

News & Events

Kimberly Jacobsen Receives the 2025 Ladder Award

The CBA Women in the Law Section, in association with the CBA Young Lawyers Section (YLS) Women in the Law Committee, presented the 2025 Ladder Award to Attorney Kimberly Jacobsen at this year's Pathways to Leadership for Women Lawyers event on March 6 at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville.

The Ladder Award was created by the YLS Women in the Law Committee in 2007 to honor a woman attorney who has “left the ladder down” for women to follow in her footsteps and values the importance of leadership development, mentoring, and supporting junior lawyers in their journeys to success. Attorney Jacobsen joins a prestigious group of past awardees that includes Hon. Anne C. Dranginis, Rosemary E. Giuliano, Kathleen L. Brandt, Margaret A. Deluca, Hon. Elizabeth J. Stewart, Maureen Danehy Cox, Hon. Nada K. Sizemore, Diane W. Whitney, Tanya A. Bovée, Hon. Maria A. Khan, Deirdre M. Daly, Hon. Lynda B. Munro, Elaine S. Amendola, Elizabeth A. Alquist, Tanyee Cheung, and Hon. Evelyn M. Daly.

Women in the Law Section Chair Michelle M. Napoli initiated this year's event with welcome remarks and an introduction for the evening's keynote speaker, Nina T. Pirrotti. Attorney Pirrotti spoke of her personal experiences and challenges as a woman in the legal field and how years ago she faced sexual harassment from a partner at the law firm she worked at. After leaving this law firm, she noted how she later developed professional relationships with several positive role models in the profession, all of whom were men. “I think my experience is a product of the era of my forma-



(L to R) YLS Women in the Law Committee Co-Chair Audrey E. Trace, CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin, 2025 Ladder Award winner Kimberly Jacobsen, YLS Women in the Law Committee Co-Chair Kara A. Newell, CBA President-Elect Emily A. Gianquinto, Keynote Speaker Nina Pirrotti

tive years as a lawyer, where there was no sexual harassment training, there was no recognition of the value of work/life balance, and the opportunities for women to rise to the top were rare and when there were it was only when she was willing to be *one of the boys*,” stated Attorney Pirrotti. “Look where we are now... It is a balm for the soul to reflect upon how far we have come in the empowerment of women.” She further emphasized that some of the most remarkable women today are the survivors of sexual harassment and assaults who have empowered others through their disclosure of workplace abuses that previously went largely unreported and unaddressed.

Following the keynote speech, Young Lawyers Section Women in the Law Committee Co-Chairs Kara A. Newell and Audrey E. Trace introduced and presented the Ladder Award to Attorney Jacobsen. In her remarks, Attorney Jacobsen conveyed her personal journey as an attorney living with Parkinson's Disease. She explained that after graduating with a bachelor's degree in sociology in 1991, she decided to enter law school due to a downturn in employment opportunities at the time. She began her career at Statewide Legal Services, where she gained appreciation for the work of helping those in need find justice in the legal system, which led her to later join the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO).

Today Attorney Jacobsen continues to serve as the Managing



(L to R) YLS Women in the Law Committee Co-Chair Audrey E. Trace, 2025 Ladder Award Winner Kimberly Jacobsen, CBA Executive Director Lina Lee, YLS Women in the Law Committee Co-Chair Kara A. Newell

PEERS AND CHEERS

Lynda Lee Arnold and **Paul J. Knierim** have been named principals at **Czepiga Daly Pope & Perri**. Arnold is a member of both the CBA Elder Law Section and the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, and has been helping clients with their elder law, estate planning, asset protection, and estate administration needs for over 20 years. Knierim is a member of the CBA Estates and Probate and Elder Law Sections as well as the Connecticut Bar Foundation and Connecticut Probate Assembly (Emeritus); he has more than two decades of service in the judiciary, formerly as head of the Connecticut Probate Court system.

Greg Pepe, a founding partner of **Neubert, Pepe & Monteith, P.C.**, was honored by St. Martin de Porres Academy at its Spring Fling Gala, along with his wife Ann Baker Pepe, for their significant contributions to the people of Greater New Haven

Reid & Riege is celebrating its 75th anniversary in business. Since its establishment in 1950, they have remained dedicated to delivering top-notch legal services across diverse industries, establishing a reputation built on integrity, expertise, and a steadfast commitment to clients. The firm remains dedicated to innovation, client-centered service, and legal excellence.

Robinson+Cole is pleased to announce the election of **Gregory J. Bennici** as a partner. He is a member of the firm's Managed Care + ERISA Litigation group and regularly litigates disputes related to group and individual welfare benefits, Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), managed care contracts, health insurance, disability insurance, and life insurance coverage.

Director and Commission Attorney of Employment Litigation at CHRO. She noted the importance that she has placed on mentoring others at the organization, stating, "Mentoring is the greatest, I always get more than I put into those situations. If I take someone under my wing, I'm always learning more from them." Towards the conclusion of her remarks, she explained that she was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 2019. "I'm lucky, I had amazing colleagues who really felt really close at the time and the support and love I got was overwhelming," stated Attorney Jacobsen. "So, I decided I'm a lawyer, and what I am going to do is some kind of



(L to R) 2025 Ladder Award Winner Kimberly Jacobsen and CBA Women in the Law Section Chair Michelle M. Napoli

awareness regarding this kind of disease. She continued by describing how over the past several years she has continued working professionally, while also produced YouTube videos, social media posts, and publications about living well with Parkinson's to raise public awareness of the disease. ■

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IN MEMORIAM

Donat C. Marchand, who served as the president of the CBA during the 2000-2001 bar year, passed away in March. Originally from Westmore, VT, Attorney Marchand's family moved in his youth to Taftville, CT, where he graduated from Norwich Free Academy. He later received a BS degree from the University of Connecticut's School of Business Administration and earned his JD from Harvard Law School in 1958. That same year, he moved to Wisconsin, where he completed ROTC at Truax Air Force Base before accepting a U.S. Air Force posting in Wiesbaden, Germany.



After completing his military commitment, Attorney Marchand returned to Connecticut and accepted a job at the Greenwich law firm Parker Badger and Fisher. He later moved to another Greenwich-based firm, Ivey Barnum and O'Mara LLC, where he remained for the rest of his career. While practicing, he earned a Master of Laws in taxation from New York University in 1967. Throughout his legal career, Attorney Marchand was active as a leader in several professional organizations, including as president of the Greenwich Bar Association and president of the CBA.

During his tenure as CBA president, the association underwent important changes and introduced new initiatives. He was the first president to helm the CBA at its then new headquarters in New Britain.

His presidency also oversaw the signing of the first contract to provide CBA members with an online legal research platform; the establishment of the CT Bar Institute, Inc.; and the introduction of the CBA Workers' Compensation Specialist Certification program. In many ways he helped to modernize the CBA for the new millennium.

Outside of his professional activities, Attorney Marchand was also committed to his local community, having served on Greenwich's representative town meeting, as chair of the board of Greenwich Library, and as a member of the boards of Greenwich's Sacred Heart School and Pathways, Inc., a local mental health and rehabilitation non-profit organization.



CBA Members, Family, and Friends

SUMMER OUTING

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, June 22 | Holiday Hill, Prospect, CT

Join the Connecticut Bar Association for a fun-filled outing with family and friends! Enjoy a day of relaxation, great company, and exciting activities.

Learn more at ctbar.org/SummerOuting.

