

# News & Events

## CBA Hosts 2024 Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Summit



(L to R) CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin; DE&I Committee Member Troy M. Brown; Dr. Arin Reeves; DE&I Committee Co-Chair Ronald J. Houde, Jr.; DE&I Committee Member Michelle Duprey; DE&I Committee Co-Chair Hon. Cecil J. Thomas

**The Connecticut Bar Association** hosted its 9th Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Summit on October 25 at CT State Community College's Gateway campus in New Haven. About 150 members of the Connecticut legal community attended the Summit to hear from distinguished speakers, who provided assessments on the state of DEI in the legal community and strategies for improving DEI initiatives within legal organizations.

**For close to a decade**, the Summit has served as an opportunity for the signato-

ry organizations to the Connecticut Legal Community Diversity & Inclusion Pledge and Plan to gather for a day of learning, reflection, and inspiration. The current Pledge and Plan provides a series of organizational diversity and inclusion action steps and best practices for each signatory organization to implement during the year. The organizational signatories then gather at the Summit each year to review their efforts and progress, and receive education focused on the future goals of the Summit. Since the launch of the Pledge and

Plan in October 2016, 46 Connecticut legal organizations, including private law firms, government legal agencies, non-profit law firms, and corporate legal departments have joined to participate in the effort.

**This year's event began with** an introduction provided by CBA Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee Co-Chair Ronald J. Houde, who summarized the purpose of the Summit by stating, "We come together as advocates, colleagues, and friends united by a shared commitment

to fostering a legal landscape that reflects the rich diversity of the communities that we serve.” CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin also provided introductory remarks for the event, thanking the committee members, speakers, and attendees for their participation in the Summit and introducing the Summit’s first speaker, Judge Cecil J. Thomas.

**The opening educational program of the Summit** presented by Judge Thomas consisted of the annual Signatory Data Collection Overview. During this presentation, which has been given annually at the Summit since 2017, Judge Thomas provided an aggregate snapshot of the representation of diverse individuals within the signatory organizations, organized by type of employer. The data is drawn from assessment responses that the Connecticut Legal Community’s Diversity & Inclusion Pledge & Plan Signatories submit annually, in which each organization describes its structural diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts during the prior year, and shares demographic data concerning lawyers employed within the organization in Con-

necticut. The presentation provided insight into the representation of diverse individuals within the leadership and total attorney population of these legal sectors, trends and changes over the years of data collection in Connecticut, and comparisons to national trends as reported by the National Association of Law Placement.

**The Summit’s second speaker was Dr. Arin Reeves**, a researcher, author, and top advisor to leaders in companies, firms, and organizations on leadership and workplace culture topics. Dr. Reeves led attendees through an interactive workshop, *The Why and the How of Diversity and Inclusion: Integrating Diversity & Inclusion Into How We Work*, that explored the field of DEI with a specific



*Retired Supreme Court Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson presented A Chief Justice’s Reflection on DEI.*

in diversity vs. equity vs. inclusion. Later in the workshop, she emphasized the importance of focusing on behavior rather than belief when seeking to implement DEI based policies within a workplace. “The minute you bring belief into the workplace you are hurting your diversity efforts, because it’s irrelevant,” stated Dr. Reeves. She stressed that by divorcing required behaviors from a belief set, proper DEI practices and policies can be implemented with less resistance from employees that disagree with their basis.



*(L to R) CBA President-Elect Emily A. Gianquinto, CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin, Professor Kenji Yoshino*

necticut. The presentation provided information on diversity metrics organized by gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability, for private, non-profit, and government legal agency pledge signatories. Summit

focus on the concept of diversity fatigue. She began by breaking down the separate meanings of each of the constituent components of DEI and the different approaches needed to achieve success

**After a break for lunch**, the Summit continued with the presentation *Practical DEI Suggestions for the Current Environment* by Professor Kenji Yoshino of the Meltzer Center for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging. In the presentation, Professor Yoshino examined polarizing perspectives on the legal repercussions that *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* will have on future DEI initiatives. He identified one perspective that optimistically believes the ramifications of the case will be restricted to college admissions and therefore not affect private business practices as well as an opposing perspective that the case portends all-encompassing restrictions on any DEI programs. Professor Yoshino argued that the correct takeaway from the case falls between these two extremes. He noted that the issue of affirmative action, around which the Fair Admissions case centers, is only one of many ap-



proaches associated with DEI initiatives, which extend to also include employee education and training, heritage celebrations, family friendly policies, structured interviewing processes, and more. “What we need to really do is think about which of these practices are legally risky and which are not,” stated Professor Yoshino before providing examples of programs that would either align or conflict with contemporary interpretations of the law.

**The Summit’s final presentation was** presented by recently retired Supreme Court Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson, who provided reflections and lessons drawn from his experiences with DEI issues during his 24 years of service on the bench. He spoke about personal situations he encountered in his profes-

sional career where he faced prejudice and assumptions based on his racial identity. Chief Justice Robinson also spoke about his views on DEI through a historical context and the particular importance of examining difficult moments in our nation’s history. “The attempts to deny, alter, or erase history by those who are embarrassed by it, fear it, or wish to manipulate it for their own purposes is not only shortsighted but dangerous,” stated Robinson. “If they are successful then all explanations of how we got here in this moment will no longer exist; all the lessons that the past has taught us will be lost.”

**Following Chief Justice Robinson’s presentation,** Judge Thomas once again took the stage to bring the Summit to a

close. Judge Thomas thanked those for attending for their commitment to the Summit, noting “The goal for today was to address the challenges of the moment, to put together the speakers that we all needed to hear from, and my hope is you all leave here inspired with something to take back to your organizations.”

**The Summit reflects the significant** efforts of the CBA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, and in particular its Summit Subcommittee, over the course of the past year. The CBA extends its gratitude to the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Summit Committee members for organizing an engaging summit and to all our sponsors for making this year’s event possible.



*Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Co-Chair Ronald J. Houde, Jr. provided introductory remarks for this year’s Summit.*



*Dr. Arin Reeves presented The Why and the How of Diversity and Inclusion: Integrating Diversity & Inclusion Into How We Work.*



*Professor Kenji Yoshino presented Practical DEI Suggestions for the Current Environment.*



*Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Co-Chair Hon. Cecil J. Thomas presented the annual Signatory Data Collection Overview at the Summit.*

## CBA Members Volunteer at Stand Down 2024

**This year, CBA Members continued** to provide pro bono legal services to veterans at the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs' annual Stand Down event, which the CBA has assisted with since 1998. On Friday, September 20, attorneys Robert Burnes, CBA Immediate Past President Maggie Castinado, Veterans and Military Affairs Section Chair Jason Fragoso, Scott Kustra, Jacob McChesney, and Russell Zimeberlin represented the CBA and provided in-person assistance to attendees at the Stand Down events, which were held in Bridgeport, Bristol, Danbury, Norwich, Rocky Hill, and Stamford.

**"Stand Down at the Connecticut Veterans Affairs campus was a big success this year,"** remarked Attorney Fragoso. "We had a great turnout of volunteer attorneys from the CBA and others representing other agencies and organizations such as Connecticut Veterans Legal Center, the Attorney General's Office, the Department of Justice, and more. Just speaking for the CT Bar contingent at Rocky Hill, our volunteers staffing the tent were approached and engaged proactively with numerous Veterans. At many of these encounters we were able to provide on the spot guidance or conduct a warm hand-off to a cognizant

agency or organization. As a Veteran myself I feel gratitude towards Connecticut Veterans Affairs for hosting this event. As a CBA section officer, I am thankful and extremely proud of the work we did as a CBA volunteer team and look forward to staffing this tent for CBA next year."

**Stand Down was established after** the Vietnam War and provides veterans with "one-stop" access to a range of programs and services offered by state and federal agencies, Veterans organizations, and community-based non-profits.



*(L to R) Russell Zimeberlin, Robert B. Fried, Veterans and Military Affairs Section Chair Jason Fragoso, and CBA Immediate Past President Maggie Castinado at the Rocky Hill Stand Down Event*



## CBA Hosts Largest Free Legal Advice Clinic to Date

On October 22 and 23, the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA) Pro Bono Committee and Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut held its largest Free Legal Advice Clinic to date, which served 72 clients in need of legal assistance. The clinics, which are held quarterly throughout the year, provide members of the public in need of legal advice with 30-minute virtual meetings with volunteer attorneys providing answers to legal questions in a variety of practice areas, including family law, bankruptcy, immigration law, landlord/tenant issues, tax law, employee rights/unemployment issues, and more.

Over the course of the clinic, 24 volunteer attorneys, three volunteer interpreters, and 19 paralegal and law student intake volunteers participated in assisting the clients. Several clients provided positive feedback on the services they received, with one noting, "I was so grateful for the time and energy you all put into this. It was very helpful for me and very needed at this time in my life." Another client stated, "As a single mother struggling financially, I was so grateful for the opportunity to utilize the clinic for legal advice pertaining to a family court issue. To say I appreciate the efforts of the team would be an understatement; this is an exceptionally valuable service to provide to the community."

The clinic provides a critical need for those who would be unable to attain legal services through other means. The median annual income of the clients that participated in this most recent clinic was \$18,000 and 93 percent of the clients reported that they are unable to afford to hire a private attorney. As the number of clients in need grows with each clinic, so does the CBA's need for volunteers. Learn more about the services provided by the CBA's Free Legal Advice Clinics as well as volunteering opportunities at [ctbar.org/freelegaladviceclinics](http://ctbar.org/freelegaladviceclinics).



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## David J. Dixon, CFA® joins Bradley, Foster & Sargent

We are pleased to announce that David J. Dixon has joined the team at Bradley, Foster & Sargent. Dave brings a wealth of insight, experience, and leadership to our team. Dave joins us from Wilmington Trust where he was Executive Vice President of Wealth Management. He also ran the wealth business at Webster Bank and held senior positions at Harbor Capital Management, Fleet Investment Advisors, and Connecticut National Bank.

Dave is active in the community serving as the immediate past Chairman of First Tee- Connecticut, former Chairman of the Arthritis Foundation of Connecticut, former Board member of the St. Francis Foundation along with other philanthropic organizations in the greater Hartford community.

Please join us in welcoming Dave in the upcoming months.



Hartford, CT | Litchfield, CT | Stonington, CT | Wellesley, MA | Delray Beach, FL | Chicago, IL | Portland, ME

## IN MEMORIAM

### Hon. Frederick Arthur Freedman

passed away at the age of 95 on May 15. Judge Freedman graduated earned a B.A. degree from the University of Connecticut in 1951 and an L.L.B. from Yale Law School in 1954. He honorably served as a First Lieutenant in the United States Air Force JAG during the Vietnam War, from 1954-1957. He practiced law with Brody and Brody, P.C. until 1981 when he became a Connecticut Superior Court judge. In 1992, Judge Freedman was appointed to the Connecticut Appellate where he served as chief administrative judge for the Appellate System until 1994 when he became a Senior Judge of the Connecticut Appellate Court and in 1999, Judge Trial Referee. When he retired from the Bench in 2012, he served as Counsel at Halloran & Sage in the Alternative Dispute Resolution Practice Group as a mediator. He was also the recipient of numerous awards, including the Connecticut Bar Association Judiciary Award.



### Richard P. (Dick) McGrath

passed away at the age of 94 on July 21. He was an honors graduate of Georgetown University and Harvard Law School, the latter where he served as an editor of the Harvard Law Review. He began his career as a corporate attorney at Hughes Hubbard & Reed (NY), then served as Corporate Counsel at Raytheon (MA) before joining Cummings & Lockwood (CT) in



1960, where he served as Head of the Corporate Department for many years. His clients included many well-known international and Fortune 500 companies. He also served as Of Counsel at Murtha Cullina (CT) during his later career. Attorney McGrath was very active in the Connecticut Bar Association, WESFACCA, and Stamford Rotary Club. For over 21 years, he served as Secretary and General Counsel (pro bono) for the International Executive Service Corps, a nonprofit organization that fosters private sector development in the economically developing world.

### Hon. Stanley Novack

passed away at the age of 93 on June 9. He obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting in 1953 and earned a law degree in 1956 from the University of Connecticut. He began his legal career in private practice in Danbury as a sole practitioner from 1967 through 1969 and also served as an assistant prosecuting attorney in the City Court of Danbury. In 1970, Judge Novack was appointed to be a Workers Compensation Commissioner for the State of Connecticut and held the position for a term of five years. He was then appointed as a judge of the Court of Common Pleas in 1975, and became a Connecticut Superior Court judge in 1978. He served as the administrative judge of the Stamford-Norwalk Judicial District from 1988 through 1992. Thereafter, he served as the chief administrative judge for the Family Division from 1992 through 1995. In 2000, he became a judge



trial referee. Judge Novack was one of the longest presiding Connecticut Superior Court judges, with 2024 marking 49 years of service. He won numerous awards throughout his career, including in 1987, he received the Distinguished Jurist Award from the CBA Family Law Section and in 2023, he received the CBA's Henry J. Naruk Judiciary Award.



### Austin Keith Wolf

passed away at the age of 101 on November 4. He graduated from Yale University (Branford College) in

1948 and graduated from Harvard Law School, cum laude, in 1951; he was admitted to the bar in the same year. Attorney Wolf founded Cohen and Wolf with Herbert Cohen in 1951 and practiced in the areas of land use planning, zoning, wetlands, real estate development, and industrial and commercial leasing. He was an attorney trial referee of the Connecticut Superior Court and received two commendations for his service. Attorney Wolf was a member of the CBA House of Delegates and past chair of the Planning and Zoning Section, which honored him in 2007 with the section's first-ever Lifetime Achievement Award, given "in recognition of longstanding distinguished service as a planning and zoning lawyer, to clients, to the profession, to the community, to strong ethical practices and to the advancement of knowledge, to writing, lecturing and similar pursuits." Additionally, he was a frequent speaker at seminars on land use topics presented by the CBA.



## Young Lawyers Section Hosts 2024 Pro Bono Fair and Golf Event



(L to R) Connecticut Appellate Court Judge Ingrid Moll, YLS Pro Bono Coordinator Ashley Cervin, CBA Pro Bono Committee Chair Dan Brody, YLS Pro Bono Coordinator Emily McCarthy, and YLS Chair Vianca T. Malick

The event's keynote speaker, Connecticut Appellate Court Judge Ingrid L. Moll, also advocated for the young lawyers in attendance to commit themselves to pro bono work throughout their careers. Judge Moll noted that there have been significant increases in the number of litigants in Connecticut representing themselves in recent years. "The reality is that, although some self-represented parties do pretty well navigating unknown territory, most do not," remarked



(L to R) Alison J. Toumekian, YLS Chair Vianca T. Malick, and CBA Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Sara J. O'Brien

On the evening of October 10, over 40 members of the Connecticut Bar Association Young Lawyers Section (YLS) gathered at the TPC River Highlands golf club in Cromwell for the section's 2024 Pro Bono Fair and Golf Event. This unique annual event consists of two parts, beginning with an optional round of golf followed by a reception featuring 15 booths for various pro bono organizations.

During the reception, each of the pro bono organizations provided brief introductions to their services and were on hand to provide information about volunteer opportunities to the YLS members at the event:

- CBA Pro Bono Programs (Free Legal Advice Clinics, CT Free Legal Answers, Lawyers in Libraries, CBA Pro Bono Connect)
- Center for Family Justice, Inc.
- Center for Indigenous Peoples Rights
- Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants
- Connecticut Legal Rights Project
- Connecticut Legal Services
- Connecticut Veterans Legal Center
- Disability Rights CT
- Hartford Public Library, The American Place
- Pro Bono Partnership

- SLS Chat Navigator
- State of Connecticut Judicial Branch (Volunteer Attorney Programs)
- Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut, Inc.
- Victim Rights Center of CT, a program of the CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence

At the start of the reception, CBA YLS Chair Vianca T. Malick welcomed the young lawyers to the event, before introducing CBA Pro Bono Committee Chair Dan Brody. Brody spoke about the importance of undertaking pro bono work and the invaluable support provided by the pro bono organizations throughout the state. "You will find through the work that you do and what you will hear from all these organizations is that you can have an immense impact on the most important aspects of someone's life," stated Brody.



Following the event's reception, attendees were encouraged to visit different organizations' booths and learn about the various pro bono opportunities they provide.

Judge Moll. "Litigants need an advocate and the courts do not serve that function. But you can." She encouraged the young lawyers present to engage with various forms of pro bono representation, including limited scope representation.

**Thank you to all those** who attended this year's event as well as all the attorneys who provide vital pro bono services to individuals in need throughout Connecticut.

# Upcoming Education Calendar

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

## DECEMBER

- 4 Professionalism Boot Camp ♦
- 9 Public Benefits and Rights in Aging: A Primer on What to Know for Your Clients
- 10 Tales from the Other Side: What Every Opposing Counsel Wants You to Know
- 11 Tools to Ethically Manage Client Trust Accounts ♦
- 12 IP Ethics ♦
- 12 The Intersection of Family and Criminal Law
- 13 Residential Real Estate Closings

## JANUARY

- 15 Communication Seminar
  - 23 The Ballad of Johnny Sick: A Story of Psychiatric Commitment in Connecticut
  - 29 Where Do We Draw the Line: Exploring Tension between Free Speech Rights and Educational Access
- ## FEBRUARY
- 4 Ethics Seminar ♦
  - 5 CBM Series ♦
  - 10 Family Law
  - 11 Labor and Employment and Business Law
  - 13 Heart Health

- 19 Engagement Letters ♦

- 25 LGBT ♦

- 27 Solo/Small Technology

## MARCH

- 3 Engagement Letters

- 4 Education

- 5 Lawyer Like an Athlete

- 11 Appellate Law

- 27 Annual Advanced Labor and Employment Law Symposium

♦ *Ethics credit available*

**CLE PASS ELIGIBLE:** For more information about the CLE Pass, visit [ctbar.org/CLEPass](http://ctbar.org/CLEPass).

## Swearing-In Ceremony Welcomes Over 170 New Attorneys to the Connecticut Bar

During two ceremonies that took place on November 8, over 170 new attorneys were sworn into the Connecticut Bar inside the Connecticut State Library and Supreme Court Building. Connecticut Supreme Court Chief Justice Raheem L. Mullins and Associate Justices Nora R. Dannehy, Gregory T. D'Auria, Steven D. Ecker, and Andrew J. McDonald presided over the day's ceremonies.

**Chief Justice Mullins provided the** ceremonies' welcome remarks as well as a brief speech recognizing and congratulating the new admittees on their notable achievement. During his speech, Chief Justice Mullins explained to the inductees that their careers as attorneys will be marked with both successes and failures and will be both difficult and fulfilling. He also noted the importance of protecting one's reputation through honest and civil conduct, warning the new attorneys, "It may take years to build your reputation, but it will only take minutes to ruin it."

**After the motion to admit** the successful candidates to the bar, Connecticut Supreme Court Chief Clerk Carl Cicchetti administered the Oath of Attorney to the new admittees, and Senior Associate Justice Andrew J. McDonald

administered the Oath of Commissioner of Superior Court. Then each inductee individually presented themselves as attorneys before the court. CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin presented a welcome speech to the new attorneys, conveying the rewarding nature of working in the field of law and encouraging them to keep in mind the important principles upheld through their service. "When you walk next door to the supreme court, you



(L to R) Connecticut Supreme Court Associate Justice Steven D. Ecker, Associate Justice Andrew J. McDonald, Chief Justice Raheem L. Mullins, Associate Gregory T. D'Auria, and Associate Justice Nora R. Dannehy

will see that honor exudes those walls. That honor is now yours," announced President Shearin.

**Following the admission of the new** attorneys, all the event's attendees were invited to attend a reception held in the Connecticut State Capitol, where they were able to meet with representatives from the Connecticut Bar Association Young Lawyers Section and other bar associations from across Connecticut.



2024  
Roster



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**Excellence in the field of Alternative Dispute Resolution**



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Waterbury



Thomas Barrett  
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Hartford



Steven Certilman  
Stamford



Dominic Fulco  
Hartford



Joseph Garrison  
New Haven



Hon. Elaine Gordon  
Westbrook



Hon. Douglas Mintz  
Stamford



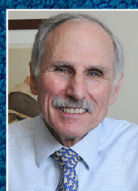
Richard Renehan  
Waterbury



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Hartford



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New Haven



Eric Wiechmann  
New Canaan



Hon. Terence Zemetis  
Madison

FEBRUARY 2025

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Check your preferred available dates or  
schedule appointments online, directly  
with Academy Members - for free.

Visit [www.ConnMediators.org/dateselector](http://www.ConnMediators.org/dateselector)

\* The National Academy of Distinguished Neutrals is an invitation-only professional association of over 1000 litigator-rated mediators & arbitrators throughout the US and a proud sponsor of the AAJ and DRI. For more info, please visit [www.NADN.org/about](http://www.NADN.org/about)



# Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson

## Departs Supreme Court After 24-year Judicial Career

After serving six years as the chief justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court, Hon. Richard A. Robinson announced his plans to retire from the bench effective September 6. Before becoming a judge, Justice Robinson first served as staff counsel for the City of Stamford Law Department from 1985-1988 and as assistant corporation counsel in Stamford from 1988 to 2000. In 2000, he was appointed to the Connecticut Superior Court and over the next seven years served in various roles, including as presiding judge (civil) for the New Britain Judicial District, presiding judge (civil) and assistant administrative judge for the Ansonia/Milford Judicial District, and presiding judge (civil) for the Stamford Judicial District.

On December 10, 2007, Justice Robinson was appointed as a judge of the Connecticut Appellate Court. Five years later on December 19, 2013, he was appointed as a justice on the Connecticut Supreme Court. He was appointed as the chief justice of the Supreme Court on May 3, 2018, by then-Connecticut Governor Dannel P. Malloy, becoming the state's first Black chief justice. Upon his appointment, Chief Justice Robinson made his top priorities improving public confidence in the judiciary and improving equal access to the justice system. He instituted new diversity, equity, and inclusion training for state judges and commissioned a task force to study the issue of racial discrimination in the selection of juries and consider measures to promote diverse jury panels.

In 2020, Chief Justice Robinson faced the challenge of leading the Connecticut Judicial Branch through the unprecedented difficulties imposed by the COVID-19 global pandemic. He oversaw the implementation of the judicial branch's plan that utilized a remote video conferencing platform to continue to carry out its constitutional duties during the period of state emergency declarations and

social distancing. He also oversaw the return to in-person court processes over the past few years as pandemic-related regulations have subsided.

"Justice Robinson has provided dedicated service to the people of Connecticut for four decades," stated Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont in an official announcement of the Supreme Court Chief

*"Throughout his career, Justice Robinson has dedicated himself to the provision of justice and the people of Connecticut."*

Justice's retirement. "During his tenure, Justice Robinson has made improving public access to the courts a hallmark of his approach, recognizing that justice operates best when it operates for everyone. He is universally admired as a compassionate, thoughtful, and skillful jurist."

"Chief Justice Robinson has worked closely with and been a great friend to the Connecticut Bar Association since his appointment in 2018, which was shortly after I began my role at the association," stated CBA Executive Director Keith Soressi. "The chief justice has collaborated



with us on many events and programs and has shown significant support for the attorneys of our association and the legal community within our state."

CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin praised Chief Justice Robinson's ser-

vice, stating "Throughout his career, Justice Robinson has dedicated himself to the provision of justice and the people of Connecticut. Over the past six years, he has provided thoughtful and valuable leadership to our Supreme Court during a period notably marked by the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic. He has also played a profoundly important role, both in Connecticut and nationally, in addressing diversity, equity and inclusion issues as they impact the court, the litigants it serves, and the legal profession. I wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement." □