Foundation Fetes M. Catherine Richardson and the firm of Meyer, Suozzi, English & Klein, P.C.

The Foundation honored M. Catherine Richardson with its Lifetime Achievement Award and the firm of Meyer, Suozzi, English & Klein, P.C. with the Outstanding Firm Leadership Award at its Annual Assembly and Dinner of the Fellows in January, 2016. Over 165 Fellows and guests attended the dinner held at the Downtown Association, New York, NY.

“Catherine was selected to receive The Foundation’s Lifetime Achievement Award for her leadership within and continued commitment to the law profession and The Foundation,” said John H. Gross, president of The New York Bar Foundation. “Catherine’s vision of what The Foundation could be and implementation of a strategic planning process was crucial to guiding us forward.”

A graduate of the State University of New York at Oswego, Richardson was awarded degrees from the University of Northern Colorado, Syracuse University College of Law and State University of New York. The Lifetime Achievement Award honors former officers or directors of The Foundation. The honoree’s service and leadership must have significantly advanced the purposes of The Foundation. In addition, the honoree’s service as an officer or director and reputation as a lawyer and bar leader must have brought significant recognition and acclaim to The Foundation.

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The Foundation Remembers Fellows

The Foundation fondly remembers two Fellows of The Foundation that played an instrumental role in the work of the organization, Judge Judith S. Kaye and Robert MacCracken.

“Both of these law champions passed this year but their passion to help those in need will continue to make a difference across New York State through funds that had been established in their name within The Foundation,” states Foundation Board President, John H. Gross.

The Judith S. Kaye Youth Court Fund

The Foundation’s Youth Court Fund had been renamed in 2009 to honor Judge Kaye, a woman who spearheaded administrative reform and devoted much of her career to improving the lives of children and families.

The Youth Court Fund was initially created in 2008 by The Foundation’s Board of Directors when it determined that New York’s Youth Courts were struggling to survive because of limited financial support. The Foundation began a campaign to raise funds to provide assistance for Youth Court activities. There are more than 100 Youth Courts in cities, towns and villages in New York that deliver justice to youths between the ages of seven and 15. The purpose of each is to seek to improve juvenile justice outcomes through an alternative to the criminal justice system.

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Message from the President

When I began my term as Foundation president in June of 2015 I had one goal—to raise more money for The Foundation. Our Board members are committed to raising more funds so that we can continue to grow the grant program and help more of those in need of access to justice across New York state.

While this message isn’t new, its importance is. The need for the grant program continues to evolve and increase.

Why is this important now?
We continue to observe an increase in grant applications. The first spike occurred in 2015 with a 25% increase in application numbers jumping from 87 in 2014, to 116 in both 2015 and 2016. There remains a substantial gap in access to justice as more than 1 million litigants in civil matters in courts in New York remain unrepresented.

We are being responsive to the needs. We are making a concerted effort to increase assistance to the following six areas for legal services initiatives of our grantees (in addition to our traditional grant program) as the needs in these areas increase.

- Human Trafficking
- Immigration
- Domestic Violence
- Homelessness Prevention
- Veterans Access to Services
- Reentry/Post-incarceration

Your support has helped the program grow. In 2014 we allocated $392,500 to 67 programs across New York State. In 2016 we allocated over $580,000 to 99 programs across New York. We are making significant strides but much work still needs to be done.

Why give to TNYBF?
We are dedicated. The Board and staff of The Foundation are committed to growing the grant program and developing new endeavors such as the “Impact Campaign” that was launched in January.

We continue to strive for excellence in governance and leadership. At a time when non-profit organizations are in the headlines for misusing funds, The Foundation has been recognized for its efforts in governance. The Foundation operates lean, fulfills its mission, provides good stewardship of your gift and helps in providing a positive impact on legal service access across New York.

We support and look for ways to promote the good work of attorneys and increase the message that the law profession is a noble one with professionals that are committed to making a difference.

The Foundation has a dedicated and experienced team of legal professionals who volunteer hundreds of hours to sit on the Grant Review Committee to review and evaluate each request that is received.

We know your gifts are making a difference.
Through video testimonials, feedback from grantee organizations, and hearing the stories of some of the people that have been directly assisted, we know that the impact is life-changing; often impacting that person’s family and children.

You help create change for future generations.
Because of your support, your gifts, and your time, we are able to show that lawyers care about those in need of legal services and are committed to the principle of access to justice for all from Watertown to Montauk and Jamestown to the Bronx.

I am proud to be able to share this newsletter that highlights some of the ways your gifts matter.

Thank you!

John H. Gross, President

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Sullivan and Cromwell, LLP Presents Lead Firm Gift to The New York Bar Foundation

The international law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell, LLP, recently presented a check for $25,000 to The New York Bar Foundation in memory of their past partner and valued friend, Robert M. MacCrate who passed in early 2016.

The gift, which will be allocated to The MacCrate Fund to Preserve the Core Values of the Legal Profession, is the first firm gift received as part of The Foundation’s Firm Challenge, and will assist The Foundation in their goal of doubling their grant program.

“It is an honor to present this gift to The Foundation in Bob’s memory and help in kicking off the firm challenge,” said Chairman of Sullivan & Cromwell, LLP Joseph C. Shenker. “Bob was a wonderful partner, great colleague and valued friend who was instrumental to the growth of The Foundation.”

The MacCrate Fund was established by the Board of Directors of The New York Bar Foundation in honor of former Foundation president, Robert MacCrate, when it conferred its inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award on him in February 2008. Mr. MacCrate was responsible for overseeing the building renovation and period restoration of 5 and 6 Elk Street in Albany, New York (part of the New York State Bar Center) and for spearheading the fundraising of $6.8 million for the Bar Center’s expansion project.

The Fellows of The New York Bar Foundation nomination and election program was introduced by Mr. MacCrate in 1974.

“It is fitting that the first firm gift has been made in honor of someone that was instrumental in moving The Foundation to where we are today,” stated Martin Minkowitz. “The timing of this gift is notable as The Foundation plans to launch the firm challenge as a way to assist in increasing the funds for the grant program.”

Firms that participate in the challenge will be recognized by The Foundation and announced as the gifts are received. “We look forward to other firms recognizing the importance of gifts such as this, to enable The Foundation to help provide legal services in New York where they might not otherwise be available,” continues Minkowitz.

As the philanthropic arm of the New York State Bar Association, The New York Bar Foundation allocated over $580,000 in grants to 99 programs across New York State in early 2016. “While each of the 13 Judicial Districts received at least one grant there is still tremendous need for legal services across the state,” adds Wachtler. “We are hopeful that firms throughout the state will follow Sullivan & Cromwell’s lead and help us reach our goal of doubling our grant program in the coming year to provide legal services to those in need.”

To learn more about The Foundation and how you can support its charitable programs, go to www.tnybf.org, phone 518-487-5651 or email nybarfoundation@tnybf.org.

The Foundation Remembers Fellows

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The Foundation Remembers Fellows

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for community youth. Girls and boys, who have committed an offense no greater than a misdemeanor, are helped by early intervention and education and learn to appreciate the justice system and the law through a Youth Court experience.

The MacCrate Fund to Preserve the Core Values of the Legal Profession

The MacCrate Fund was established by the Board of Directors of The Foundation in honor of former Foundation president, Robert MacCrate, when it conferred its inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award on him in February 2008. Mr. MacCrate was first elected to The Foundation’s Board of Directors in 1972 and served as president from August 1972 to July 1973 and again from 1976 to 1991. During his tenure he advanced the objectives of The Foundation to improve the justice system, facilitate the delivery of legal services, increase public understanding of the law, and enhance professional competence and ethics. He was responsible for overseeing the building renovation and period restoration of 5 and 6 Elk Street in Albany, New York (now part of the New York State Bar Center) and for spearheading the fundraising of $6.8 million for the Bar Center’s expansion project.

“The Foundation is appreciative of the funds and what they have enabled us to do as an organization,” continues Gross. “Because of their namesakes and the generosity of our donors we have been able to assist hundreds of people in need.”

Around the corner. Around the state.
The New York Bar Foundation Awards More than $580,000 in Charitable And Educational Grants

Ninety-nine nonprofit programs across New York have received grants totaling more than $580,000 from The New York Bar Foundation this year.

“Contributions enabled us to provide at least one grant to each Judicial District across New York State,” notes Lucia Whisenand, who chairs the Grant Committee. “Unfortunately, there is still significant need for resources to provide legal representation to the underserved.”

Many of the organizations funded by The Foundation provide essential legal services to low-income individuals. “They impact quality-of-life issues, such as senior homelessness prevention, human trafficking, immigration, veterans programs, wage justice, re-entry and domestic violence,” explains John H. Gross, president of The Foundation.

“Programs supporting children and teens include those focusing on children with disabilities, teen dating violence, child sexual abuse and exploitation, transitioning from foster care, broken adoptions, and youth courts,” Whisenand states.

Funding for the grants comes from the generous contributions to The Foundation by lawyers, law firms, corporations and others. “The collective impact of The Foundation’s donors complements local organizational efforts,” explains Whisenand.

“The legal assistance made possible by the grants is often life-changing for the recipients and their families,” adds Gross. “Having a voice that is heard makes an impact on their present and their future. As attorneys, we need to be proactive in supporting The Foundation and its grant program.”

Grantees include:

First Judicial District (Manhattan):
Advocates for Children of New York; Advocates for Justice (AJLJ); Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF); Boys and Girls Republic; Brennan Center for Justice; Catholic Charities Community Services; Center for Family Representation (CFR); Community Service Society of New York; Correctional Association of New York; Court Appointed Special Advocates, Inc. (CASA) – NYC; Gay Men’s Health Crisis; Goddard Riverside Community Center; Housing Conservation Cooperatives, Inc. (HCC); Human Rights First; inMotion Inc.; LatinoJustice PRLDEF; Lawyers Alliance for Human Rights; Human Rights First; inMotion Inc.; Legal Services Corporation; Partnership for the Homeless; Pro Bono Net, Inc.; Safe Horizon, Inc.; Sakhi for South Asian Women; The Door - A Center of Alternatives, Inc.; The Legal Aid Society; UnLocal, Inc.; Urban Justice Center; Volunteers of Legal Service (VOLS); Youth Represent.

Second Judicial District (Kings County):
CAMBA, Inc.; Catholic Migration Services, Inc.; Center for Court Innovation/Fund for the City of New York/Brownsville Youth Court, Center for Court Innovation/Fund for the City of New York/Red Hook Youth Court; Puerto Rican Bar Association and PRBA Scholarship Fund, Inc.; The Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc.; The Children’s Law Center.

Third Judicial District (Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Sullivan, Ulster counties):
Capital District Women’s Bar Association (CDWBA); Court Appointed Special Advocates of Ulster County; Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York (LASNNY); New York State Defenders Association, Inc.; NYSBA Committee on Courts of Appellate Jurisdiction; NYSBA Committee on Diversity; NYSBA Law, Youth & Citizenship Program; Prisoners’ Legal Services of New York; United Tenants of Albany, Inc.

Fourth Judicial District (Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Montgomery, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, Washington counties):
The Center for Community Justice, Inc.

Fifth Judicial District (Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego counties):
Frank H. Hiscock Legal Aid Society; Youth Court Jefferson County.

Sixth Judicial District (Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Madison, Otsego, Schuyler, Tioga, Tompkins counties):
Horseheads Family Resource Center

Seventh Judicial District (Cayuga, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Yates counties):
Empire Justice Center (formerly Greater Upstate Law Project (GULP)); Hillside Children’s Foundation; Legal Aid Society of Rochester, Inc.; Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc.; Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Inc.; Monroe County Bar Center for Education; The Center for Youth Services, Inc.; Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County (VLSPI); Worker Justice Center of New York, Inc.

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Charitable and Educational Grants
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Eighth Judicial District (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming counties):
Family Justice Center of Erie County; Genesee County CASA for Children; Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, Inc.; Legal Services for the Elderly, Disabled or Disadvantaged of Western New York, Inc.; Mental Health Association of Erie County; Veterans One-stop Center of WNY, Inc.; Western New York Law Center, Inc.; Wyoming County Youth Bureau.

Ninth Judicial District (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Westchester counties):
Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (formerly Westchester/Putnam Legal Services); Mental Health Association of Westchester, Inc.; My Sisters’ Place, Inc.; Pace Women’s Justice Center.

Tenth Judicial District (Nassau, Suffolk counties):

Eleventh Judicial District (Queens County):
Center for Court Innovation/Fund for the City of New York/Queens Youth Court; Center for Integration and Advancement of New Americans, Inc. (CIANA); Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement House.

Twelfth Judicial District (Bronx County):
BronxWorks; MinKwon Center for Community Action (formerly YKASEC); Part of the Solution; The Bronx Defenders; Thurgood Marshall Junior Mock Trial Program, Inc.

Thirteenth Judicial District (Richmond County):
Richmond County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Inc.

2016 Grant Distribution

11% Increasing public understanding of the law
70% Facilitating the delivery of legal services
19% Improving the justice system and the law
Welcome New Fellows

The following Fellows have been elected by The Foundation Board of Directors for 2016 and have accepted this distinguished honor. Congratulations!

First Judicial District
Anta Cisse-Green of New York (Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP)
Roberta Kaplan of New York (Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison)
Peter Neger of New York (Morgan Lewis Bockius LLP)
Andrew Scherer of New York (Debevoise & Plimpton LLP)

Second Judicial District
Domenick Napoletano of Brooklyn (Napoletano Law)

Third Judicial District
Erica Hines of Albany (Heslin Rothenberg Farley & Mesiti PC)**
Marne Onderdonk of Albany (Albany County Family Court)
Sandra Rivera of Albany (Law Office of Sandra Rivera, PLLC)

Fourth Judicial District
Nancy Sciocchetti of Saratoga Springs (O’Connell & Aronowitz PC)

Fifth Judicial District
Hon. Robert F. Julian of Utica (Robert F. Julian P.C.)
Jean Marie Westlake of Syracuse (DeFrancisco & Falgiatano Law Firm)

Seventh Judicial District
Keith McCafferty of Geneva (Legal Assistance of Western NY, Inc.)
Steven Modica of Rochester (Modica & Associates)*

Eighth Judicial District
Hon. E. Jeanette Ogden of Buffalo (N.Y.S. Supreme Court)

Tenth Judicial District
Carole A. Burns of Rocky Point (Carole A. Burns, Esq.)***
Donna England of Centerreach (England & England PC)
Peter Mancuso of North Bellmore (Nassau County District Attorney)
Scott McBride of Riverhead (Suffolk County Surrogate’s Court)

Eleventh Judicial District
Richard M. Gutierrez of Forest Hills (Richard Gutierrez Law)

*Joined as a Life Fellow
**Joined in the Maryann Saccomando Freedman Circle of Giving
***Joined in the Benjamin N. Cardozo Circle of Giving

Past recipients include Maryann Saccomando Freedman of Buffalo, Robert MacCrate of New York (Robert MacCrate of New York) and Justin L. Vigdor of Rochester. All served as president of The New York Bar Foundation and the New York State Bar Association.

The Foundation’s Outstanding Firm Leadership Award was presented to Meyer, Suozzi, English & Klein, P.C. The firm or organization with a record of meaningful contributions and support of the efforts and mission of The New York Bar Foundation. “The Foundation presents this outstanding Firm Leadership award in recognition of the meaningful contributions Meyer Suozzi English and Klein have made to The Foundation through the scholarship program,” states Gross. “This support aligns with our focus of helping to enrich the legal profession by offering opportunities to students to enhance their legal career path.”

The 2016 Judge Bernard S. Meyer Scholarship was established in 2004 by the law firm, Meyer, Suozzi, English & Klein, P.C. The scholarship is awarded to a second year law school student who excels in legal writing and advocacy skills. Previous winners of this scholarship have gone on to hold positions at law firms such as Cravath and Cadwalader, and as in-house counsel at organizations including Cancer Genetics, Inc. and NY Arc.

Meyer Suozzi English & Klein have supported 10 of these $5,000 scholarships in honor of the Honorable Bernard S. Meyer.
Section Gifts Assist Students and Foundation Grant Program

Through the Sections of the New York State Bar Association, over $88,000 in fellowships and scholarships have been allocated for the 2016 year to 18 students. These gifts are notable in that they provide invaluable practical experience to law students. NYSBA Section gifts make a positive impact on these programs and can impact the overall grant program as well.

Through the generosity of the NYSBA General Practice Section, $25,000 was allocated toward pro bono initiatives via the 2016 grant program. “We believe that this is a productive use of funds in promoting pro bono legal efforts by general practice attorneys across the State,” states Chair of the General Practice Law Section, Emily F. Franchina. “Partnering with The Foundation to assist in fulfilling this need is a good way to help make a difference.”

One recipient, the Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc. will use their grant for their Veteran’s Pro Bono Project; a new and innovative project to help veterans file fully developed claims for VA disability benefits, and to assist with other VA benefits issues, such as military discharge upgrades. The project is innovative in that it is based at the VA Medical Center in Canandaigua where veterans can consult with their pro bono attorneys at the same location where they receive other veterans services. “The project uses Rochester based volunteer attorneys to serve a rural veteran population who live in counties with a significantly smaller bar and, consequently, fewer pro bono attorneys available,” states Managing Attorney Keith McCafferty. “The money we received from The Foundation will allow us to continue to develop this much needed project.”

Additional organizations assisted through the grant program via the General Practice Law Section support include:

• Advocates for Children of New York for their Assistance for Children with Disabilities Program, New York
• Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement House for Providing Free Legal Benefit Services to Low-Income Immigrants, Long Island City
• Lawyers Alliance for New York for Pro Bono Legal Services for Economic Development Nonprofit Organizations, New York
• Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc. for their Veteran’s Pro Bono Project, Geneva
• The Children’s Law Center for their Broken Adoptions Subsidy Mediation Project, Brooklyn
• Human Rights First for their Refugee Representation Project of New York, New York

Recipients of fellowships and scholarships include:

Joel K. Asarch Section on Elder Law and Special Needs Scholarship
• Julie Gilgoff, CUNY School of Law

Judge Bernard S. Meyer Scholarship
• Loraine Jelinek, Albany Law School

The Real Property Law Section Melvyn Mitzner Scholarship
• Nicholas Zapp, Albany Law School

The Real Property Law Section Lorraine Power Tharp Scholarship
• David Ullman, Columbia Law School

Antitrust Law Section Fellowship
• Ken Edelson, Fordham University School of Law
• Michael Joseph Perez, CUNY School of Law

The Honorable Charles L. Brieant, Jr. Fellowship
• Andrew J. Citron, Brooklyn Law School

Commercial and Federal Litigation Section Fellowship
• Simone Isaac, Hofstra University School of Law

The Corporate Counsel Section Fellowship
• George Ocasio, Syracuse University College of Law

Health Law Section Fellowship
• Omar Mustafa, Brooklyn Law School
• Amira Privott-Yeiser, Fordham University School of Law

• Brian Miguel Salazar, Yeshiva University Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

The Intellectual Property Law Section Miriam Maccoby Netter Fellowship
• Candy Koh, Fordham University School of Law

The Trusts and Estates Law Section Fellowship
• Matthew Eaves, State University of New York at Buffalo
• Benjamin Lin, Hofstra University School of Law
• Jonathan Moberg, Albany Law School

Congratulations!

Foundation Board Member, Carla Palumbo, presents a grant check to the Legal Assistance of Western New York Executive Director, C. Kenneth Perri. Also in photo l to r are: Staff paralegal Tami Sprague, Staff Attorney Deirdresha Wint, Staff Attorney Gavin Reynolds, AmeriCorps Paralegal Kristen Scheib, Supervising Attorney Kate Woods, Staff Paralegal Bruce Stahl, Palumbo, Perri, Managing Attorney Keith McCafferty, Administrator Ellen Pfeif, and Equal Justice Works Fellow Melissa Molfetas.
Foundation Grant Check Presentations

Your gift has a ripple effect. By making a donation to The Foundation you create a ripple of hope, offering someone the opportunity for legal assistance to make their voice heard. You make a ripple of hope to their family and children, creating change for future generations. Your gift makes a larger ripple of financial impact as it is added to other gifts received, collectively assisting those that benefit from legal services and the grant program.

Because of you, The Foundation is able to provide grants across New York State. Foundation Board members and Fellows made 43 presentations to grant recipients, giving them an opportunity to hear about the difference the grants make to the organizations and in the lives of the people that they serve.

Thank you for making a difference through The Foundation.

Foundation Board member David M. Schraver presents a grant check to attorneys for the Wage Justice Project Elizabeth Koo and Elizabeth Nicolas. The grant, presented to the Empire Justice Center, Rochester, NY, will be used to help support their Wage Justice program. “This grant from The New York Bar Foundation will allow our attorneys to continue to address the growing wage theft epidemic by empowering low-wage and immigrant workers through community organizing and education, impact litigation, and bottom-up policy reform,” stated Anne Erickson, President and CEO of Empire Justice Center. “We appreciate The Foundation’s continued support for critical access to justice programs across New York State.”

Foundation Fellow Chair of the Eleventh Judicial District David L. Cohen presents a grant check to CIANA Founder and CEO, Emria Habiby Browne. Also in the photo l to r are: Devon Stein (Americorps VISTA), Browne, Marianne Scharf (Program Manager), Emily Levitt (Volunteer ESL Instructor).

A grant was presented by Foundation Fellow Chair of the Eleventh Judicial District David L. Cohen to the Center for the Integration and Advancement of New Americans (CIANA), Astoria, NY. The grant will be used to support their Legal Immigration Services Program. The overarching goal is to help combat poverty, and provide a continuum of services that will increase the self-sufficiency of new immigrants and empower emerging immigrant communities.
Foundation Board member Sheila Gaddis presents a grant award and certificate to Center for Youth Executive Director Elaine Spaul and youth Board of Directors Adrianna Lester (far left) and Georgia Kerkezis (far right).

The grant presented to The Center for Youth, Rochester, NY will be used to support their Rochester Teen Court, a peer sentencing program.

“For many years and through the support of the New York Bar Foundation, Teen Court has prevented young people from reoffending while engaging teen volunteers in the judicial process,” said Elaine Spaull, Executive Director of The Center for Youth. “Teen Court is essential to the Rochester community, and we could not deliver this program without the generosity and commitment from our funding partners.”

Foundation Board member Roger Maldonado presents a grant check to Marisa Gold, Staff Attorney, Lawyers For Children’s Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation Project and Karen J. Freedman, executive director, Lawyers For Children.

The grant presented to Lawyers for Children, New York, NY will be used to support their Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation Project. The project provides integrated social work and legal services to children in foster care who have faced sexual trauma, including children who have been the victims of sex trafficking. According to Lawyers For Children’s Executive Director Karen J. Freedman, “This generous grant from The New York Bar Foundation will help us sustain the critical work we are doing to protect and support some of the most vulnerable youth in New York City. Thanks to your generosity, Lawyers For Children will be there to help our clients find the safety and love that all children deserve. We are very grateful for your support!”

Foundation Board member Martin Minkowitz presents a grant check to The Children’s Law Center (CLC). Left to right are: Stephen Rinehart, Esq., president of CLC, Judi Kramer, Esq., CLC Attorney, Minkowitz, Karen Simmons, Esq., CLC executive director, Brenda Whitfield, CLC caseworker, and Tanisha McKnight, Esq., CLC director of paralegal and volunteer services.

The grant, presented to The Children’s Law Center, Brooklyn, NY, will be used to support their The Broken Adoptions Project that is part of CLC’s Reflective Advocacy Practice.

Karen Simmons, CLC’s Executive Director stated, “Children in foster care are among the most vulnerable youth in the system. At CLC, we know that a child’s placement requires careful oversight to ensure that foster children do not end up in a “broken adoption.” The grant from The Foundation will help ensure that youth impacted by the loss of an adoptive connection will have their voice heard in a court or non-court proceeding that impacts them.”
Making An Impact Around The Corner

By James R. Barnes, Board Member of The New York Bar Foundation

Lawyers caring. Lawyers sharing. Around the corner. Around the state. This motto was adopted by The New York Bar Foundation to personalize the organization’s goals.

As a Foundation director and a member of its grants committee, I recently had an experience that truly epitomizes these words.

Each year, Foundation directors make it a priority to meet grant recipients and hand-deliver their grants when possible. I have been fortunate to meet great people working for excellent causes. The recipients welcome us with open arms, sincerely appreciative of the assistance that our grants provide.

As an attorney practicing in Albany, I typically volunteer to meet with Capital Region grant recipients.

I recently visited United Tenants of Albany (UTA), a first-time Foundation grant recipient. For more than four decades, this community-based, nonprofit organization has served tenants in Albany and neighborhoods throughout the Capital District. On the most fundamental level, it seeks to protect tenants’ rights for safe, decent and affordable housing.

There are few things more important to individuals and families than the place called home. For too many New Yorkers, affordable housing is an unattainable dream. For many others, poor housing conditions negatively affect their quality of life. It takes advocacy to address these concerns. Thankfully, there are organizations like UTA, whose mission is to serve members of our community, one at a time, day after day.

The entrance to the basement UTA office sits in the heart of downtown Albany on Clinton Avenue. I was greeted by Sandy LeVan, who has been with the organization for more than 20 years. As we introduced ourselves, it was easy to witness Sandy’s passion for helping clients in need. Many people know Sandy as the “Tenant Lady,” a name that stems from her efforts to mediate landlord/tenant issues in local courts. Countless tenants have benefitted from her efforts to find solutions to otherwise hopeless circumstances.

Sandy was joined by Erin Reale, another UTA staff member. We discussed the issues facing organizations like UTA. Sandy explained that the demand for legal services for housing cases exceeds the UTA’s resources, and in a perfect world, there would be enough funding to hire another professional to take more cases. I know that the same is true of countless organizations providing legal services throughout our state.

Sandy and Erin introduced me to Roger Markovics. He and his wife Maria founded UTA. Providing housing services to low-income people in the Albany area has been their life’s work. They have been inspired by people who, struggling to keep their own families housed, get involved in efforts to make housing better for all people. In this way, housing becomes a tipping point in our communities. Housing problems often lead to other problems. Housing solutions have the opposite effect.

As lawyers, we are committed to justice. That commitment can take many forms. In any form though, it starts on a case-by-case basis. One individual served, leads to the next. A life changed can impact the entire community.

Until The Foundation’s grant committee considered its application, I honestly can say that I had not heard of United Tenants of Albany. I left my meeting with Sandy, Erin and Roger transformed by the life-changing work that a local charity is doing in my community.

All I had to do was look around the corner.

“The Bar Foundation has made it a focus this year to seek contributions for legal services in areas of human trafficking, immigration, domestic violence, homelessness prevention, veterans’ access to services, and reentry/post-incarceration. With housing being a universal component of everyday life, the work of the UTA, and the clients it serves, touches each of these issues.”

James R. Barnes
The New York Bar Foundation is pleased to welcome two new members to its Board of Directors. Hermes Fernandez and David M. Schraver began their first 3-year term on June 1.

“I welcome these new members of the Board,” states Foundation Board President, John H. Gross. “I look forward to working with them and adding their expertise to our leadership team.”

Hermes Fernandez is a member of Bond, Schoeneck & King, PLLC. He is co-chair of the firm’s Health Practice Group. He concentrates his practice in health law, administrative and regulatory law, related litigation and governmental representation.

A 25-year member of the State Bar, Fernandez previously served as Vice President for the Third Judicial District, a member-at-large on the Executive Committee and was a member of the House of Delegates for eight years. He is chair of the Committee on Legislative Policy, and has served on many other committees. He is currently Treasurer of the Health Law Section and a member of the Committee on State Constitutional Convention, the Nominating Committee, and the Judicial Screening Committee. Fernandez graduated from LeMoyne College and earned his law degree from Syracuse University College of Law.

“This is a double honor. I am pleased to have a chance to work with the distinguished lawyers who serve on the Board of The Foundation and I am pleased to join them in the important work of supporting the fair administration of justice.”

David M. Schraver is of counsel to the law firm Nixon Peabody LLP in Rochester. He is a long-time member of the New York State Bar Association and served as President in 2013-2014. He has served on many committees including the Executive Committee (member-at-large and Vice President for the Seventh Judicial District), Finance Committee (chair 2007-2012), and President’s Committee on Access to Justice (co-chair 2012-2013). He is a member of the House of Delegates, Committee on Standards of Attorney Conduct and Commercial and Federal Litigation Section, and chairs the Nominating Committee.

He is member of the ABA House of Delegates and member of its Litigation Section. He also is a past president of the Monroe County Bar Association and the Metropolitan Bar Caucus of the National Conference of Bar Presidents. He has served on the boards of a number of community organizations in the Rochester area.

Schraver is a graduate of Harvard University and the University of Michigan Law School. After law school, Schraver was on active duty in the United States Navy Judge Advocate General’s Corps (JAG).

“As the charitable arm of the New York State Bar Association, The New York Bar Foundation supports its educational programs as well as other organizations around the State that provide access to justice, improve the legal system and promote the rule of law. I am pleased to join in this important work as a member of the Board.”

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“There are no words to describe all the gratefulness I have towards you. Your interest, support and dedication have been the keys for my case to be successful. God bless you, your family and your good heart. What you did for me will never be forgotten by me and the rest of my family. Once again, thank you.” MSP Client

This is but one example of the many successes donors make possible. With your generous grant, My Sisters’ Place will continue to support the victims of domestic violence and human trafficking in their journey to independence and self-sufficiency. Thank you for caring.

My Sisters’ Place, White Plains

Thank you for The New York Bar Foundation’s recent grant to the “Bridge the Gap” program at the Pace Women’s Justice Center...PWJC provides much-needed legal services to the community. With a dedicated staff of experienced attorneys who offer legal services and court representation for victims of domestic violence and elder abuse, PWJC is fostering the university’s commitment to justice and public service.

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Hillside Children’s Center, Rochester

Thank you very much for The New York Bar Foundation’s 2016 grant in support of the Law Project. We are grateful to have The Foundation’s support in providing free legal services to very low-income New Yorkers who are at risk of losing their homes.

Goddard Riverside Community Center, New York
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