILER</b> <b>KARA M. EYRE</b> <b>JENNA E. McDONNELL</b> <b>STEPHANIE R. MESSINA</b> <b>LISA A. POCH</b> <b>IFEOLUWA M. POPOOLA</b> <b>TAYLOR C. SCHUBAUER-WATERS</b> <b>MICHELLE M. SCHWACH</b>
<b>IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT</b>	<b>ANASTASIA M. McCARTHY</b>

## LOCAL COMMITTEE CHAIRS

<b>Awards</b> Brittany Jones	<b>Geographic Outreach</b> Sarah P. Rera	<b>Long Range Planning</b> Karen Richardson
<b>Book Club Series</b> Sarah Honan Debra Ritz	<b>Health &amp; Reproductive Rights</b> Bernadette Gargano Gaelin Carrig Christina Akers-DiCenzo Marina Barci	<b>Membership</b> Jenna McDonnell Alexandra Jaehn
<b>Bylaws</b> Gabrielle Markle	<b>Corporate Counsel</b> Vicky-Marie Brunette Allison E. Ogorek	<b>New Lawyers</b> Allison Contrera
<b>Criminal Law</b> Florina Altshiler Cathleen Roemer	<b>Installation</b> Marissa H. Washington	<b>Nominations</b> Anastasia McCarthy
<b>Diversity</b> Mayada Osman	<b>JALBCA</b> Judith Gerber	<b>Programs/CLE</b> Kara Rossi Lisa Poch
<b>Domestic Violence</b> Judith Olin Nicole Grasso	<b>Judge's Choice Series</b> Ashley Lowry	<b>Public Sector &amp; Non-Profit Attorneys</b> Rebecca Izzo Ron Winter
<b>Employment Law</b> Erin Ewell Rebecca Izzo	<b>Judiciary</b> Sharon Swift Erin McCampbell Paris	<b>UB Law Liaison &amp; Denman Scholarship</b> Anna McCarthy
<b>Family Law</b> Ashley Blahowicz Kaitlyn Hoerner	<b>Legislative</b> Anastasia McCarthy	<b>Wellness</b> Emily Florczak
<b>Finance</b> Gabrielle Markle	<b>LGBTQ+</b> Alexis Florczak Bernadette Gargano Anastasia McCarthy	<b>Working Parents</b> Kara Eyre Christina Akers-DiCenzo



**Western New York Chapter**  
Local voice. Statewide impact.





## A Note from The President...

Dear WBASNY WNY Members and Friends,

I am thrilled to welcome you to our Chapter's Annual Installation of Officers and Directors and Awards Reception! I look forward to an evening of reconnecting with colleagues and friends and celebrating the accomplishments of our Chapter, its leaders, and our inspiring award recipients.

It is an incredible honor to be installed as our Chapter's 39th President. The Women's Bar and our Chapter have been instrumental in my life, both personally and professionally. I first became involved as a brand-new "baby lawyer" and credit WBASNY for rapidly expanding my network of mentors and colleagues. Since then, I have been privileged to serve our Chapter at every level, from Committee Chair, to Local and State Director, and now as an Officer. Personally, I have met some of my most cherished friends through the Women's Bar. The women of WBASNY are among the first to celebrate my successes and to support me through my struggles. That is the power of the WBASNY network.

Even more powerful than the network is the mission of the Women's Bar: to promote the advancement of the status of women in society and of women in the legal profession; to promote the fair and equal administration of justice; and to act as a unified voice for our members with respect to issues of statewide, national, and international significance to women generally and to women attorneys in particular. This mission is at the core of everything our Chapter and the statewide organization of which we are a part do. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve this mission and be a steward of this organization.

Tonight, we recognize four award recipients whose work exemplifies WBASNY's values and furthers our mission. The highest honor our Chapter bestows is the M. Dolores Denman Lady Justice Award. This Award is named for M. Dolores Denman, the first woman to serve as Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, Fourth Department, and one of our Chapter's founders. The Lady Justice Award recognizes significant contributions and dedication to the work of the Women's Bar. It is my honor to bestow this award on our Chapter's 33rd President, Anne Joynt. Anne is a true leader within our legal community and beyond. Despite her busy law practice, and many (and I do mean many) professional and philanthropic commitments, Anne remains incredibly engaged with our Chapter. She never seems to miss an event, and she is never too busy to return a call and provide advice to our Chapter's current leadership.

We are also honored to bestow the President's Award on Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York, whose tireless work to preserve health and reproductive rights is at the heart of our mission, and to award the Carol A. Condon Outstanding New Lawyer Award to Marina Barci and the Diversity Leadership Award to Jamila Lee. Please join me in congratulating our inspiring honorees.

I also extend heartfelt congratulations and thanks to the incoming Directors and Officers. It is a pleasure to serve alongside such a dynamic, accomplished, and committed group. Thank you for your dedication to our work.

Our Committee Chairs also deserve immense recognition and thanks. They work so hard to provide timely and relevant CLEs, meetings, and networking opportunities for our members. We could not put on even a fraction of our programs without their dedication and enthusiasm.

Thank you to our amazing group of WBASNY WNY Past Presidents. The old adage about standing on the shoulders of giants could not ring more true for our Chapter. I am so grateful for their constant support and guidance.

Congratulations to Immediate Past President Anastasia McCarthy on her receipt of the Crystal Buffalo Award. Anastasia worked tirelessly during her presidency to engage our members, ensure the financial health of our Chapter, and focus our efforts in high impact areas. She formed our Chapter's first committee on health and reproductive rights and spearheaded both a reduction in membership dues for law student members and a membership sponsorship program, making membership more accessible than ever. We are in awe of her accomplishments and so grateful for all of her hard work.

Many thanks to President Elect Marissa Washington and the Installation Committee for all of their hard work. Planning and executing tonight's celebration is a massive undertaking and is critical to our Chapter's fundraising goals and programing.

Finally, thank you to our generous sponsors. Your support is crucial not only to this evening, but to our Chapter's ability to serve its members and mission throughout the year. We could not do it without you.

I hope you enjoy this evening. Thank you for being here.

*Kinsey A. O'Brien*

Kinsey A. O'Brien, Chapter President





**Marina A. Barci, Esq.**  
**Carol A. Condon Outstanding  
 New Lawyer Award Recipient**

**Associate Corporate Counsel,  
 Colliers Engineering & Design**

*(An Introduction Prepared by  
 Anastasia M. McCarthy, Esq.)*

I have had the pleasure of knowing Marina Barci since she was a student law clerk (and later, an associate attorney) at Hurwitz Fine P.C. and I am absolutely honored to share a few words about her here.

For as long as I have known her, Marina has been a stand-out member of the bar. She is confident, funny, and has an incredibly strong and reliable work ethic. More importantly, she is the epitome of a constant friend—thoughtful, considerate, and kind. During the pandemic, for example, it was not uncommon for Marina to drop off treats on a co-worker’s porch or to stop by to say hello at the front door.

Marina’s kindness and drive have flourished since joining the Western NY legal community and I have been honored to watch her journey unfold. During law school, Marina not only worked part-time at Hurwitz Fine, but participated on trial team and moot court and began coaching mock trial at the Charter High School for Applied Technologies (which she continued to do until 2022). She also served as the president of Future Advocates in Training and completed over 200 hours of pro bono service through CLARO (Civil Legal Advice Resource Office) at the Western New York Law Center.

Marina began her legal career as an associate attorney with Hurwitz Fine, working in litigation. It quickly became evident to me that Marina would be a talented attorney and an important member of our WNY legal community. Early in her legal career, Marina became involved with WBASNY and the BAEC, participating in the Young Lawyers Committees. She has also served as co-chair of the GOLD Group’s Recruitment and Student Engagement Committee, a member of VLP’s Rising Champions for Justice board, a scholar mentor with Say Yes Buffalo, and a legal observer for the National Lawyers Guild.

Marina has since moved on from our work together and now works in-house as associate corporate counsel at Colliers Engineering and Design, a national provider of multi-discipline engineering, architecture, design and consulting services to public and private sector clients. Beyond WBASNY WNY, Marina actively participates with the Young Professionals for Olmsted Parks and is Secretary for the Hostel Buffalo-Niagara board of directors. In addition, she is the treasurer of the UB Law Alumni Association’s GOLD (Graduates of the Last Decade) Group.

I was thrilled when Marina joined WBASNY WNY because I knew that she would grab the opportunities the organization made available to her and make the most of them—she’s done that and more. If you have attended a WBASNY event in the last several years, you’ve probably seen Marina there—in fact, it’s not uncommon for Marina to roll up her sleeves and run a sign-in table or otherwise volunteer at an event she originally planned to simply attend for fun. Marina currently serves as a co-chair of the WBASNY WNY Health and Reproductive Rights Committee and a member of our chapter’s Judicial Selection Committee. Both commitments require the dedication of considerable time, effort, and care, which Marina gives without question.

We are so lucky to have a member as dynamic and unwavering as Marina and I can think of no one more deserving of the Carol A. Condon Outstanding New Lawyer Award. Congratulations, Marina! I am so proud, not only of your accomplishments, but to call you a friend.

**From Marina A. Barci, Esq.,  
 Carol A. Condon Outstanding New Lawyer Award Recipient**

I am truly honored to receive the Carol A. Condon Outstanding New Lawyer Award. And my congratulations to the other award recipients! WBASNY WNY has supported me and our community in so many ways and I am grateful to be part of such a caring organization. I am continuously inspired by the women here to be an active contributor to the profession and community.

I would like to acknowledge those who have played a pivotal role in shaping my journey as a lawyer and thank all who have taken time to train and promote me. I consider myself fortunate to have had some incredible mentors in my career thus far. In particular, I would like to recognize Jody Briandi, Anastasia McCarthy, and Eric Bernhardt. Although we no longer work together directly, their enduring support, motivation, and inspiration continues to propel me forward. I am so grateful for the invaluable time they invested in me. I eagerly anticipate the opportunity to pay it forward to other young lawyers.

My thanks extend to Colliers Engineering & Design, especially the legal team, for supporting my professional endeavors and continuing to help me learn and grow in the corporate world.

In a world marked by divisiveness, we find ourselves at another pivotal moment in history. I am proud of the work we are doing in the WNY community to educate and champion women's rights, particularly within the realm of health and reproduction. I am surrounded by extraordinary women and am thankful to have cultivated such a community. As the saying goes, "Here's to strong women – may we know them, may we be them, and may we raise them."



**Anne E. Joynt, Esq.**  
**M. Dolores Denman Lady Justice Award**  
**Recipient**

**Partner, Lipsitz, Ponterio & Comerford**  
**LLC**

*(Introduction Prepared by Neil Pawlowski, Esq.)*

It is my privilege and honor to be able to introduce the recipient of the 2023 M. Dolores Denman Lady Justice Award, my dear friend, Anne Joynt. Without a doubt, nearly every person reading this introduction has had an opportunity to interact with Anne either professionally with her work as a

personal injury plaintiff's attorney or through her impressive professional and charitable service in several organizations throughout Western New York. There is nobody in my mind more deserving of an award for her significant contributions and dedication to the work of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York and specifically the Western New York Chapter.

Anne holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in both English and Spanish from the State University of New York College at Geneseo, and her law degree from the University at Buffalo Law School, State University of New York. During her time at UB Law School, Anne served as the Co-Editor in Chief for the Buffalo Human Rights Law Review and was also an associate member of the Buffalo Public Interest Law Journal.

Since graduating from law school, Anne has handled hundreds of complex plaintiff's personal injury files focusing in toxic tort exposure at Lipsitz, Ponterio & Comerford, LLC, where she has been a Partner since 2014. Anne also currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Erie County Bar Association Aid to Indigent Prisoners Society, Inc., the Center for Elder Law and Justice, the Western New York Women's Foundation, and the National Federation for Just Communities of WNY. She is a member of the Dean's Advisory Counsel of UB Law School. Anne is also a Past President of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, WNY Chapter, and the UB Law Alumni Association.

Aside from her impressive professional and social justice activities, Anne is also an active member of the Board of Directors for Girls on the Run, as well as the Western New York Regional Board of Directors for the State University of New York at Geneseo.

Anne has also been honored throughout the Western New York community for her willingness to always help and support both the legal community as well as the entire community at large. She was a prior recipient of the UB Law Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award for Community Service, Buffalo Business First's Women of Influence Award, Woman Lawyer of the Year from the Women Lawyers of Western New York, Attorney of the Year Leader in Law Award from the Daily Record and was also an Honoree for Buffalo Business First's 40 Under 40 Award.

It is not surprising that this award is being given to Anne tonight. Anne's achievements in both her career and community strikes to the core of the mission of WBASNY, and specifically to the work that Justice M. Dolores Denman promoted through her mentorship and dedication to the legal community and the greater Western New York community as a whole. Anne's hard work and efforts undoubtedly have improved the lives of her colleagues, friends and communities around her.

**From Anne E. Joynt, Esq.,**  
**M. Dolores Denman Lady Justice Award Recipient**

I am deeply honored to receive the M. Dolores Denman Lady Justice Award, and to be sharing this evening with my distinguished fellow awardees. While I did not have the opportunity to practice before Justice Denman, her impacts on our legal community, and New York jurisprudence on the whole, are legendary. To have my name spoken alongside hers is the greatest of compliments, and I am humbled to be receiving this award.

When I was sworn into the Bar, I was unsure about where I should spend my time out of the office. While everyone extolled the virtues of networking, I had no idea what that really looked like in practice. Due to my interest in women's issues in general, and my hope to meet more young female attorneys, I decided to attend some events held by the Western New York chapter of WBASNY. I will be forever thankful for that choice. It was there that I truly met my tribe, and I have so many deep friendships that have sprung from this organization. There are so many women that I have gotten to know, both personally and professionally, by virtue of my involvement in WBASNY that I would never have had the opportunity to encounter in practice. These women have enriched my life, both personally and professionally, and I will always be so thankful to WBASNY for facilitating these relationships. It has meant the world to me to know such a diverse and interesting group of women, and to be able to count upon them for support, and to support them in turn, as we all navigate our legal careers. After years of service on the Board, being elected to serve as President of our chapter was the experience of a lifetime, and I joined an illustrious list of accomplished and dynamic women who have led the organization. I am so gratified to see the tradition continue with the women that have continued to lead and lend their time and talent to our community.

To my family, thank you for your unending support.

To my colleagues at Lipsitz, Ponterio & Comerford, thank you for your support of my endeavors, be they in or out of the office, and your endless commitment to bettering our community.

To my friends and mentors, thank you for your friendship and your wisdom. I am made better by knowing each of you, and I feel so thankful to have you in my life.

Thank you again for this recognition, and congratulations to my fellow honorees.



Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York

**Planned Parenthood  
of Central and  
Western New York  
President's Award  
Recipient**

*(An Introduction Prepared by WBASNY WNY President Kinsey A. O'Brien, Esq.)*

It is not an exaggeration to say that access to reproductive health care is under attack across the United States. For years, and particularly since the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, women's ability to access critical health services and exercise agency over their own bodies and reproductive lives has been in jeopardy. WBASNY WNY recognizes that preserving this access and agency is crucial to advancing the status of women in the legal profession and in society generally.

For these – and so many other – reasons, we are honored to bestow the President's Award on Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York (PPCWN), an organization that protects and provides health care and education that empowers individuals and families. With respect. Without judgment. No matter what.

PPCWN serves a very large region that encompasses 18 counties and the Cities of Syracuse, Canandaigua, Rochester, Batavia, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls. Its incredible providers and staff, including President and Chief Executive Officer Michelle Casey, who will accept the award this evening, work tirelessly to provide patients with a full range of high-quality sexual and reproductive health services and education so that all people get to determine the course of their own life.

In light of *Dobbs* and the legal battle surrounding access to mifepristone, one of the drugs used for medication abortions, PPCWN has seen a dramatic increase in the need for abortion care, including a significant influx of patients from out of state. In the face of uncertainty and risk, the providers at PPCWN did what they have always done – they stepped up, expanding hours and meeting the increased demand. PPCWN has also worked to combat the spread of misinformation, including launching "RAE," Resources for Abortion Education, an online platform that provides facts and resources regarding the availability and safety of abortion care.

Of course, PPCWN's work has long gone far beyond abortion care. Through its health centers and mobile outreach, it also provides critical preventive care, including routine pap smears, HPV vaccinations, and breast examinations; STI testing and treatment; pregnancy testing and options counseling, including with respect to adoption and parenting support; access to birth control and emergency contraception; and gender affirming hormone care. It also provides steadfast, intersectional, and confidential support to survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, including a 24/7 support hotline, crisis intervention, and training, advocacy, and outreach programs.

PPCWN is also a leader in educating and supporting our community's youth. Through its Moxie program, it provides "Instagram Sex Ed," filling a crucial information gap for young people, helps teens serve as peer advocates, and operates a free teen center that is open during the school year and summer. PPCWN also provides "The Connection," an educational program based in Niagara Falls that helps to improve physical and emotional health, provides healthy food and personal hygiene products, and teaches vegetable gardening to youth.

The above is just a small sampling. I could go on for pages about the varied and vital work that PPCWN does in our communities. Suffice it to say that this organization displays incredible commitment to WBASNY WNY's values, goals, and mission and is more than deserving of the prestigious President's Award. Please join me in celebrating and congratulating PPCWN.

**From Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York,  
President's Award Recipient**

*(Remarks Prepared by PPCWN President & CEO Michelle Casey)*

On behalf of Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York (PPCWN), we are so honored and grateful to be recognized by the Western New York Chapter of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York (WBASNY). WBASNY is a dedicated partner in our work to create a more equitable and just world – essential work that begins right here in the communities we serve.

In a moment when we are witnessing unprecedented attacks on our right to bodily autonomy, PPCWN is proud to provide sexual and reproductive health care and education to individuals and families in Western New York and beyond. We believe that access to care, including access to abortion, is a human right that empowers individuals to make decisions about their own lives and futures. Without adequate access to these services, there is no bodily autonomy. Without bodily autonomy, there is no justice.

The work of PPCWNY would not be possible without our more than 200 dedicated staff members, who are directly providing services and working behind the scenes every single day. These individuals deliver essential health care out of nine centers; facilitate countless education workshops; oversee our youth programs at In Control, The Connection, and Teen Reality Theatre; and provide sexual assault and domestic violence crisis support services through our program, RESTORE. At PPCWNY, we are devoted to our mission and will continue to show up in service of our mission, *no matter what*.

Thank you, WBASNY, for this award. Thank you for standing in solidarity with Planned Parenthood in the fight for control over our own bodies, our lives, and our futures. Together, we will rebuild and reclaim our freedom.



**Jamila A. Lee, Esq.**  
**Diversity Leadership Award Recipient**

**Assistant Dean for Student Affairs,  
University at Buffalo School of Law**

*(An Introduction Prepared by University at  
Buffalo School of Law Vice Dean for Student  
Affairs Bernadette Gargano, Esq.)*

It is my great honor to introduce the 2023 Recipient of WBASNY WNY's Diversity Leadership Award, Jamila Lee, Esq. I have known Jamila for over a decade now, having first met her as one of my students at the University at Buffalo School of Law. Jamila's commitment to diversity started early, before she even graduated from law school. Jamila came to UB Law as a transfer student in 2013, and she immediately became an active member of the law school community, including serving as the president of the Black Law Students Association. Ever since then, again, for over a decade now, Jamila has continued to serve her community and to promote the ideals of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging. Jamila is a Past President of the Minority Bar Association, a Director of the Minority Bar Foundation, a Director of the Bar Association of Erie County, and a long-standing member of the Women's Bar Association of New York – Western New York Chapter. Jamila also serves on the Buffalo Prep Collective and its Alumni Council, The Foundry's Board of Directors, the Buffalo Seminary's Anti-Racism Task Force and Head Alumnae Council, and the New York State Deputy Chief's Administrative Judge Task Force. Further, Jamila worships as a member of the First Calvary Baptist Church Arise Ministry.

Jamila Lee earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Trinity College, and her Juris Doctorate from the University at Buffalo School of Law. Since her graduation from UB Law, not only has Jamila served her community, but she was also named to Buffalo Business's First Legal Elite in 2020 and as a Buffalo Black Achiever in the same year. She was honored again by Buffalo Black Achievers in 2022 for her work as a youth

speaker. Jamila worked for over four years in the Eighth Judicial District, where she served as the Deputy Chief Clerk for the Surrogate's Court. In her role, Jamila worked as both a court manager and a court attorney. Prior to her work with the Hon. Acea Mosey, Jamila was in private practice. She also served as a law clerk to the Hon. Paula Feroletto and as a legal assistant to the Hon. Timothy Drury, both in the New York State Supreme Court. If that is not enough, Jamila also serves as a Confidential Investigator for adoption petitions for the Erie County Surrogate's Court.

At UB Law, Jamila serves as an Assistant Dean in the Office of Student Affairs, working with students every day to help them achieve their goals. She handles a variety of issues from our Peer-to-Peer Advocates to Accommodations and Accessibility to Wellness and Belonging to academic advising. She brings her experience in DEI to the Office of Student Affairs and collaborates closely with UB Law's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to create programming and events to support our students from underrepresented communities and backgrounds. She also works closely with the University's Office of Accessibility Resources. Dean Lee, as our UB Law Students address her, lives her values every day. Her defining characteristics are her faith, service to her community, her values to promote all those who are marginalized, and her indefatigable work ethic. I am so proud to call her a colleague and a friend. My life and the lives of so many others have been improved by her leadership and, perhaps more importantly, her commitment to equity, her empathy, and her generosity of spirit.

**From Jamila A. Lee, Esq.,  
Diversity Leadership Award Recipient**

Thank you to WBASNY and their committee members for presenting me with the Diversity Leadership Award. I am honored and shocked to be a recipient. As I prepared my remarks, I struggled with what to say because I have so many personal stories from my past to my present day. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (D.E.I.B.) work is an area that I'm constantly learning about because it's an area that continues to expand and must be applied to practice. Due to our own implicit biases, this work can be difficult when we are trying to enact real change.

Recently, I conducted a training for law students and I misgendered a student. When I first met the student, the student identified as a female, but now the student identifies as non-binary, and goes by they/them pronouns. I have misgendered them once too many, unintentionally – but what does that matter? I already contributed to that student's uneasiness or feeling of lack of belonging – despite my intention. The student waited until the end of the training to correct me, and I thanked them for correcting me and immediately apologized. The student responded and said "it's ok. I know it wasn't meant in a malicious way and it was unintentional." The student knew that using they/them pronouns was an adjustment for me – mainly because I knew how they first identified. After some more thought, I emailed the student and apologized again for possibly contributing to their lack of belonging in any way and then asked them to please correct me publicly next time. I understood they were being courteous by waiting until after the training, but that interaction and correction could have helped others as well.



I'm sharing this story because there are daily opportunities that present themselves where we all can take the lead and improve relative to areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. I acknowledge I have a lot to improve and learn, but I am trying. For D.E.I.B. to be sustainable long-term, we all need to take the lead.

This award is given to show gratitude to those in the legal field who have effected change in the legal profession, and helped remove barriers that stand in the way of equality. Helping to remove barriers that stand in the way of equality can be discouraging despite how important and personal diversity work is to me. As legal professionals, I'm sure you can empathize with trying to explain an argument to someone with an opposing view and the person continuously chooses not to understand it or accept it – despite the vast supporting documentation. Regardless of how discouraging it can be at times, I will not stop trying to make our communities more inclusive because those feelings of being unheard, devalued, or unseen are real, and they impact you in unexplainable ways.

There are key women in my life who helped me deal with these feelings and removed barriers for me along my legal career. Thank you to Judge E. Jeanette Ogden, who helped me get into law school, supported me throughout law school, and has remained a phone call or text away to this day. Judge Ogden truly embodies her favorite quote “lift as you climb.” I would also like to thank Bernadette Gargano for seeing me when I was a law student. She never knew the impact she had on me until after I graduated, but she helped me along with my wavering feelings of imposter syndrome while I was in law school. Then, she brought me back to the law school to help students in the same capacity. Thank you. Thank you to my best friend, my mom, Judge Barbara Johnson-Lee. She showed me how to live my life and how to treat people. I will never be as great as she is but thank you for giving me such a loving, safe, and solid foundation.

Thank you to my wonderful support group. And thank you to WBASNY for continually doing the good and necessary work.



## ABOUT THE AWARDS

### Carol A. Condon Outstanding New Lawyer Award

In an effort to recognize the outstanding contributions of the next generation of attorneys, WBASNY WNY created the Carol A. Condon Outstanding New Lawyer Award, which is awarded annually. This award is given to a WBASNY member who, as of December 31st of the current membership year, has been a member of the bar for not more than five years, and who has made outstanding achievements within the profession, outstanding contributions within the WBASNY WNY community, or both.

This award is named in honor of WBASNY WNY's 1995-1996 President, Carol A. Condon. Following nearly a decade of service to WBASNY at the state and local levels in the roles of both an officer and director, Carol A. Condon encouraged– and continues to encourage – new lawyers to become active contributors to their profession and community and showed them how to do so. WBASNY WNY is proud to commemorate Carol A. Condon's encouragement and mentorship of the next generation of lawyers with the “Outstanding New Lawyer Award” in her honor.

Past recipients of the Carol A. Condon Outstanding New Lawyer Award are:

2015	Sarah J. Duval, Esq.	2019	Brittany A. Jones, Esq.
2016	Emma L. Buckthal, Esq.	2020	No award presented due to pandemic
2017	Candace R. Alnaji, Esq.	2021	Marissa Hill Washington, Esq.
2018	Sarah Bertozzi, Esq.	2022	Taylor C. Schubauer, Esq.

### M. Dolores Denman Lady Justice Award

The Achievement Award was renamed in 2000 as the M. Dolores Denman Lady Justice Award. It was renamed in honor and in memory of Justice Denman, one of the previous recipients of the award. Justice Denman was a staunch supporter of the goals of WBASNY generally, and particularly of our Chapter. The award recognizes significant contributions and dedication to the work of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York and the Western New York Chapter.

Past recipients of the Lady Justice Award are:

1992	Hon. Carol Heckman	2008	Kathleen M. Sweet, Esq.
1993	Linda J. Nenni, Esq.	2009	Audrey Czesak
1994	Hon. M. Dolores Denman	2010	Sheri Mooney, Esq.
1995	Hon. Barbara Howe	2011	Hon. Erin Peradotto
1996	Ann E. Evanko, Esq.	2012	Karen Richardson, Esq.
1997	Barbara Schifeling, Esq.	2013	Cheryl Meyers Buth, Esq.
1998	Lillian E. Geiger Cowan, Esq.	2014	Hillary Banker, Esq.
1999	Carol Condon, Esq.	2015	Melissa H. Nickson, Esq.
2000	Gayle L. Eagan, Esq.	2016	Bridget M. O'Connell, Esq.
2001	Linda Marsh, Esq.	2017	Lisa A. Mueller, Esq.
2002	Shari Jo Reich, Esq.	2018	Assemblymember Monica P. Wallace
2003	Suzanne E. Tomkins, Esq.	2019	NYS Senator Shelley B. Mayer
2004	Hon. Judith S. Kaye	2020	No award presented due to pandemic
2005	Hon. Sharon S. Townsend	2021	Melinda Saran, Esq.
2006	Ginger D. Schroder, Esq.	2022	Holly Baum, Esq.
2007	Hon. Shirley Troutman		

## Diversity Leadership Award

The Diversity Leadership Award recognizes individuals or organizations who have demonstrated a commitment to promoting full and equal participation in the legal profession through the encouragement and involvement of women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and/or persons of differing sexual orientations and gender identities. We present this award to show gratitude to those individuals, corporations, organizations, lawyers, members of the judiciary and/or legal academia, who have effected real change in the legal profession, and have removed barriers that stand in the way of equality.

Harter Secrest & Emery LLP received the Diversity Leadership Award in 2017, and Samantha I. V. White, Esq. received the Diversity Leadership Award in 2022.

## The President's Award

The President's Award recognizes a distinguished individual whose leadership serves as a role model for others, and whose ideals and accomplishments reflect a commitment to goals consistent with the mission of WBASNY, including the promotion of the status of women in society and in the legal profession, and the fair and equal administration of justice.

Past recipients of the President's Award are:

1997	Barbra Kavanaugh, Esq.	2010	Hon. Lisa Bloch-Rodwin
1998	Sam Hoyt	2011	Lt. Gov. Kath Hochul
1999	Lana Benatovich	2012	Jane Griffin
2000	Myrna F. Young	2013	Congressman Brian Higgins
2001	Crystalea Burns Pelletier	2014	Hon. Elizabeth Wolford
2002	Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker	2015	Hon. Eugene Fahey
2003	Hon. John F. O'Donnell	2016	Alexa D. Sardina
2004	Recognition of All Past Presidents	2017	Lenora B. Foote-Beavers, Esq.
2005	Kate Joyce and Laura Gruber	2018	Mary Travers Murphy
2006	Denise O'Donnell, Esq.	2019	Cindy L. Odom
2007	Susan Hill	2020	No award presented due pandemic
2008	Jacqueline G. Mordant	2021	Teresa "Teri" Miller (posthumously)
2009	Annie Deck-Miller	2022	Margot Glick (posthumously)



## M. Dolores Denman Scholarship

The Denman Scholarship Fund provides financial assistance to custodial parents to assist with child care while studying for the bar exam. This scholarship pays tribute to one of our founding members who became the first female presiding justice of an appellate division. Most importantly, this scholarship pays tribute to a woman who was dedicated to her family and friends above all, who supported her profession and mentored younger attorneys, and who never lost sight of the individuals whose lives were and continue to be impacted by the decisions reached by her Court.

Past recipients of the M. Dolores Denman Scholarship are:

2019	Deonna Jones	2022	Heather A. Kuhn
2020	Rachel Vicario	2023	Bryanne Jones



**KINSEY A. O'BRIEN**, President of the WNY Chapter, is a Partner at Hodgson Russ LLP. A member of the Firm's Labor & Employment practice group, Ms. O'Brien counsels employers in all aspects of labor and employment law and defends them in employment-related litigation. She has been named to the Upstate New York Super Lawyers Rising Stars lists for Employment & Labor since 2016 and was named a Legal Excellence Award honoree by the Rochester Business Journal in 2021.

In addition to her work with the WNY Chapter, Ms. O'Brien is active in the WBASNY State Nominations Committee. She previously served as a WNY WBASNY Local

Director and chaired its Employment Law Committee, Bylaws Committee, and UB Law Liaison Committee.

Ms. O'Brien graduated summa cum laude from SUNY Buffalo Law School. During law school, Ms. O'Brien was a Publications Editor for the Buffalo Law Review and won the Charles S. Desmond Memorial Moot Court Competition. She was also awarded Best Appellate Brief in that competition.

Ms. O'Brien serves as Board President for Locust Street Neighborhood Art Classes, Inc., a not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing free and low-cost art classes to individuals of all ages, especially youth, low-income, and minority populations. She

is also the Chair of the Labor Law Committee of the Bar Association of Erie County and a member of the Leadership Buffalo Class of 2022.

Ms. O'Brien lives in Tonawanda with her husband, daughter, and dogs. She is an avid football fan (Go Bills!) and loves to travel.

**MARISSA H. WASHINGTON**, President-Elect and State Delegate, is a Support Magistrate in Erie County Family Court. She previously owned and operated a boutique law firm where she practiced matrimonial and family law with a focus on representing children in Erie and Niagara Counties.



Ms. Washington received her BA from the University of Pittsburgh in May of 2012. She then received her Juris Doctor from Valparaiso University School of Law in December 2015 and sat for the February 2015 New York State Bar Exam. She was admitted to the New York State Bar in June of 2015 and practiced exclusively in the area of Matrimonial and Family Law until her appointment as a Support Magistrate in July of 2023.

In addition to her work with the WNY Chapter of WBASNY where she serves on the Board of Directors, she is an active member of the Erie County Bar Association, and the Minority Bar Association of Western New York. She is also a member of the Buffalo Chapter of The GirlFriends, Inc.

Ms. Washington is a native of Williamsville and presently lives in Kenmore with her husband and their children.



**GABRIELLE "GABE" D. MARKLE**, Treasurer and State Delegate, is the Chief Operating Officer at Lossless Production Services, Inc., where she and her husband run a family business providing event production and audio/visual services to corporate clients.

Prior to joining Lossless full-time, Gabe focused her legal practice in several areas including general liability defense and representing relative caregivers in custody, adoption, and guardianship proceedings stemming from Family Court matters. She also previously represented older adults in

cases of financial exploitation, family offense proceedings and eviction proceedings to remove abusive family members from the home.

Gabe is a Buffalo native who received her undergraduate degree in political science from Canisius College. From there, she earned her Juris Doctorate from Catholic University, Columbus School of Law in Washington, D.C. During law school, she had the opportunity to practice law as a student attorney in the Criminal Prosecution Clinic at the Montgomery County, Maryland State Attorney's Office. She was also a member of the Moot Court Association. Gabe earned the Pro Bono Service Highest Honors Award which highlighted her commitment to non-profit legal work through her pro bono hours during law school. Prior to her legal career, she successfully managed her family's local restaurant.

In her free time, Gabe enjoys traveling, avidly watching documentaries, reading, baking, and spending time with family, including her rescue animals.

**KARA M. EYRE**, Deputy Treasurer, Local Director and Co-Chair of the Working Parents Committee, is an experienced litigator with Wilson Elser. Ms. Eyre has extensive experience defending against medical malpractice, nursing home negligence and general liability claims, and represents individual providers and institutions in medical claims across a full spectrum of medical specialties. In the nursing home and long-term care area, she handles the defense of matters alleging violations of the New York Public Health Law section 2801-d. She has extensive experience managing the defense of cases through all phases of litigation, and has successfully argued appeals before the Fourth Department Appellate Division.



Ms. Eyre is a member of the Erie County and New York State Bar Associations, in addition to WBASNY WNY. She is also President of the Board of Directors for Lawyers for Learning, a local tutoring organization that pairs elementary school students in Buffalo with tutors from the legal community. Ms. Eyre is an Adjunct Professor for the Paralegal Studies Program at Daemen College, where she teaches Introduction to Medical Malpractice Litigation and Administrative Law.

Ms. Eyre has been recognized as a 2020 "Up and Coming Attorney" by The Daily Record and as a "Rising Star" for her work in personal injury and medical malpractice defense by Super Lawyers.

Ms. Eyre earned her Juris Doctor from the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York, New York. She is also a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Ms. Eyre lives in Snyder, New York with her husband and three young children. She is also the Secretary of the Board of the Smallwood Drive Elementary Parent Teacher Association.



**BRITTANY A. JONES**, Secretary and State Delegate, is the Principal Law Clerk to the Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden. Prior to her current position, Brittany was a litigator at Mental Hygiene Legal Service. She also previously served as an associate attorney at the law firm Webster Szanyi LLP and as an appellate court attorney for the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Fourth Department. Brittany is a former treasurer of the Rochester Black Bar Association. She has volunteered in the Just Cause (formally known as Volunteer Legal Services

Project) family law clinic and landlord-tenant program where she represented clients in and around the Rochester area. She also is a past president of the Minority Bar Association of Western New York.

Brittany holds a Bachelor of Science from Emerson College, a Master of Science in Telecommunications and Network Management from the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University, and a Juris Doctor from Syracuse University College of Law.



**ANASTASIA M. MCCARTHY**, Immediate Past President, is a partner in the Litigation Department at Hurwitz Fine, P.C. where she defends retailers, business owners, property owners, schools, and employers against a wide variety of claims. She has been the recipient of the Daily Record's "Up and Coming Attorney" Award (2019) and Business First's IDEA (Inclusion Diversity Equity Awareness) Award (2021). She has been named to the Upstate New York Super Lawyers Rising Stars List for the last four years and has been named to the Best Lawyers in America "Ones to Watch" list for the last several years as well.

Anastasia received her Juris Doctor degree cum laude from the University at Buffalo Law School. While in law school, she served as a research assistant and was an active participant in the moot court program. She also co-founded and served as co-president of the Women of SUNY Buffalo Law, was president of the LGBTQ law student group OUTLaw, and was a member of the Buffalo Moot Court and a clerk on the Buffalo Environmental Law Journal. Before heading to law school, Anastasia earned dual Bachelor of Arts degrees in English literature and theatre from SUNY Geneseo. While studying at Geneseo, she was awarded the C. Agnes Rigney Award in writing drama and the Mary A. Thomas Award in poetry writing, and was inducted into Alpha Psi Omega, the theatre and dance honor society.

Anastasia is originally from Rochester. She and her wife, fellow Board Member, Anna McCarthy, now live in Williamsville with their children, Josie and Elliot, and their cat, Ben.



The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little extra.

Hodgson Russ is proud to support WBASNY and the WNY Chapter. Your inspirational work strengthens our community and elevates all women.



**Hodgson Russ**  
ATTORNEYS LLP

ALBANY + BUFFALO + GREENSBORO + HACKENSACK  
NEW YORK CITY + PALM BEACH + ROCHESTER  
SARATOGA SPRINGS + TORONTO

[HODGSONRUSS.COM](http://HODGSONRUSS.COM)



WNY'S ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY  
DRY CLEANER | TAILOR | LAUNDRY | HOUSEHOLDS

# CONGRATS

## To the Incoming Board & All Award Recipients!



SHARP  
SUITS

WITH FREE  
PICK UP &  
DELIVERY

 **Colvin  
Cleaners**

Helping to Support Legal Leaders in Our Community  
716.873.2952 | [www.colvincleaners.com](http://www.colvincleaners.com)

## Proud to support

the Western New York Chapter  
of the Women's Bar Association  
of the State of New York.

Congratulations to all  
the honorees.



**Harter Secrest & Emery LLP**

ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS

50 Fountain Plaza, Suite 1000  
Buffalo, NY 14202

**716.853.1616**

[hselaw.com](http://hselaw.com)

# BSAW

Bennett Schechter Arcuri & Will LLP

## WBASNY WNY Members

**Kristin Arcuri, Esq., Pauline Will, Esq.,  
Jenna McDonnell, Esq. & Jennifer Lopez,  
Esq.**

### **Congratulate Honorees:**

*Kinsey O'Brien, Esq.*

*Anne Joynt, Esq.*

*Planned Parenthood of WNY*

*Marina Barci, Esq.*

*Jamila Lee, Esq.*

*Anastasia McCarthy, Esq.*

**Bennett Schechter Arcuri & Will, LLP**  
701 Seneca Street, Suite 609  
Buffalo, NY • (716) 242-8100  
[www.BSAWlaw.com](http://www.BSAWlaw.com)



**ASHLEY R. LOWRY**, State Delegate, owns and operates her own small business, UNOVA Coworking, a multi-use office space in Springville. She also works as a staff reporter for The Springville Journal, where she actively contributes to numerous grassroots efforts in her hometown community. Ashley is a founding member and current vice president of Green Springville, a 501c3 non-profit devoted to advancing sustainability initiatives in Springville and surrounding areas. She also serves as Chair of the Governance Committee on the Bertrand Chaffee Hospital Board of Directors.

Ashley earned her B.A. and J.D. degrees, magna cum laude, from the University at Buffalo. Ashley is admitted to practice law in the state of New York, as well as before the United States Supreme Court, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, and WNY District Court. She served 12 years in the Appeals Bureau at the Erie County District Attorney's Office, where she handled direct appeals, post-conviction motions, and federal habeas corpus petitions. In 2017, one of her cases received statewide attention and she guest lectured at the NYU School of Law.

Ashley was elected to the Nominations Committee of the Erie County Bar Association. She spearheaded and managed the Officer "Skip" McDougald Adopt a School Project that adopted the Buffalo Academy School 131. She has mentored numerous students from the UB School of Law and at the DA's Office, and taught over 15 CLEs and presentations, with an emphasis on ethics, diversity, and leadership. This includes an entertaining re-enactment of the Susan B. Anthony trial at the Twentieth Century Club in 2022. Ashley is a licensed wildlife rehabilitator through the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

Buffalo Business First selected Ashley as a 40 Under 40 winner for 2023. She also received awards as a 2018 BN360 Spotlight Professional by the Buffalo Niagara Partnership and in 2019 received the 4 Under 40 Award from the Springville Area Chamber of Commerce. In 2020, she won the WBASNY Emerging Leader Award.

When she is not advocating for public art, including 2023's "A Wish on the Wind," a 77-foot-long collaborative project between Springville Center for the Arts and the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, Ashley enjoys baking, traveling, and relaxing with her husband and four shelter cats.



**ANNA S. M. MCCARTHY**, State Delegate, is a Senior Associate in the Buffalo office of Harter Secrest & Emery LLP. Anna focuses in labor and employment at HSE, and she frequently counsels employers in the development of employee policies, union relations, wage and hour issues, discipline and termination decisions, discrimination and harassment claims, and employment contract disputes. Anna was a recipient of The Daily Record's Up and Coming Attorneys award in 2019, and she has been selected to the Upstate New York Super Lawyers Rising Stars list since 2018.



Anna is the current co-chair of the WBASNY State Labor and Employment Law Committee, and she is also a member of the Board of Directors of the National Federation for Just Communities of Western New York, an organization dedicated to overcoming racism, bias, and discrimination through advocacy, conflict resolution, and education.

Anna graduated from SUNY Buffalo Law School cum laude, where she received the Buffalo Human Rights Center Summer Fellowship to provide legal assistance to refugees relocating to the Western New York area. Anna is also a graduate of Wellesley College, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Spanish. Prior to attending law school, Ms. McCarthy spent a year in Spain teaching English to both primary school and university students.

Anna lives in Williamsville with her wife, WBASNY WNY Past President Anastasia McCarthy, and their two children.



**FLORINA ALTSHILER**, Florina Altshiler, Local Director, is a Litigation Partner with Russo & Gould LLP, specializing in criminal and civil defense litigation to include high level felonies as well as New York labor law, premise liability and medical malpractice defense litigation where she handles matters through jury trial to verdict in the State and Federal Courts across the country. She also serves as Assigned Counsel for felony level criminal matters in Erie County, NY. She is licensed in NY, NJ, PA and AK and works as trial counsel with local counsel in other states for high exposure matters.

Florina is also the exclusive Legal Analyst for WKBW ABC News and frequently offers commentary for Court TV and the Law & Crime Trial Network. She has been quoted and published throughout the country, including the Miami Herald, Chicago Tribune,

the Daily Beast, Buffalo News, the Daily News and BBC. She has appeared on both national and local television broadcasts including Fox News, ABC, Law & Crime and others. She has traveled to offer CLE presentations across the country and frequently presents for Lawline, Clearlaw, NBI, DRI, the Buffalo Claims Association, Defense Trial Lawyers Association, and the Erie Institute of Law, among others. She has been an instructor of multiple courses for over a decade at Columbia University in the City of New York; her courses include Trial Advocacy, Introduction to Neuroscience, Neuroscience and the Law, and the Law of Race, Class, Poverty and Power. She has also taught courses at St. John's School of Law, Daemen College and Buffalo State College to include Introduction to Law, Legal Research and Writing and Torts. Her articles have been published in the New York Law Journal and the Buffalo Law Journal, among others.

Prior to relocating to Buffalo, Florina served as a prosecutor for the State of Alaska, Office of the Attorney General, based in Anchorage, where she handled the prosecution of all levels of crime through trial to jury verdict and also served on the sexual assault response team and the homicide response rotation. She successfully prosecuted dozens of cases through verdict, including violent felonies and sexual assaults. In 2013, she received an Alaska State Legislature Citation for her work with the Anchorage High School Mock Trial program. She also volunteered for the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

Florina continues to serve as an arbitrator for the Civil Court of the City of New York where she started in 2009 and she is also a Certified Federal Court Mediator with the Western District of New York. She has been a Harpur Law Council Steering Committee Appointee since 2016. She serves as a Board Member of the Defense Trial Lawyers Association and a State and Local Director for the Western NY Chapter of the Women's Bar Association; she previously served three-year terms as a Board Member for Journey's End Refugee Services, Crisis Services and New York Legal Assistance Group.

Florina's distinctions include selection as a Top-Rated Civil Litigation Attorney and a Rising Star by Super Lawyers magazine every year since 2017; a perfect 10.0 rating by Avvo; and Above the Law's Lawline Top 20 Female Faculty in 2016 and 2020.



**CHRISTINA AKERS-DICENZO**, Local Director, is passionate about helping employees navigate and solve problems at work so they may live healthy, joyful, and impactful lives. As the founder of Akers-DiCenzo Law PLLC, Christina provides legal counsel and litigation services on behalf of employees facing workplace discrimination and retaliation. Prior to launching her own practice, Christina worked for over eight years representing employees in federal and state courts and administrative agencies on matters involving pregnancy accommodation and discrimination, workplace lactation and breastfeeding rights, parental leave, disability discrimination and workplace accommodation, sexual harassment, and workplace retaliation.



Christina is a current co-chair of the WBASNY Health and Reproductive Rights Committee, and incoming co-chair of the Working Parents Committee. She is a proud member of the National Employment Lawyers Association, the National Employment Lawyers Association of New York, the Women's Bar Association of Western New York, and the Bar Association of Erie County.

Christina sits on the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of Kadimah. Christina received both her Juris Doctor and Master of Urban Planning from SUNY Buffalo and her bachelor's from Brandeis University, where she studied History and Politics.



**JENNA E. MCDONNELL** is a Local Director, Co-Chair of the Membership Committee and member of the Working Parents Committee. Jenna is a Partner in the Defense Litigation department at Bennett Schechter Arcuri & Will LLP. Jenna is experienced in the defense of casualty and negligence matters including toxic tort liability, trucking liability, motor vehicle liability, premises liability, products liability, and municipal liability claims. Jenna is admitted to practice in the State of New York and in the United States District Court for the Western

District of New York. Jenna regularly appears in state and federal courts throughout upstate New York and handles matters from initial case investigation through dispute resolution.

Jenna has been recognized as a "Rising Star" for her work in defense litigation by Super Lawyers for the past four years.

Jenna earned her Juris Doctor from George Mason University School of Law in

Arlington, Virginia. Jenna is also a graduate of Niagara University where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and served as a member of the President's Society.

Jenna is a member of the Erie County Bar Association, New York State Bar Association and DRI in addition to WBASNY WNY. Jenna is a member of the Board for the Pet Emergency Fund, an organization designed to provide financial support to pet owners who cannot afford emergency medical care for their pets. Jenna is also the former Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees for the United Church Home Society which oversees Senior Wishes where she served from 2015 through 2022. Senior Wishes enriches the lives of deserving local seniors by granting meaningful wishes.

Jenna is a native of Western New York and lives with her husband and two children in Wheatfield, New York.

**STEPHANIE R. MESSINA**, Local Director, is an experienced civil litigator with Burgio, Curvin & Banker. She currently focuses her practice on insurance defense and has extensive experience managing the defense of cases through all stages of litigation. She has represented both Plaintiffs and Defendants in claims involving transportation negligence, premises liability, retail and hospitality liability, catastrophic losses, education and special education law, and the Child Victims Act litigation. She has successfully argued appeals before the Fourth Department Appellate Division and in the United States District Courts. In addition to her membership with WBASNY, Ms. Messina is a member of the Erie County Bar Association, the Western New York Trial Lawyers Association, the Defense Trial Lawyers Association, and the New York State Academy of Trial Lawyers.



Ms. Messina graduated cum laude from Albany Law School. During law school, she was the Managing Editor for Research and Writing for the Albany Government Law Review, and the winner of the Donna Jo Morse Client Counseling Competition. Stephanie studied abroad in China, visiting Beijing, Xian, and Shanghai, and participating with both the law school and Shanghai Maritime Court while abroad. She was a student practice intern in the Albany City Court Domestic Violence Prosecution Clinic, as well as the Albany Law Health Law Clinic. Prior to law school, Ms. Messina received a Bachelor of Arts magna cum laude from the University at Buffalo.

Ms. Messina serves as Vice President for the Board of Directors for Sensational Fun, Inc., a non-profit therapy and play center for children with special needs and differing abilities. She is also the co-Chair of the Negligence Committee of the Erie County Bar Association, and a member of the Erie County Bar Association's Judiciary Committee and Appellate Practice Committee.

Ms. Messina lives in Cheektowaga with her husband, children, and dogs.





**LISA A. POCH**, Local Director and co-chair of the Employment Law and Programs/CLE Committees, joined Chiacchia & Fleming in 2007. She is an experienced trial lawyer whose practice is focused on representing people who have been seriously injured in motor vehicle accidents, workplace accidents, slips and falls and other mishaps. Ms. Poch graduated, with distinction, from the University of Toronto in 2005. She went on to receive her Juris Doctor from the University of Buffalo Law School in 2008. There, she competed on multiple trial teams, representing the law school in competitions across the Country. In law school, she earned the Robert J. Connelly Award for Excellence in

Trial Advocacy.

Ms. Poch has achieved great success at trial on even the toughest cases, recovering significant sums of money for her clients on cases where the insurance company was not willing to offer a penny. She has been named a Rising Star for plaintiff's personal injury litigation by Super Lawyers Magazine for the past eight years and is also a Buffalo Business First 40 under 40 nominee. Lisa is admitted to practice in all of the Courts of the State of New York, as well as the United States District Court for the Western District of New York and the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. She has argued appeals before the New York State Appellate Division, New York State Court of Appeals and the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. She has also handled matters before the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and New York State Division of Human Rights.

Lisa also serves as Town Attorney, and Deputy Supervisor, for the Town of Hamburg, New York.

Lisa and her husband reside in the Village of Hamburg with their three children. They enjoy traveling, volunteering and cheering on the Buffalo Bills!

**IFEOLUWA M. POPOOLA**, Local Director, is an Assistant County Attorney at the Erie County Department of Law in the litigation unit, where she focuses on defending the county both in federal and state court in personal injury cases and civil rights cases. Ifeoluwa also spearheads and handles all Erie County Red Flag law cases and all Erie County Department of Health Commissioner's hearings for violation of the Erie County Sanitary Code.



Before joining the County, Ifeoluwa was a Public defender at The Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo defending indigent members of the Buffalo community in misdemeanor and felony cases.

Ifeoluwa is an internationally trained attorney licensed to practice both in her home country Nigeria and in New York State Appellate Division Fourth Department and the United States Federal Court for the Western District of New York.

Before relocating to the United States, Ifeoluwa had a general practice in Nigeria where she practiced both criminal and civil law for about 3 years. After relocating to the United States, Ifeoluwa attended the University of Buffalo where she bagged her second law degree (JD).

Ifeoluwa is also the Vice -president of the Minority Bar Association of Western New York and a member of the Erie County Bar Association.

She has always been passionate about public service and pro-bono work which has influenced her career path as an attorney. Ifeoluwa was recently featured as a pro-bono spotlight attorney by the ECBA Volunteer Lawyers Project Inc. for her pro-bono representation of some of their clients.

Ifeoluwa enjoys spending time with her husband and their two sons and is also an active member of her local church where she also enjoys spending time with her church family.



**TAYLOR C. SCHUBAUER-WATERS**, Local Director, is an attorney advisor for the Social Security Administration Buffalo Office of Hearings Operations. Ms. Schubauer-Waters has experience representing individuals in obtaining disability benefits from the Social Security Administration and the New York State & Local Retirement System, and through all stages of the administrative process, including at hearings before Administrative Law Judges, as well as appeals to the United States District Court for the Western District of New York and United States

Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

In addition to being a member of the Membership Committee for WBASNY WNY, Ms. Schubauer-Waters is a member of the Erie County Bar Association's Committee for the Disabled. She is also a board member and the tutoring coordinator for Lawyers for Learning, a local tutoring organization that pairs students from Buffalo Public School 18 with tutors from the legal community.

Ms. Schubauer-Waters earned her Juris Doctor from the University at Buffalo School of Law where she completed a concentration in Family Law. While in law school, Ms. Schubauer-Waters participated in the Domestic Violence & Women's Rights clinic where she represented survivors of domestic violence in Erie County Family Court.

Ms. Schubauer-Waters is a native of West Seneca and presently lives in North Buffalo, New York with her husband. She enjoys reading, traveling, and spending time with her family and friends.

**MICHELLE M. SCHWACH**, Local Director, is Court Attorney to Hon. Mary G. Carney in Erie County Family Court.

Prior to this, she was in private practice, concentrating in matrimonial and family law. During that time, in addition to having represented litigants in matrimonial and family law matters, she was a member of the Attorney for Children panel, and her practice included divorce mediation and resolving matrimonial matters using the Collaborative Law method. She was a regular volunteer with the Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyers Project and the Family Court Help Desk.



Michelle attended the University at Buffalo, graduating cum laude with a BA in psychology and legal studies, and was a scholarship athlete with UB's Division I rowing program. Michelle attended the University at Buffalo Law School and received her JD in 2008. During her time in law school, she was the law clerk for the legal department at Independent Health Association. She served on the executive boards for the Buffalo Human Rights Law Review and the Buffalo Women's Law Journal and was a participant in the Law School's Community Economic Development clinic.

Michelle has been an active member of the Bar Association of Erie County. She was the co-chair of the Matrimonial and Family Law Committee for five years and is a member of the Family Court Practice and Procedure and the ADR Committees. As an active participant in the WNY community, Michelle sits on the board for Neighborhood Legal Services, as well as the Lawyers for Learning board. She has previously served on the boards for Yogis in Service, the Alliance Francaise de Buffalo and the Association for a Buffalo Presidential Center, among others.

Michelle lives in Amherst with her husband and two children. Outside of her legal work, she loves the practice of yoga, outdoor pursuits and running.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**The Installation Committee Extends Our Sincerest Gratitude to:**

**Hodgson Russ LLP**  
~ Gold Sponsor~

**Duke Holzman Photiadis & Gresens LLP**  
**Hurwitz Fine PC**  
**University at Buffalo School of Law**  
**Wilder & Linneball, LLP**  
~Bronze Sponsors~

**Colvin Cleaners**  
~Bar Sponsor~

**Bennett Schechter Arcuri & Will LLP**  
**Harter Secret & Emery LLP**  
~Dessert Sponsors~

**Lossless Production Services**  
~Parking Sponsor~





The Installation Committee also acknowledges the efforts of the following individuals and businesses, whose hard work, creativity, and inspiration are key to WBASNY WNY'S success:

- 500 Pearl
- Anderson's Flower Shop
- Ashley R. Lowry, Esq.
- Balloon Bar BFLO
- Buffalo Valet, LLC
- Jessica Ahrens Photography
- Lisa Mueller, Esq. (Art Design & Invitations)
- Nikki's Chocolates WNY
- Sanchez & Associates
- Sweet Beginnings Bakery
- Tony Martin Awards
- All of our Journal Sponsors

***WBASNY's mission is to promote the advancement of the status of women in society and the legal profession; promote the fair and equal administration of justice; and act as a unified voice for its members with respect to issues of statewide, national and international significance to women generally and to women attorneys in particular.***



**Thinking of ways to SAVE MONEY while you're sitting at home?**

**CALL NOW!**  
We could save you **THOUSANDS!** on your Auto & Home Insurance Policies

**3 EASY WAYS TO GET A QUOTE**

- 1. CALL** Takes only 10 minutes on the phone **716.836.2222**
- 2. TEXT** Send a text to **716.836.222** and we'll call you at your convenience
- 3. GO ONLINE** Visit **BobWhiteInsurance.com** and fill out a brief form for a quote

**Over 25 carriers**  
**Licensed Live Agents**  
**No Contact Quotes**  
**Specialized in Home & Auto Insurance Packages**

**BWI**  
BOB WHITE INSURANCE  
HOME • AUTO • BUSINESS • LIFE  
1045 Wehrle Drive  
Williamsville, NY 14221  
716-836-2222  
BobWhiteInsurance.com



**Batavia Legal Printing, Inc.**  
Appellate Court Printers  
**585-768-2100**

7 Bank Street • LeRoy, NY 14482  
blpi2100@yahoo.com

Suzanne Duysen  
Kelly Stalica  
Danielle DuBois

Handling your appellate printing and e-filing needs for the NYS Supreme Court's Appellate Divisions Second, Third and Fourth Departments, NYS Court of Appeals and the US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

*A woman-owned & family operated company.*



COUNSEL PRESS

Counsel Press has been trusted since 1938 in assisting attorneys with preparing, filing and serving appeals. We have mastered the art of the appellate process and offer our clients a tailored solution to their appellate needs. Our services include:

- All appellate document preparation, including printed and electronic requirements
- Printing, filing, electronic filing and service upon all parties
- Legal research, writing and review

Let us provide the quality service and appellate expertise you can trust to handle your appeal.

[www.counselpress.com](http://www.counselpress.com)

THE APPELLATE EXPERTS®

800-4-APPEAL




Congratulations to WBASNY immediate past president Anastasia M. McCarthy on being honored with the Crystal Buffalo Award for her leadership

[www.hurwitzfine.com](http://www.hurwitzfine.com) | 716 849 8900

Congratulations to all Officers, Directors and Award Winners!

President, Kinsey O'Brien, Esq.  
 Immediate Past-President, Anastasia M. McCarthy, Esq.  
 Past-President, Elise Cessar, Esq.  
 Anne Joynt, Esq.  
 Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York  
 Marina Barci, Esq.  
 Jamila Lee, Esq.

Legal Problems?  Get Smart.  
 Counsel for the Clever.

**WILDER &  
 LINNEBALL, LLP**

1-877-890-6001 ~ [www.wilderandlinneball.com](http://www.wilderandlinneball.com)

Congratulations to this year's Award Winners and the incoming Officers and Directors!

*from your friends at*



Our mission is to improve the quality of life for older, disabled, and low-income adults through the provision of free legal services, primarily in WNY.

Our goal is to use the legal system to ensure that our clients may live independently and with dignity.

The Center for Elder Law & Justice congratulates **Anne Joynt, Esq.** for being honored as the 2023 recipient of the M. Dolores Denman Lady Justice Award!

We are honored to have Ms. Joynt serve on our Board of Directors.

Congratulations to the new officers, directors, and awardees!

Scan to learn more:





## Congratulates this Year's Awardees and the Incoming Board!

701 Seneca Street, Suite 750, Buffalo, New York 14210  
† 716.855.1111 f 716.855.0327  
www.dhpglaw.com



**AKERS-DICENZO LAW PLLC**  
ATTORNEY FOR EMPLOYEES

A warm congratulations to the incoming WBASNY-WNY  
officers, board of directors, and award honorees!

www.akersdicenzolaw.com  
716-608-2180



Breast Cancer  
Network of WNY

## BCN in Buffalo

Supporting Western New Yorkers Impacted  
by Breast Cancer Since 1988



**MONTHLY  
LEARNING SERIES**

**WEEKLY  
SUPPORT GROUPS**



**DAILY  
RESTORATIVE HEALTH  
CLASSES**



Help for Today with  
Hope for Tomorrow



716-706-0060



bcnwny.org



info@bcnwny.org



742 Delaware Ave.,  
Buffalo, NY 14209

Women's Bar Association of the State of New York

# WBASNY



**Western New York Chapter**  
Local voice. Statewide impact.



Colliers

Engineering  
& Design



Proud to support the WBASNY's

## Annual Installation of Officers, Directors & Awards Ceremony

*Congratulations to our  
own, Marina Barci!*

877 627 3772  
colliersengineering.com



Accelerating success.

# TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY

New York State Senate, 63rd District



#### Contact My Office

37 Franklin Street, Suite 550  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
Phone: (716) 826-2683  
Email: kennedy@nysenate.gov  
Website: kennedy.nysenate.gov

*Congratulations to the Western  
New York Chapter of the Women's  
Bar Association of the State of  
New York on an incredible event,  
and to all of tonight's award  
recipients at the Annual  
Installation of Officers and  
Directors and Awards Ceremony!*



## MBA WNY

Minority Bar Association of Western New York

The Minority Bar Association of WNY congratulates  
MBAWNY Past President Jamila Lee  
and all of this year's award winners  
on their outstanding accomplishments!

2023 Executive Board

President: Samantha White  
Vice President: Ifeoluwa Popoola  
Treasurer: Anaiss Rijo Lelonek  
Deputy Treasurer: Natalia Marte  
Recording Secretary: Brandi Smith  
Corresponding Secretary: Deonna Jones  
Director: Arrianna Hart  
Director: Jesutowo Adenjje

**Congratulations  
to each honoree  
for achieving  
excellence in the  
practice of law and  
the pursuit of justice.**



**BAR ASSOCIATION  
OF ERIE COUNTY**

Proud community partner of the Women's Bar  
Association of the State of New York, WNY Chapter

[www.eriebar.org](http://www.eriebar.org)



**Burgio Curvin & Banker**  
ATTORNEYS  
*celebrates*

THE WESTERN NEW YORK CHAPTER OF

**WBASNY**

*for advancing the status of women in society  
and in the legal profession for over 30 years*

*Congratulations to:*

M. Dolores Denman Lady Justice Award Recipient  
**Anne Joynt, Esq.**

President's Award Recipient  
Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York

Carol A. Condon Outstanding New Lawyer Award Recipient  
**Marina Barci, Esq.**

Diversity Leadership Award Recipient  
**Jamila Lee, Esq.**

The Chapter's 39th President  
**Kinsey O'Brien, Esq.**

and all 2023-2024 Officers and Directors  
including our own Stephanie Messina

**Burgio Curvin & Banker**  
ATTORNEYS

496 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14202 | 716.854.1744 | [www.burgiocurvin.com](http://www.burgiocurvin.com)  
personal injury | insurance defense

# Saluting Achievement

The attorneys and staff at Lipsitz, Ponterio & Comerford, LLC are proud to support the Western New York Chapter of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York.

## We Wish to Congratulate:

*Kinsey O'Brien, Esq.*

on her installation as this year's Chapter President

*Anne E. Joynt, Esq.*

M. Dolores Denman Lady Justice Award

*Planned Parenthood of Central  
and Western New York*

President's Award

*Marina Barci, Esq.*

Carol A. Condon Outstanding New Lawyer Award

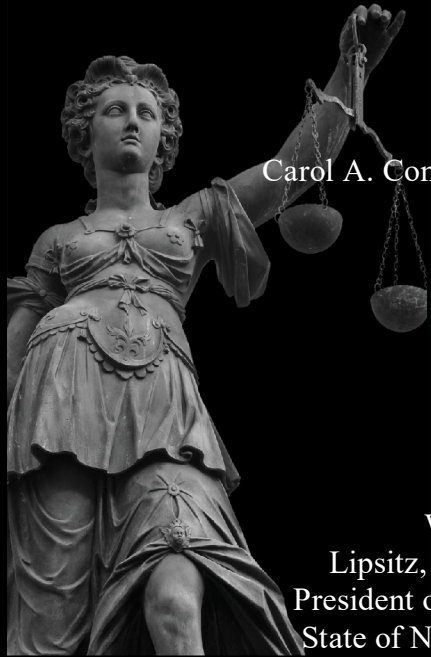
*Jamila Lee, Esq.*

Diversity Leadership Award

*Anastasia McCarthy, Esq.*

Crystal Buffalo Award

We salute Anne E. Joynt, a Partner at Lipsitz, Ponterio & Comerford, LLC and Past President of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, Western New York Chapter.



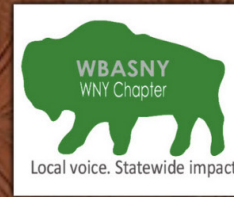
**LP  
C** Lipsitz, Ponterio  
& Comerford<sup>llc</sup>

Mesothelioma & Catastrophic Injury Attorneys

716-849-0701

[www.LipsitzPonterio.com](http://www.LipsitzPonterio.com)

424 Main Street • Suite 1500 • Buffalo, New York 14202



**Congratulations on your  
Installation as President of  
WBASNY WNY, Kinsey!  
We are so proud of you!**

**Love,**

**Michael, Eleanor,  
Marvin, & Chester**





The University at Buffalo School of Law  
and the UB Law Alumni Association  
*congratulate*  
Kinsey A. O'Brien '13  
and the 2023-24 Board of Directors  
for the Western New York Chapter of WBASNY



*We are proud of the outstanding leadership provided by our graduates*

*State Delegates*

Ashley R. Lowry '09  
Anna S.M. McCarthy '15

*Immediate Past President*

Anastasia M. McCarthy '15

*Local Directors*

Christina Akers-DiCenzo '13  
Lisa A. Poch '08  
Ifeoluwa Popoola '19  
Taylor C. Schubauer-Waters '17  
Michelle M. Schwach '08

*WBASNY Recording Secretary*  
Elise L. Cassar '10

*Special congratulations to our alums*

**Marina A. Barci, Esq. '18**  
*Associate Corporate Counsel,*  
Colliers Engineering & Design  
*Recipient, Carol A. Condon*  
**Outstanding New Lawyer Award**

**Anne E. Joynt, Esq. '05**  
*Partner, Lipsitz, Ponterio*  
& Comerford LLC  
*Recipient, M. Dolores Denman*  
**Lady Justice Award**

**Jamila A. Lee, Esq. '15**  
*Assistant Dean for Student Affairs,*  
University at Buffalo School of Law  
*Recipient, Diversity Leadership Award*