

# News & Events

## CBA Establishes The Karen Lynn DeMeola Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Fund



Karen Lynn DeMeola

The Connecticut Bar Association (CBA)'s Diversity and Inclusion Committee (the Committee) has established The Karen Lynn DeMeola Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Fund (DeMeola Fund) at

the Connecticut Bar Institute (CTBI). The DeMeola Fund is named for Karen Lynn DeMeola, the first person of color to serve as president of the Connecticut Bar Association (2017-2018 bar

year), and a longstanding champion of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Connecticut legal community. Interested persons and groups can provide financial donations to the DeMeola Fund to support the efforts and initiatives of the Committee.

The DeMeola Fund will be used to support the mission and purposes of the Committee, including its advancement of the CBA's Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Strategic Plan, and Connecticut Legal Community's Diversity and Inclusion Pledge and Plan. The DeMeola Fund may establish and fund fellowships or scholarships, educational programming and events, or other diversity and inclusion initiatives related to the Connecticut legal profession. Initial contribution from the CBA Diversity and Inclusion Summit donations have assisted with the establishment of the DeMeola Fund and will be funded by other donations to the CBA's diversity initiatives, from the Committee's events, or the public.

To learn more about the DeMeola Fund and to make a donation, visit [ctbar.org/DeMeola-Fund](http://ctbar.org/DeMeola-Fund).

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## CBA DONATES \$8,000 TO LEGAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

The CBA has donated \$8,000 to the Connecticut Bar Foundation (CBF) to benefit their legal service grantees who provide pro bono civil legal services to Connecticut's low-income residents. This donation will be beneficial to the legal service providers that anticipate an increase in the public's need for pro bono services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The donation to the legal service provider is just one of the many initiatives the CBA has undertaken as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The CBA has trained lawyers to take on pro bono cases, helped established a small business virtual legal clinic, answered questions through an anonymous online portal, and raised funds for local food banks.

"The economic impact of COVID-19

has greatly amplified the access to justice gap, creating significant anticipated increases in evictions, foreclosures, family and domestic violence matters, among other legal issues," said CBA President-elect and Pro Bono Committee Chair Cecil J. Thomas. "This is a crucial time for the Connecticut legal profession to increase our pro bono engagement, and our support for our legal aid providers."

## CONSTANCE BAKER MOTLEY SPEAKER SERIES ON RACIAL INEQUALITY



Judge Constance Baker Motley

The CBA and Connecticut Bar Foundation have founded the Constance Baker Motley Speaker Series on Racial Inequality to explore issues of racial inequality and systemic racism. This series is named in honor of civil rights trailblazer, Judge Constance Baker Motley, with the goal of supporting and fostering renewed commitment to advancing civil rights and social justice.

The inaugural event, "A Virtual Conversation on Racial Injustice," was held on July 15 and featured Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson and Justice Maria A. Kahn. The panel, moderated by Dean Timothy Fisher of UConn School of Law and

Professor Marilyn Ford of Quinnipiac University School of Law, explored issues of racial inequality and systemic racism.

The second event of the series, "Segregated Communities and Opportunity," held on August 12, examined the lasting effect discriminatory land use and development policies have on housing choice and the lives of people of color, particularly lower income Black and Latino families, who have few options to move to areas with high performing schools and safe neighborhoods, and the necessary changes needed to ensure that every community is a community of opportunity.

The series' third event, "Systemic Racism, Voting Rights, and American Democracy," was held on August 25 and featured a panel discussion that explored the systems that perpetuate racial inequality in voting rights and political access and what we can do to promote a truly fair and free electoral democracy in our communities.

Scheduled for September 24, the fourth event, "How the Law Structures Educational Inequities," will discuss the inequities in primary and secondary educational systems, how school districts are organized and funded, and how inequities manifest in differential school funding, resources, and outcomes.

Visit [ctbar.org/ConstanceBakerMotleySeries](https://ctbar.org/ConstanceBakerMotleySeries) to learn more and register for an upcoming event.

## CBA MEMBERS HELP ENSURE CONNECTICUT RESIDENTS' RIGHT TO VOTE ON ELECTION DAYS

Elections require a large team of dedicated volunteers to ensure our citizens are able to exercise their right to vote. Eight years ago, the CBA and Secretary of the State Denise W. Merrill formed a joint program called the "Secretary's Legal Assistance Program" to train volunteer attorneys to be on call to respond to

**CBA members can learn more and sign up to volunteer on Election Day, November 3, at [ctbar.org/Election-Day](https://ctbar.org/Election-Day).**

polling issues. The role of the volunteer attorney is to serve as a neutral source of information, sort out the facts of a situation, report back to Secretary Merrill, and then communicate her directives.

On August 11, approximately 90 volunteers assisted with Primary Election Day. This is the first time since the program's inception that the CBA has assisted with the primaries. ■

DIVERSITY &  
INCLUSION  
SUMMIT



*We are a Richer  
and More Effective  
Association Because  
of Diversity*

Don't miss the

## 2020 Diversity and Inclusion Summit

on Wednesday, October 21  
from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Register now at [ctbar.org/summit](http://ctbar.org/summit).



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