

Celebrate with the Stars: Seventh Annual Event Goes Virtual



BY JESSE PIORKOWSKI

ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, THE SEVENTH ANNUAL “Celebrate with the Stars” was held virtually for the first time. President Amy Lin Meyerson began the night with her introduction, followed by Executive Director Keith J. Soressi, who welcomed attendees and acknowledged the support of event sponsors: headline sponsor Kronholm Insurance Services, gold sponsor Quinnipiac University School of Law, silver sponsor Green & Sklarz LLC, and supporter George W. Crawford Black Bar Association.

Immediate Past President Ndidi N. Moses then gave her remarks and honored attorneys observing the 50th anniversary of their admission to practice in Connecticut.

The awards presentation began with the signature awards, which were presented by Immediate Past President Moses, President Meyerson, and President-elect Cecil J. Thomas.

The Honorable Alvin W. Thompson, United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut, received the Henry J. Naruk Judiciary Award for his substantial contributions to the administration of justice in Connecticut. During his acceptance speech, Judge Thompson shared: “As a judge I have not only found it satisfying, but personally enriching, to strive in putting aside my personal views and preferences and find facts and apply the law fairly and impartially, hoping to further the goal of equal justice for all. Lawyers can make important contributions to our society by being role models on how to disagree without being disagreeable, and for how to engage with critical thinking, and make informed decisions.”

The Edward F. Hennessey Professionalism Award was presented to The Honorable Kenneth L. Shluger, judge for the New London District Superior Court, for his significant dedication to



(Clockwise from the top left) Among the night’s many 2020 Celebrate with the Stars award winners: The Honorable Alvin W. Thompson, Judith Altmann, Joanna M. Kornafel, Austin Berescik-Johns, and Kristi D. Kelly.

the highest ideals and standards of the legal profession. Judge Shluger frequently speaks to civic organizations in schools, has coached an inner-city team in a statewide mock trial competition, and mentors and encourages school children in underserved communities.

The Tapping Reeve Legal Educator Award went to Jennifer G. Brown, interim executive vice president and provost at Quinnipiac University, for her commitment and contributions to legal education. She joined the Quinnipiac University School of Law faculty in 1994, has served in numerous roles since, and

was appointed dean in 2013. She has also taught as a visiting professor in the law schools at Yale, Georgetown, and Harvard.

The John Eldred Shields Distinguished Professional Service Award was given to John Rose, Jr. for his outstanding service on behalf of the CBA, for the benefit of the legal community, and the community at large. He received many adulations from his colleagues, along with a special surprise message from his daughter. Attorney Rose has achieved many milestones throughout his long legal career, including being Hartford's first Black full-time corporation counsel and the first Black lawyer representative on the state's Judicial Selection Commission. Additionally, he is a founder and past president of the George W. Crawford Black Bar Association and a founder and past vice president of the Connecticut Law Firm Group, which became the Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity.

The winner of this year's Charles J. Parker Legal Services Award was Erin E. Kemple, executive director of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center. Throughout her career, she has dedicated herself to providing legal services to those who are disadvantaged in Connecticut. For over three decades, she has committed herself to working with those living in low-income communities to ensure that all have access to housing opportunities, free from discrimination.

Audrey B. Blondin was honored with the Citizen of the Law Award for her public service with VOSH-Connecticut (Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity). With the help and contributions of her husband, they continue to carry out eye care missions and serve those in need in Nicaragua.

The final signature award of the night was the Citizen for the Law Award, which was presented to Holocaust survivor and human rights advocate Judith Altmann, who has dedicated her life to speaking about her harrowing experience and encouraging others to "stand up" to injustice and acts of intolerance.

The Young Lawyers Section Vanguard Award was presented by Vice President Daniel J. Horgan to this year's two winners—Austin Berescik-Johns and Joanna M. Kornafel—for their significant contributions to both the CBA and the YLS. Attorney Berescik-Johns has been involved with the YLS for eight years, serving in many roles, including various substantive law committees and chairing the YLS' legislative affairs efforts. Attorney Kornafel received the YLS' Rookie of the Year Award in 2014, the Commercial Law & Bankruptcy Section's Rising Star Award in 2017, and the YLS' Star of the Year Award in 2019.

"When I first entered the legal profession, it was like entering a dark room and being able to see very little. Now I can make out quite a bit in the room, and the CBA as much as anything, has been the light allowing me to slowly see," stated Attorney Berescik-Johns.

The final award of the evening was The Honorable Anthony V. DeMayo Pro Bono Award. The winners of this award, as se-

50-Year Awardees

These CBA member attorneys are observing the 50th anniversary of their admission to practice in Connecticut

Robert M. Axelrod	Joel Martin	Lewis M. Platt
David L. Belt	Hartstone	Martin Rader, Jr.
Bruce E. Bergman	Geoffrey Hecht	Robert J.
Louis Blumenfeld	Wesley W. Horton	Reardon, Jr.
Andrew B.	D. Seeley	Herbert
Bowman	Hubbard	Rosenberg
Ward F. Cleary	Paul A. Hudson	Edward F.
Sanford Cloud, Jr.	Peter A. Janus	Rosenthal
Robert P. Cohen	Hon. Clarence	Dennis A.
Hon. Henry S.	Jones	Sadlowski
Cohn	Ivar Jozus	Jack Scherban
James S. Corbett	Gerald H. Kahn	Daniel A. Silver
Lanny J. Davis	Hon. Timothy R.E.	Mark G. Sklarz
Brenda A. Draghi	Keeney	Richard Stabnick
Richard Emanuel	W. Wilson	John F. Strother
Kathryn Emmett	Keithline	Peter F. Stuart
Ellice Fatoullah	John C. Linderman	Shaun Sullivan
Gerald Field	Edward T.	Donald Tamis
Mark I. Fishman	Lynch, Jr.	Charles C. Vail
Hon. Gerald M.	George J. Markley	Raymond F.
Fox, Jr.	Jeffrey McCormick	Voelker
John P. Fracassini	John F. McKenna	David Wallman
Fredric J.	Edward Mellick	Robert W.
Friedberg	Thomas	Weeks, Jr.
Richard Gerken	Mulligan, Jr.	Thomas Weithing
Marshal D. Gibson	Neil F. Murphy, Jr.	Richard P.
Brian Gildea	Mitchell Pearlman	Weinstein
Marc J. Glass	Louis R. Pepe	Donald P. Wilmot
Raymond J.	Harold J.	Martin Zeldis
Gustini	Pickerstein	

lected by the Pro Bono Committee, exhibit commitment to pro bono service and serve as role models for the profession. This year's winners were: Gayle C. Carr, Mark A. Healey, Kristi D. Kelly, and Susan M. Williams.

President Amy Lin Meyerson concluded the event by congratulating all the award winners, encouraging pro bono service, and thanking sponsors and CBA staff for their contributions to the inspiring night.

The testimonial videos shown during the event can be found at ctbar.org/awards-videos. ■

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