



Celebrate with the STARS!

A Night of Honor and Inspiration

BY CORRINE KING

MORE THAN 260 LEGAL PROFESSIONALS, ELECTED OFFICIALS, community members, families, and friends gathered virtually on April 8 to honor 14 individuals and more than 30 attorneys observing 50 years of practice at the eighth annual Celebrate with the Stars.

Before the main event began, those admitted to the bar a half-century ago gathered for a reunion. They shared “war stories,” funny moments, and how the legal profession has changed since they were first admitted to the bar in 1971. When asked what the most challenging thing about their legal careers was, they all agreed the past year and the changing technology within the legal profession has been the largest obstacle in their careers.

Senator Richard Blumenthal, Governor Ned Lamont, and Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz kicked off the event by sharing personal anecdotes and remarks about the award recipients and congratulated and thanked the attorneys observing 50 years of practice for their dedication to the legal profession and rule of law.

Attendees then viewed a video presentation of the 50-year honorees’ most proud professional accomplishments, which ranged from memories of when they were

first sworn-in to the bar to arguing their first case to reflections on their pro bono service. The list of those celebrating 50 years of practice was read by the event’s emcees—President Amy Lin Meyerson, President-elect Cecil J. Thomas, and Vice President Daniel J. Horgan.

The Honorable Anthony V. DeMayo Pro Bono Award was the first award of the evening and was presented to four attorneys for their dedication to the provision of pro bono legal services. William “Liam” Bohannon was honored for his work with the Connecticut Veterans Legal Center. Louis M. Federici was recognized for his 25-year history with Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut. Basam E. Nabulsi was celebrated for his work with Connecticut Legal Services’ Stamford Day Laborer Clinic, Stamford Pardons Clinic, and the Eviction Defense Pro Bono Partnership. Richard S. Order was honored for his work with Greater Hartford Legal Aid, helping victims of domestic violence

obtain restraining orders against their abusers.

The celebration of serving some of Connecticut’s most vulnerable residents continued with the presentation of the Charles J. Parker Legal Service award to Kathy Flaherty. She was honored for her work as executive director of the Connecticut Legal Rights Project, Inc.; dedication to the provision of legal services; representation of low-income individuals with mental health conditions on matters related to their treatment, recovery, and civil rights; and consistent advocacy for people and lawyers living with disabilities.

Later in the evening, Patricia R. Kaplan, a previous Charles J. Parker Legal Service Award recipient and legal service advocate throughout her career, was honored posthumously with the Edward F. Hennessey Professionalism Award. Attendees celebrated her work mentoring others in the legal profession, her dedication to access to justice for all, and for her embodiment of the highest ideals of the profession. Remarks written by Attorney Kaplan before her passing in February, read by Amy Eppler-Epstein, moved some attendees to tears while others shared the impact of her professional legacy in the chat box.

Jennifer Levi, a professor at Western New England University's School of Law and director of GLBTQ Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) Transgender Rights Project, was awarded the Tapping Reeve Legal Educator Award. Professor Levi expressed that it was her honor to receive the award, and went on to state, "But really the pleasure and the joy has been all mine to have the opportunity that Western New England University Law School has given me to educate a generation of lawyers that are in the legal community changing the world and inspiring me and giving me tremendous hope for the future of the profession, but truly for the future of our world."

Two CBA members were recognized for their outstanding work with some of the association's largest sections. Amy Calvo MacNamara was honored with the John Eldred Shields Distinguished Professional Service Award for her above-and-beyond work and dedication to the Family Law Section and family law practice throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Kyle A. McClain received the Young Lawyers Section (YLS) Vanguard Award for his current role as public service co-director and previous role as CLE co-director.

Four individuals were honored for their work in the community. Attorney Greg Davis was presented with the Citizen of the Law Award for his dedication to the Hartford-area community and work with Hartford Public Library, Bloomfield Public Library, and Hartford Youth Scholars. Conley F. Monk, Jr. received the Citizen



(Top L to R) Amy Calvo MacNamara, James M. and Rebecca Corbin Loree, (Bottom L to R) Greg Davis, and Richard S. Order were among those honored at the 2021 Celebrate with the Stars.

for the Law for his life-long dedication to supporting veterans in Connecticut and fighting for veteran benefits. Rebecca Corbin Loree and James M. Loree were presented with the Distinguished Public Service Award for their contributions to the Connecticut community and work through the Loree Foundation, which provides grants for educational assistance, training, and support of individuals in need.

The final award of the evening, the Henry J. Naruk Judiciary Award, was presented to retired Connecticut Supreme Court justice, Richard N. Palmer, for his substantial contributions to the administration of justice in Connecticut. "I'm deeply honored to have been selected among so many deserving members of our state and federal

judiciary and to be included among the truly outstanding previous recipients," said Justice Palmer in his remarks. He also thanked former Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers and current Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson who are both former recipients of the award.

The evening was made possible through the support of our many sponsors, including Headline Sponsor Kronholm Insurance Services. We thank all of our sponsors, along with the evening's attendees and all of those who provided video testimonials and introductions for making the event a success. Learn more about the awardees at ctbar.org/awards. ■

Corrine King is the marketing lead at the Connecticut Bar Association.

50-Year Awardees

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

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| Hon. Jonathan J. Kaplan | Steven M. Fast | Edward M. Kveskin | Steven R. Rolnick | Averum Jay Sprecher |
| Hon. Joseph A. Egan | Lawrence Roy Fish | Frederick P. Leaf | Helen F. Ryan | Dominick J. Thomas, Jr. |
| Barbara B. Brown | Richard S. Fisher | Robert R. Moran, Jr. | Jay H. Sandak | John L. Vecchiolla |
| J. Michael Cantore, Jr. | Dana Eric Friedman | William S. Nathanson | David W. Schneider | Walter D. Wagoner, Jr. |
| Thomas A. Covill | Martin P. Gold | John D. Paul | Thomas F. Shea | Martin B. Waterman |
| James F. Early | Carolyn P. Gould | David Reif | James H. Shulman | Craig F. White |
| Robert M. Elliott | Carolyn P. Kelly | Penn Rhodeen | David J. Skolnick | Steven H. Winkler |
| | Paul E. Knag | Richard C. Robinson | Ramon S. Sous | |

To view the video presentation of the 50-year honorees' most proud professional accomplishments, visit ctbar.org/awards.