

2020 Year In Review: Staying Connected While Apart

By AMY LIN MEYERSON

A year has passed since Governor Lamont used the CTAlert system to urge all Connecticut residents to “Stay Safe, Stay Home.”¹ In response to the global pandemic, the Connecticut Bar Association deployed its COVID-19 Pandemic Task Force working in concert with the governor’s office and the Connecticut Judicial Branch to resolve legal issues and provide timely and accurate information and resources to CBA members, our legal community, and the public at large as quickly as possible.

We express our gratitude to the task force co-chairs,² task force subcommittee co-chairs,³ their respective members, and other good and special CBA members for their dedication and countless hours volunteering tirelessly to promote the health and vitality of the legal pro-

Amy Lin Meyerson is the 2020–2021 President of the Connecticut Bar Association. She is a sole practitioner in Weston, Connecticut, practicing business and general corporate law.



cession and ensure access to justice for our clients, including our most vulnerable neighbors in need of basic human necessities.

While the work of the COVID-19 Pandemic Task Force has come to a close, we are aware that many of our members and other lawyers still are experiencing difficulties and have concerns that are not being addressed. The CBA is working on your behalf to understand, navigate, and advocate for you to provide the

most up-to-date solutions and resources available. We will continue to collaborate with the governor’s office, the legislature, and the Judicial Branch to find answers to your questions and further guidance on how to safely engage in the practice of law.

Facilitating meetings with the Judicial Branch and promoting CBA positions⁴ with the state legislature are just some of the continuing efforts we have been diligently moving forward.

Through open lines of communication with the Allocation Subcommittee of the Governor’s COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group,⁵ we have expressed the concerns facing front line attorneys who are at risk because of the nature of their practice and the operation of the courts, including the issues facing the criminal defense bar. The importance of the vaccine to restoring the operations of our court and increasing access to the judicial system cannot be overstated. We urge the Allocation Subcommittee to make a recommendation to the governor to prioritize at-risk attorneys on the vaccine distribution schedule.

“ And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us
but what stands before us

We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside

We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another

We seek harm to none and harmony for all

~National Youth Poet Laureate, **Amanda Gorman**

The economic impact of COVID-19 will cause an unprecedented eviction crisis, temporarily stayed by state and federal eviction moratoriums. Lawyers, judges, and court administrators continue to take the lead in finding new avenues to gain access to justice. If you are able, please volunteer for any one of the programs the CBA has developed to help marshal pro bono attorneys to assist those in need, including CBA Pro Bono Connect, CT Free Legal Answers, CBA Virtual Small Business, CBA Free Legal Clinics, and CBA Lawyers in Libraries.

Whether it is giving your time or monetary support, we encourage you to engage with us. You may find these volunteer and charitable giving opportunities that align with our mission of advancing the legal profession and the principles of law and justice or meet the needs of some of Connecticut's most vulnerable residents through CBA Gives⁶ at ctbar.org/CBAGives and at ctbar.org/ProBono.

Insights, inquiries, and recommendations from the legal community on what more the Connecticut Bar Association may do are greatly appreciated. The CBA welcomes your input on issues and concerns that we may assist to resolve. You may post inquiries anonymously by clicking on the "Share Your Inquiry or Concern" button on the CBA website. However, if you submit your contact information, we will respond to you directly when we have a course of action and/or an answer.

As we continue to await word on when the CBA can begin to reopen our offices and safely bring back in-person events, we invite you to Connect to Succeed and join us as we Champion our communities; Broaden networks; and Advance justice. Despite the challenges arising from the pandemic and in the face of great social unrest, we were able to continue to guide our clients to good and right results.

The theme for this issue of the *CT Lawyer* is "Year in Review." You will read ar-

Connect to Succeed!

**Champion Our Communities,
Broaden Networks, and
Advance Justice**

Connecticut
Bar Association

ticles that feature the achievement of just some of our colleagues over the past year in different practice areas, including ethics, employment law, and debt collection laws.

We are excited that we will soon have new attorneys join our ranks to assist with our ongoing efforts. On January 14, 2021, the CBA and the Connecticut Bar Examining Committee joined Chief Justice Robinson for a virtual event hosted by the Connecticut Judicial Branch to congratulate recent law school graduates and other successful candidates who passed the Connecticut bar exam administered in February 2020 and October 2020.

Once these successful bar exam takers are admitted to the Connecticut Bar, they will receive a letter from the Connecticut Bar Association confirming their automatic free membership to the CBA with an offer to join up to three of our sections for free for the remainder of the bar year.

Through our 70+ sections, committees, and task forces, the CBA provides professional development and networking opportunities that are crucial to the exchange of ideas and information to equip us with the knowledge and resources to serve our clients while staying connected, resilient, and motivated. The CBA delivers the outstanding services and award-winning CLE programs we need to be the exceptional legal professionals our citizens and communities rely upon. One of our largest and most active sections is our Young Lawyers Section, or YLS, which is the home in the CBA for new attorneys who are 37 years old or younger or those who have been admitted to the bar for less than six years. Read the YLS column on page 38 to learn more about the YLS activities.

We look forward to welcoming Connecticut's newest attorneys into our CBA membership and are excited to encourage and support the civil and robust open exchange of diverse ideas and perspectives among them. Civility allows us to listen to one another, share ideas, and advocate effectively. We continue to champion the rule of law to ensure that laws are not capriciously applied or misapplied against individuals and by lawmakers themselves. Examples from our not-too-distant past show that we still have much work to do and must be ever vigilant.

Stay safe and be well. ■

NOTES

1. <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2020/03-2020/Governor-Lamont-Uses-CTAlert-System-to-Urge-Connecticut-Residents-to-Stay-Safe-Stay-Home>
2. <https://www.ctbar.org/members/sections-and-committees/task-forces/2020-covid-19-pandemic>
3. <https://www.ctbar.org/members/sections-and-committees/task-forces/2020-covid-19-pandemic/subcommittees>
4. <https://www.ctbar.org/legislative-affairs/legislative-agenda>
5. <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Communications/Disease-Preparedness/COVID-19-Vaccine-Advisory-Group>
6. <https://www.ctbar.org/about/cba-gives>