

Connect to Succeed!

Champion Our Communities Broaden Networks Advance Justice

I hope you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy as we continue to navigate through this unprecedented time of great social unrest and racial injustice during a global pandemic. Despite these extraordinary circumstances, I am honored to have taken on this leadership role as the 97th president of the Connecticut Bar Association and to be part of our dynamic CBA Executive Committee with Cecil J. Thomas, president-elect; Daniel J. Horgan, vice president; Margaret I. Castinado, treasurer; Erin O'Neil-Baker, secretary; Amanda G. Schreiber, assistant secretary-treasurer, and Ndidi Moses, im-

Amy Lin Meyerson is the 97th president of the Connecticut Bar Association. She is a sole practitioner in Weston, practicing business and general corporate law.



mediate past president. I also am excited to continue to work with and learn from our CBA staff and to volunteer with the entire CBA leadership team.

It has been almost 30 years since, as a law student, I got involved with the American Bar Association (ABA). And, 20 years since I founded the Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association; 15 years since I served as president of its parent organization, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association or NAPABA; and five years since I chaired the ABA's Solo, Small Firm and General Practice Division.

Throughout my career, I've seen firsthand the power of connecting with others involved in the law and legal community and the resulting success in promoting justice and strengthening our legal profession. It is with this in mind that this year's theme is **Connect to Succeed!**

Connect to Succeed! re-enforces the CBA's commitment to serve as the voice of the legal profession within the organized bar and with the public, and to en-

sure that the benefits of bar membership are realized.

We are committed to advancing justice. In these disturbing times when political leaders are undermining fundamental American values and civil and human rights issues have become hyper-partisan, the CBA as a nonpartisan organization faces the challenging task of working effectively with people on both sides of the aisle. As we continue to shape CBA policy, our unquestioned focus is to protect and promote the principles of the rule of law, democracy, and our justice system against those who are attacking it.

It is because of these divisive times that I believe that our theme of **Connect to Succeed** is now more important than ever. Our country's foundation is based on the rule of law, which we will vigilantly defend. We must stand together to advance justice and protect liberty for all.

The CBA is committed to supporting the operational needs of the courts and our Judicial Branch as traditional means of access to our courts has been cut off



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Broaden Networks, and
Advance Justice**



by this coronavirus pandemic and at this time of civil unrest where there is an even greater need to have access to the legal system. Our clients are desperate for answers to when their legal issues will be resolved, especially the increasing number of our most vulnerable neighbors who need access to basic human necessities. Through the provision of pro bono services, we continue to work diligently to get people the legal help they need and to narrow the justice gap. Learn more about the CBA's pro bono efforts in Time to Go Pro Bono on page 33 of this issue.

Through the CBA's Secretary's Legal Assistance Program, the CBA continues to assist the Connecticut Secretary of the State Denise W. Merrill and her office by providing volunteer attorneys at polling places across Connecticut to protect and ensure our right to vote on Election Day. Volunteer attorneys work with the Office of the Secretary of the State to respond to issues at Connecticut polling places to assess situations, report back to Secretary Merrill, and then communicate her directives to the voting moderator. Ninety lawyers volunteered to assist at the polls for Primary Election Day on August 11, 2020. We invite CBA members to volunteer as nonpartisan designees of the Secretary of the State to help ensure the success of the general election on November 3, 2020.

We are committed to broadening networks through the provision of professional development and networking opportunities that are crucial to exchange ideas and information to equip you with the knowledge and resources to serve your clients while staying connected, resilient, and motivated. The CBA continues to deliver the outstanding services and programs you need to be the exceptional legal professionals our citizens and communities rely upon.

The newly established CBA In-House Counsel Task Force has CBA Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Amanda G. Schreiber of CIGNA stepping forward to take the lead and participating attorneys



Amy Lin Meyerson with her husband, Brandon; son, Garrett; and daughter, Ashley.

from the Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Eversource, Legrand, MasterCard, Stanley Black & Decker, The Hartford, and United Health Group; and former general counsels of Hubbell and The United Illuminating Company. The purpose of this task force is to harness CBA resources to further demonstrate that the CBA is a cost-effective source of high-quality, current content for in-house attorneys that is relevant and easy to access; to assist in-house counsel to do their jobs better and more cost-effectively; to promote diversity and inclusion in corporations; and to provide leadership opportunities for corporate counsel. This task force is not intended to promote a law firm or a particular point of view.

To further support solo and small firm practitioners, we created the CBA Solo and Small Firm Resource Center working with the Solo and Small Firm Section and other solo and small firm attorneys in sections throughout the CBA membership. Take a look at the resource portal at ctbar.org/SoloSmallFirmResourceCenter. We welcome your feedback and suggestions for additional resources.

We also are grateful for our committee of experienced lawyers lead by Linda Randell, former general counsel of UIL Holdings and The United Illuminating Company, that will promote the public interest and the profession by leveraging the skill sets and experience of "senior lawyers." This committee will work to implement a framework for

projects and programs through collaboration with law schools, governmental entities, and non-governmental organizations and oversee the CBA Emeritus Pro Bono Attorney program. The committee's projects and programs are intended to benefit non-lawyers, law students, or younger lawyers—and the participating experienced lawyers themselves.

Many thanks to Peter Arakas, Livia Barn-dollar, Samuel Braunstein, Ernie Mattei, Fred Ury, An-Ping Hsieh, Robert Langer, Mark Dubois, Penny Mason, Lou Pepe, Carmine Perry, Bill Prout, John Rose, and Helen Ryan for sharing their collective knowledge, experience, and judgment.

With your overall well-being in mind, we have added "Be Well," a new well-being feature in *The CBA Docket*. The CBA Lawyer Well-Being Committee will be sharing knowledge, experiences, insights, and tips to help you think about what you are doing to promote your well-being and how you may do more to improve self-care and to promote it within your workplace. The committee co-chairs, Traci Cipriano, JD, Ph.D., LLC, of the Yale School of Medicine and Tanyee Cheung, partner, Finn Dixon & Herling, invite you to:

- Share how your firm or organization is addressing well-being in general, COVID-related anxiety, or diversity and inclusion;
- Share your healthy strategies for managing your stress; or
- Ask a question about how to better manage stressors and stress or a work-life related challenge.

Please send your stories and questions to communications@ctbar.org. If you have

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President's Message

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privacy concerns, you can e-mail Traci directly at drcipriano@optimum.net.

We are committed to championing our communities as we continue to strengthen, grow, and elevate the standing of Connecticut's legal profession. In facing our current challenges, we also will guide our clients to good and right results on legal issues facing our communities and staunchly support our colleagues who have the passion for public service and the protection of our human and civil rights.

As the first Asian Pacific American (or APA) to serve as CBA president, I am particularly sensitive to the surge in racism we are experiencing. The CBA endeavors to protect and provide relief to

all of our communities who are affected by the forces of racism, dehumanization, violence, and scapegoating during this already disturbing time. Additionally, increasing diversity in the legal profession results in better service to our clients, facilitates access to justice, and improves the legal profession as a whole. To keep you apprised of our ongoing diversity and inclusion efforts, please see our new Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion column on page 31, which is launching in this issue and will appear in future issues of *CT Lawyer*.

The feedback we receive is helpful as we shape this new legal landscape. We are grateful for the good and special people in our CBA membership for your dedication and commitment, not only to the association's causes but also to the vitality and health of the legal profession and our communities.

Although our physical CBA offices remain closed to the public, the CBA staff continues to keep the Connecticut Bar Association fully operational and have implemented new protocols for everyone's well-being and safety in preparation for when our offices can reopen and in-person meetings may resume. Please do not hesitate to reach out if there is anything we may do to assist you by e-mailing info@ctbar.org or calling (844)469-2221.

Please stay safe, be well, and thank you for your patience. ■

Pro Bono

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What if I need additional support or a case consultation?

Contact your local legal aid office. You'll find a list of Connecticut civil legal aid providers on the CBA website at ctbar.org/probonoorganizations. Attorneys within these organizations have deep expertise and significant experience, and may be able to consult with you on individual case questions or direct you to further supporting materials.

What about malpractice insurance?

The CBA does not provide malpractice insurance coverage. However, some of Connecticut's legal aid providers are able to offer malpractice insurance coverage with a case referral.

Why should I get involved?

Many words have been devoted to our ethical obligations, as attorneys, to provide pro bono legal representation.¹ We could also discuss, at great length, the broader philosophical and policy considerations, our responsibilities as officers of the court, the proper administration of justice, the rule of law, or the obligations arising from our status as an independent and self-regulated profession. Each of these reasons have been addressed before, and will undoubtedly be addressed again in the future. For now, I will give you the simplest reason. Applying your expertise to the aid of those at risk of homelessness, those seeking relief from violence, those overwhelmed by the odds and facing financial crisis, those who have no other hope of a level playing field, is deeply fulfilling. This is our calling as a profession, and when we are at our best. I hope you will join the fight by taking the Pro Bono Pledge, and lending your legal talents to Connecticut's most vulnerable residents. Now, more than ever, we need your experience, your skills, and your compassion in the pursuit of justice for all. ■

NOTES

1. See Connecticut Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 6.1.

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BRIAN MEZICK

New Haven County State Marshal
35 Elm Street, New Haven, CT 06510
(203) 684-3100
statemarshal@mezick.com

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