

## WDNY Mediator Biographies (Buffalo)



**Florina Altshiler**

**Background:** Ms. Altshiler was born in Ukraine; raised and educated in New York City and moved to Buffalo by way of Alaska.

**Education:** Binghamton University B.A. Psychology 2002 (Rosenberg Scholar); St. John's University School of Law, J.D. 2005 (Merit Scholar)

**Work History:** Partner, Russo & Gould LLP, Aug. 2015 – Present

Litigate and defend complex, multi-party matters in a variety of civil liability practice areas including medical malpractice, labor law and general negligence from preparation of answer through final disposition including trial and appeals. Exclusive Legal Analyst, WKBW ABC 7 SCRIPPS Network Sept. 2015 – Present: Offer regular legal commentary regarding topics including high profile criminal matters, constitutional protections and civil matters of national significance. Arbitrator, Civil Court of the City of New York 2009 – Present: Part-time, summer quarter, binding arbitrator for matters of limited jurisdiction. Current teaching responsibilities include trial advocacy, torts and legal research and writing courses at Buffalo State College, Daemen College, and Columbia University in NYC. Previous work history includes work at Webster Szanyi with defense of Section 1983 excessive force and constitutional violation claims through trial; Assistant District Attorney, handling felony sexual assault and homicide cases on behalf of the State of Alaska; plaintiff's side trial litigation for Wingate Russotti & Shapiro in NYC; civil litigation defense work for Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker LLP in NYC; and medical malpractice defense work for NYC-based firms.

**Areas of Practice:** Medical Malpractice; Civil Rights; Torts; Commercial Litigation; General Litigation; Criminal Defense

**Professional Achievements:** Ms. Altshiler is a frequent author and lecturer on topics including constitutional law, civil litigation, trial technique and criminal law across the country including presentations to the Utah Defense Lawyers; Indiana State Prosecutors; Kentucky Attorney General's Office; NYS Attorney General's Office; NITA; DRI; DTLA; Erie County Institute of Law; Lawline; and Clearlaw among others. Her awards include: 2017, 2018 and 2019 Super Lawyers New York Rising Star; Above the Law's Top 20 Women Faculty of 2016 and 2021; Avvo 10.0 Rating; State Director, Women's Bar Assoc. of the State of NY, Western NY Chapter; Journey's End Refugee Services, Board Member, Jan. 2017 – 2020; Crisis Services, Buffalo, NY Board Member, Aug. 2017 – 2020; St. John's School of Law, Alumni Assoc. WNY Chapter President, Dec. 2015 - Present; Binghamton University, State University of New York Harpur Law Council Steering Committee Appointee 2016 – Present; New York Legal Assistance Group, Associate Board Member, 2011 – 2016; Defense Research Institute (DRI) Member, 2016 – Present; Buffalo Claims Assoc. (BCA) Member, 2015 – Present; American Assoc. for Paralegal Education, Member, 2016 – Present; Erie County Bar Assoc., Member, 2014 – Present; DTLA Board 2017-Present.

**Personal Achievements:** Completed the 2009 NYC Marathon, 2010 NYC Marathon and 2010 Marine Corp. Marathon; former USA Luge competitor; National Ski Patrol in Alaska



**Hedwig M. Auletta**

**Background:** Born in New York City; lived in Florence Italy for several months; moved to Buffalo following graduation from Law School in 1986

**Education:** Marymount Manhattan College, BA, History and languages, magna cum laude 1974; Fordham University School of Law JD, cum laude, 1986

**Work History:** Confidential law clerk to Hon. Jon T. Elfvin: 1986-1988; Barclay Damon, LLP (formerly Damon Morey, LLP) 1988- 2018; Roach Brown McCarthy & Gruber 2019-Present.

**Areas of Practice:** Negligence; Labor Law 240; FDCPA

**Professional Achievements:** Best Lawyers in America, 2012

**Personal Achievements:** Board of Directors, American Red Cross, local chapter Trustee, Holy Spirit R.C. Church Volunteer reader, Niagara Frontier Radio Reading Service



**Mitchell J. Banas**

**Background:** North Tonawanda, New York (1960-present)

**Education:** Grove City College; SUNY College at Fredonia, B.A. 1982; SUNY Buffalo Law School, J.D. cum laude 1985

**Work History:** Jaeckle Fleischmann & Mugel LLP/Bond Schoeneck & King PLLC Commercial litigator 1985- Present

**Areas of Practice:** Commercial litigation; breach of contract; business torts; intellectual property; civil rights

**Professional Achievement:** Fellow, Litigation Counsel of America; Fellow, Trial Lawyer Honorary Society; Past President, Advocates Club of Western New York; Past Treasurer, Western New York Trial Lawyers Association; Buffalo First "Lawyers Who Mean Business"; Best Lawyers in America

**Personal Achievement:** Vice President of District Operations and Board Member; Greater Niagara Frontier Council Boy Scouts of America; Eagle Scout



**Michael A. Brady**

**Background:** Buffalo, NY

**Education:** Le Moyne College, B.S., 1970; Cornell University, J.D., cum laude, 1975

**Work History:** Michael A. Brady has devoted his legal practice exclusively to litigation and trial work. Before forming Hagerty & Brady in 1989, Mr. Brady was a law clerk to then Chief Judge John T. Curtin, WDNY (1975-77); a litigation associate at Hodgson Russ LLP (1977-79); an Assistant United States Attorney, WDNY (1979-83, ending as the Chief, Criminal Division); and as an associate and then a partner in the litigation department of Moot & Sprague (1983-89).

**Areas of Practice:** Mr. Brady's litigation practice has been widespread, including personal injury, insurance defense, construction law, environmental law, commercial law, employment disputes, legal malpractice and aviation law. He has tried complex cases in state and federal court on behalf of plaintiffs and defendants. Mr. Brady has been on the Mediation Panel since the commencement of the Western District of New York's Mediation Program in 2006. Mr. Brady has mediated hundreds of Federal Court lawsuits. These mediations have included wrongful death actions, commercial disputes, trademark litigation, admiralty disputes, construction disputes, personal injury actions, ERISA disputes, FDCPA actions and numerous other matters. In addition to his role as a Federal Court panel mediator, Mr. Brady is frequently requested to mediate State Court disputes in Buffalo and Rochester. He has also been engaged to arbitrate disputes both as single arbitrator and as a member of a panel.

**Professional Achievements:** On the occasion of the dedication of the new Federal Courthouse in Buffalo, on May 3, 2012, the judges of the Court recognized Mr. Brady with the Court's first Professionalism Award. The award recognized Mr. Brady's contributions to the Court's mediation program, his pro bono work at the Court, and his efforts in the community, specifically his 17-year involvement in the high school Mock Trial program. Mr. Brady was recognized by the Attorney General of the United States for his work in a series of bank fraud prosecutions in Federal Court in Buffalo. He was also selected by Judge Richard J. Arcara as a Special Prosecutor in federal court on a series of contempt citations. More recently, he has been recognized by various peer reviews including Best Lawyers in America, Super Lawyers and Business First's Who's Who in Law, Business First's Who's Who in Law, Legal Elite of WNY, Lawyer of the Year and 2022 Lawyers of Distinction by the New York Times and The National Law Journal. In 2019, Mr. Brady and his partner and son Daniel were awarded the Pro Bono Award by the Judges of the WDNY. He has long held the Martindale-Hubbell AV rating and is listed in the Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers.



**David G. Brock**

**Background:** Forty-eight years in the litigation of personal injury and insurance-related claims, including product liability, premises liability, professional liability and ethics (including medical and legal malpractice), municipal liability of police and fire departments, New York State claims counsel for a Northeast regional waste disposal company, local counsel for a global truck and highway equipment manufacturer. Twelve years as a member of the Appellate Division, Fourth Department, 8th District Attorney Grievance Committee (Chair, 2013-2014).

**Education:** Union College, Schenectady, NY, B.A., English, 1967; UB School of Law, J.D., 1972

**Work History:** Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, Staff Counsel, 1973-1977; Jaeckle Fleischmann & Mugel, LLP., Partner, 1977-2016; Kavinoky Cook LLP, Senior Counsel, 2016- 2019; The Coppola Firm, Senior Counsel, 2020-present; U.S.D.C., Western District of New York, Certified Mediator, 2006-present.

**Areas of Practice:** Personal injury; Legal and Medical Malpractice; Professional Responsibility & Ethics (Attorney discipline); Insurance coverage; Contractual liability; Product liability; Premises liability; General Litigation

**Professional Achievements:** Robert M. Kiebala Defense Trial Lawyer of the Year, 2010; Fourth Department, 8th District Attorney Grievance Committee (Chair, 2013-2014); Best Lawyer 2022 Lawyer of the Year – Personal Injury Litigation-Defendants.

**Personal Achievements:** Temple Beth Zion Brotherhood Maurice Tabor man of the Year Award, 2009 Temple Beth Zion Board of Trustees, President, 1995-1997 Planned Parenthood William B. Hoyt Advocacy for Choice Award, 2012 Park School of Buffalo Board of Trustees, President 2018-2020



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**Michelle Bullock**

**Background:** Raised in Western NY and resident of East Aurora, NY 1989 to present. I have had the pleasure of residing in Birmingham, AL and Roswell, GA from 1985-1989. I also spent my first year of law school at Capital University in Columbus, OH.

**Education:** Canisius College, B.A. 1993; SUNY Buffalo Law School J.D. 1996 (concentration in Real Estate Development).

**Work History:** Independent Contractor Erie County Law Dept. (intern 1991-93), Erie County District Attorney’s Office Sex Offender Unit (intern); Associate at Hall, Ricketts, Marky & Gurbacki 1999-2009; Law Office Michelle S. Bullock 2009 to present- currently Michelle S. Bullock Law & Mediation, PLLC.

**Areas of Practice:** Established Mediation practice since 2009 including areas of contract dispute, family matters, divorce matters and neighbor disputes; legal practice includes real estate, Court appointed Referee, estate planning, divorce, family, collaborative divorce, custody, adoption, Qualified Domestic Relations Orders, representing children as Attorney for the Child in Erie and Genesee Counties; panel mediator in Erie County Family Court. Previous experience in bankruptcy, traffic/criminal matters and commercial litigation.

**Personal Achievements:** I took a few laps around the track at Watkins Glen with a group of enthusiastic Mini Cooper owners. More importantly, I am proud to have established a solo legal practice so many years ago and include mediation as the focus of that practice. Leaving a firm and successfully branching out on my own while raising my children as a single parent is my best personal achievement to date. Being selected to participate in the WDNY Mediator Panel is a very close second.



**Christen Civiletto**

**Background:** Ms. Civiletto is an attorney, ADR professional, author, and adjunct law school instructor who brings a variety of experiences to a multifaceted legal career. She has an extensive background litigating complex intellectual property matters in state and federal courts, spearheading mass toxic tort actions, and co-managing ADR programs for institutional clients. She is licensed to practice in New York and Georgia.

**Education:** VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL (Nashville, Tennessee) Doctor of Jurisprudence, May 1993 Recipient, Vanderbilt Appellate Advocacy Award (1991); STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO (Buffalo, New York) Bachelor of Arts, Political Science/Communication, May 1990 Summa Cum Laude.

**Work History:** ATTORNEY, PRIVATE PRACTICE (Buffalo, NY) June 2002-present. UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO LAW SCHOOL, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK (Buffalo, NY) Adjunct Faculty, 2003 to present (responsible for content and teaching of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) course, which focuses on the substantive and procedural aspects of ADR, including mediation, neutral evaluation, mini-trial, and arbitration, and also Environmental Law courses). MEDAILLE COLLEGE (Buffalo, NY) Adjunct Faculty, 2016-2020 (courses relating to Business Law and Business Ethics). ENTRUST ADR RESOURCES (Buffalo, NY) Executive Director/Mediator, 2003-2012. ALTMAN, KRITZER & LEVICK, P.C. (Atlanta, Georgia) Of Counsel Attorney, Litigation, 1997-2002. POWELL, GOLDSTEIN, FRAZER & MURPHY, LLP, n/k/a BRYAN CAVE LLP (Atlanta, Georgia) Associate Attorney, Litigation, 1993-1997.

**Areas of Practice:** Handled all phases of commercial litigation and arbitration matters in both federal and state courts, including negotiation, discovery, trial, and confirmation proceedings. Litigated complex intellectual property matters such as patent, trademark, trade dress, copyright, and trade-secret cases. Currently counsel of record for a series of toxic tort cases in Wheatfield/North Tonawanda, New York and Niagara Falls, New York.

**Professional Achievements:** Recipient, Ken Joyce Award for Excellence in Teaching (UB Law 2017) Certified Mediator, Resolution Resources Corporation (Atlanta, Georgia) 2001 Certified Arbitrator, Resolution Resources Corporation (Atlanta, Georgia) 2001 Ms. Civiletto recently established a faith-based conflict resolution organization with area attorneys and businesspersons. EntrustADR.org. She is a frequent guest panelist or lecturer on subjects relating to the professional development of new lawyers, and other law-school related subjects.

**Personal Achievements:** Ms. Civiletto has authored non-fiction books for law students and new lawyers, as well as a recent suspense novel. She has judged The Eric Hoffer Award for Book and Prose since 2014. She is an avid outdoorsperson.





**Robert B. Conklin**

**Background:** Born and raised in Buffalo, New York. Moved to Orchard Park in 1974.

**Education:** Canisius College BA (English); SUNY Buffalo Law School JD (cum laude), Law Review

**Work History:** Upon graduation, I clerked for US District Judge, John T. Curtin. Thereafter, I joined the litigation department of Hodgson, Russ, Andrews, Woods and Goodyear where I have continued my career, ultimately as a Senior Partner, President and General Counsel.

**Areas of Practice:** (1) Product Liability; (2) Employment Litigation; (3) Railroad Law; (4) Professional Responsibility and Legal Ethics; and (5) Complex Business Litigation.

**Professional Achievements:** Recognized in "commercial litigation" or business litigation by Best Lawyers in America (20 years) and Super Lawyers. Also recognized in the "Bet The Company" category of Best Lawyers in America. Also recognized by UB Law Review for Distinguished Service in 2005.

**Personal Achievements:** Formerly member of the Board of Directors of the Shea's Performing Arts Center, Buffalo, New York. Currently Emeritus Member of the UB Law School's Dean's Advisory Counsel.



**Lisa A. Coppola**

**Background:** Born and raised in Buffalo and Tonawanda, NY. Graduate of Kenmore East High School. Current residence is Snyder, NY.

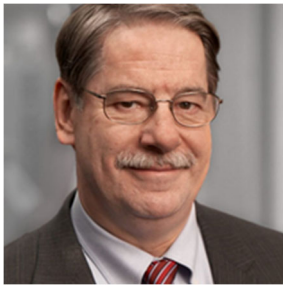
**Education:** Syracuse University, B.S magna cum laude; dual degrees in advertising and marketing; Syracuse University College of Law, J.D. summa cum laude

**Work History:** Prior to founding and managing The Coppola Firm, Lisa Coppola worked for a decade at Hodgson Russ where she was named the first female equity partner in its litigation department. She also spent a dozen years as a partner at then-named Rupp, Baase, Pfalzgraf, Cunningham & Coppola. Ms. Coppola began her career at Phillips Lytle and served for two years as law clerk to the Hon. H. Kenneth Schroeder, Jr., United States Magistrate Judge for the WDNY from 2000 to 2002.

**Areas of Practice:** Ms. Coppola's practice is broad and rewardingly diverse. She has been lead counsel in jury trials in New York State and federal courts, including trying tried high-exposure cases to verdict, and has argued appeals in various courts including the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. Her litigation practice has ranged from personal injury to employment-related claims, commercial/business litigation, and general litigation, representing both plaintiffs and defense throughout the years. She has litigated against government agencies and practiced before administrative tribunals and commercial arbitration panels. She has owned several law and non-law-related businesses and has a keen, practical sense for business challenges and strategy.

**Professional Achievements:** Syracuse University WNY Alumni of the Year (2019); Amherst Chamber of Commerce Woman-Owned Business of the Year (2019); Top 25 Women Upstate New York Super Lawyers (2019); Girl Scouts Women of Distinction (2017); Legal Elite Top 10 (Business First) (2016); NAWBO Buffalo Niagara Member of the Year (2016); NYS Bar Association Empire State Counsel Outstanding Pro Bono Volunteer (2015); Volunteer Lawyers Project Immigration Award (2014); Upstate New York Super Lawyers (2009-2019); Legal Elite (Business First), 2014, 2016-2019; Women of Influence (Business First) (2011); Women Who Mean Business (Business First) (2005).

**Personal Achievements:** Active board member of the National Association of Women Business Owners (Washington, D.C.), Roswell Park Alliance Ambassadors, and MedLaw Cancer Partnership of WNY. Former board trustee of Health Sciences Charter School. Proud single mother by choice to two accomplished and kind young women.



**James D. Donathen**

**Background:** Born and raised in the South Bend, Indiana area, moved to Buffalo after graduation from Notre Dame Law School in 1978, and since 2021 has split time between Lakewood Ranch, Florida and Buffalo.

**Education:** University of Notre Dame Law School, cum laude; University of Notre Dame, B.A., magna cum laude.

**Work History:** Confidential Law Clerk to Hon. John T. Elfvin, 1978-80; Staff Attorney, NLRB Division of Enforcement Litigation, 1980-84; Partner, Moot & Sprague, 1984-90; Partner, Phillips Lytle LLP, 1990-2020; Of Counsel, Phillips Lytle LLP, 2021-2023; Donathen ADR, LLC 2014 to present.

**Areas of Practice:** Practiced in the areas of labor and employment law and commercial litigation for over 40 years; provided proactive advice to clients and litigated a wide range of workplace matters, including Title VII, ADA, ADEA, FMLA, New York Human Rights Law, FLSA, New York Labor Law, ERISA, LMRDA, SOX, OSHA, covenants not to compete, theft of trade secrets and confidential information, breach of employment contracts, and other workplace fraud/disloyal employee disputes; spoke frequently on labor and employment topics; and conducted harassment and other internal investigations.

**Professional Achievements:** Selected to the Upstate New York Super Lawyers Top 50, listed in Chambers, USA, and recognized in The Best Lawyers in America as well as other prominent legal publications.

**Personal Achievements:** Served as Officer, HR Committee Chair and Board Member, YMCA Buffalo Niagara (20 years); Board Member, Resource Council of Western New York; and Vestry Member, Calvary Episcopal Church, Williamsville, New York. Now volunteers in the Attorney Emeritus Program (pro bono work) and plays trombone in the Manatee Community Concert Band, Bradenton, Florida.



**Kevin J. English**

**Background:** I was born in Buffalo, New York in 1959.

**Education:** I received my Bachelor of Arts degree from Canisius College in 1981, and my Juris Doctor Degree, cum laude, from Southwestern University in 1984.

**Work History:** Upon graduation I began my career with the New York City firm of Bigham Englar Jones & Houston where I was an associate in the Firm's Aviation Defense Litigation Department. In late 1986, I returned to Buffalo and joined Phillips Lytle LLP as an associate in the Firm's Litigation Group. In 1992, I was elected to partnership. I became the Practice Group Leader of the Firm's Litigation Practice Group in January 2008 and served in that role through 2017. On January 1, 2018, I became the Firm's Risk Management Partner.

**Areas of Practice:** My practice is a diversified one, which includes commercial and tort matters in both the state and federal courts. On the commercial side, I represent plaintiffs and defendants in commercial matters, including non-compete cases, closely held corporate business disputes, breach of contract cases, insurance disputes and construction cases. On the tort side, although the majority of my work is representing defendants in product liability matters, I have also successfully represented plaintiffs in negligence and products liability cases.

**Professional Achievements:** I have successfully tried or arbitrated complex commercial and tort cases to verdict or decision, in the Western District of New York, the Southern District of New York, and in New York Supreme Court, Counties of Niagara, Erie and New York. I have been ranked in Chambers USA: Leading Lawyer's for Business (2015-2019); Listed in The Best Lawyers in America; and Upstate New York Super Lawyers list (2007 - 2018).





**Robert J. Feldman**

**Background:** A native of Brooklyn, Mr. Feldman resides in Snyder, New York with his wife, Lisa. Together they have two children, Sarah, an appellate law clerk in Oregon, and Sam, studying to be an architect in Buffalo, and are the proud owners of Murphy, a prize-winning Labradoodle.

**Education:** Mr. Feldman graduated from Brooklyn Technical High School in 1969 and has a B.A. in History from the State University of New York at Binghamton, 1973. He is a 1976 magna cum laude graduate of University at Buffalo Law School where he received the Robert J. Connelly Trial Technique Award.

**Work History:** Since receiving his J.D. in 1976, Mr. Feldman has worked at the law firm of Gross Shuman Brizdle & Gilfillan, P.C. where he has been a shareholder since 1981. In addition to private practice, Mr. Feldman is trained as a mediator for the United States District Court for the Western District of New York ADR program.

**Areas of Practice:** Mr. Feldman's practice is devoted principally to the areas of corporate and business bankruptcy law and financial restructuring, commercial litigation and general business representation. He has extensive experience representing debtors, creditors and creditors' committees in Bankruptcy Court in business reorganizations under Chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code and in bankruptcy proceedings under Chapters 7, 11 and 13 of the United States Bankruptcy Code for individual business owners and professionals. His business and commercial litigation experience includes partnership and shareholder disputes, commercial litigation, construction disputes and banking litigation. He serves as general outside counsel to a number of businesses, including several in the healthcare industry. He has represented school districts, administrators, teachers and students in education law matters for more than 35 years.

**Professional Achievements:** Member of the American and New York State Bar Associations and the Bar Association of Erie County; past chair of the Commercial and Bankruptcy Committee of the Bar Association of Erie County; current member of the SUNY Buffalo School of Law Dean's Advisory Council; current member of Buffalo and Erie County Board of Directors Assigned Counsel Program; past member of UB Law School Alumni Association Board of Directors. He has lectured extensively in the areas of business litigation, business bankruptcy and education law for the New York State Bar Association, Bar Association of Erie County, Western New York Education Council, National Business Institute and Lorman Business Institute.

**Personal Achievements:** Board of Directors of United Way of Buffalo and Erie County; past Board member of Jewish Federation of Greater Buffalo.



**Jennifer L. Friedman**

**Background:** Born, raised and live in Lancaster, New York (with the exception of my years in Ithaca for law school). I am married with two children and we have traveled extensively throughout the country and world.

**Education:** Cornell Law School, 1997 cum laude; SUNY at Buffalo, 1994, summa cum laude

**Work History:** Schröder, Joseph & Associates, LLP 2016-present; McGee & Gelman 1997-2016

**Areas of Practice:** I am an experienced attorney with broad-based knowledge of many areas of law especially those relating to business entities. I have participated in numerous commercial, intellectual property and labor/employment mediations, arbitrations, settlement negotiations and litigation involving multimillion dollar claims and I provide mediation/alternative dispute resolution services. My practice is equally divided between plaintiff and defendant side work. I have been first and second chair in federal court litigation involving patent infringement, trademark, trade secret and breach of contract disputes including in New York, Illinois, Kentucky, Florida, Wyoming and Michigan. I have actively litigated commercial cases involving, among other things, breach of contract, corporate dissolution, trade secrets, minority shareholder issues, breach of covenants not to compete, breach of confidentiality agreements and breach of fiduciary duty. I have extensive experience litigating patent and trademark disputes in various federal courts around the country. I have authored numerous appellate briefs and have argued in the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. I represent employers on employment discrimination matters including age, sex, race, national origin and disability claims.

**Professional Achievements:** Recognized in Intellectual Property by Super Lawyers.

Obtained a successful jury verdict in a breach of contract action in the first jury trial verdict in the Supreme Court Erie County Commercial Division. Professional memberships: Western District of New York Local Rules Committee and Local Patent Rules Committee; Erie County Bar Association ADR, Intellectual Property, and Labor Law Committees.

**Personal Achievements:** Garden Walk Buffalo Niagara, Inc. - Member of Board of Directors - 2015-2018; Girl Scout Green Angel Volunteer Award – 2016; Girl Scout Leader - 2003-2017; Girl Scout Gold Award Mentor - 2014-present; Lancaster Garden Club, 2005-present, Past President - 2007-2009, Past Vice President - 2009-2011; Paws for Love Pet Therapy Volunteer - 2015-present; SPCA of Erie County, Foster Parent - 2006-present.



**Bernadette Gargano**

**Background:** Bernadette Gargano is a Western New York native, who currently resides in Snyder, New York, with her family.

**Education:** Cornell Law School, J.D., *cum laude*; UNC-Greensboro, M.A. in English Literature; University at Buffalo, B.A. in English and Women’s Studies (dual degree), *summa cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa

**Work History:** Ms. Gargano is currently the Vice Dean of Student Affairs and a Lecturer-in-Law at the University at Buffalo School of law, where she teaches advanced legal skills courses (federal and state practice), civil rights litigation, and civil rights seminars. Ms. Gargano also directs the legal writing program and the Access to Justice Hybrid Clinic, f/k/a the Pro Se Practicum, and the Pro Se Assistance Program on behalf of U.B. Law. Ms. Gargano has presented at international, national, and regional conferences on a variety of legal topics, and she serves on national and internal academic committees. She currently only practices on a *pro bono* basis. Preceding her academic career, Ms. Gargano practiced as a commercial and business litigator, including broad-based business counseling and advising. Her practice focused on the areas listed here, but she also has experience in estates and trusts, tax, and product liability. Prior to practice, Ms. Gargano served as a confidential law clerk to the Honorable William M. Skretny in the Western District of New York.

**Areas of Practice:** Civil Rights/Constitutional law; Commercial, complex contract, and business law  
Construction law; Education/Higher Education Law; Employment law; Intellectual Property

**Professional Achievements:** ECBA-VLP, Champion for Justice – Federal Court Award, 2018  
Jacob D. Hyman Award in recognition of significant contributions to excellence among students of color, 2018; Commencement Faculty Award in recognition of teaching excellence, 2016  
Women Lawyers of WNY, Lawyer of the Year, 2015; ECBA Justice Award, 2015, awarded to the Pro Se Practicum and ECBA-VLP as co-recipients; Association of Legal Writing Directors, Teaching Grant for Innovative Curriculum, 2012 & 2016

**Personal Achievements:** In service to undergraduate education at the University at Buffalo, Ms. Gargano developed and taught the University’s pilot program for “extended learning,” entitled “Lawyers as Agents of Social Change.” This week-long program was housed on the Chautauqua Institution and taught in collaboration with the Robert H. Jackson Center. The program focused on the Nuremberg Trials, the related development of international courts, and Justice Jackson’s roles as the first U.S. prosecutor at Nuremberg and an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. This program ran for three years and was the only undergraduate program of its kind.

**Lynn Gates**

**Background:** I grew up in Pasadena California and Vancouver Island Canada. I moved to New York City in 1970 and travelled in Europe, England and part of Africa in 1972. I moved to Buffalo in 1973 and have lived here ever since.

**Education:** Smith College, State University of Buffalo Law School 1976

**Work History:** Prior to graduating from law school I worked for a non-profit television station in Los Angeles and then worked as a producer at KABC, the local ABC affiliate. I also helped start an education program (BUSCA or Barrio Union for Supported Community Action) for Mexican Americans in the Los Angeles area.

**Areas of Practice:** Personal injury, products liability, medical malpractice, asbestos defense, arbitration and mediation.

**Professional Achievements:** Listed in Who's Who in the Arbitration/Mediation section of the Buffalo Law Journal and Business First for 5 years; Honoree Legal Elite by Buffalo Law Journal and Business First; Rated Super Lawyer for Alternative Dispute Resolution Upstate Division; Rated AV preeminent by Martindale-Hubbell

**Personal Achievements:** American Board of Trial Advocates (incoming president); Roswell Park Ambassadors Alliance 1996-present; Erie County Bar Association Board of Directors (past); Erie County Bar Foundation Board of Directors (past); Western New York Trial Lawyers Board of Directors (past); Judiciary Committee Chair (present); Buffalo Squash Rackets Association Board Member (present)



**Sharon Stern Gerstman**

**Background:** Born in Brooklyn, raised in Central New Jersey, in Western New York since 1980.

**Education:** Brown University, AB 1972; University of Pittsburgh, JD 1975; Yale Law School, LLM 1977

**Work History:** University of Toledo Law School, Visiting Professor, 1975-6; University of Missouri-Kansas City Law School, Assistant Professor, 1977-1980; Jaekle, Fleischmann & Mugel, 1980-1981; New York Supreme Court (confidential law clerk and matrimonial referee, 1981-2009; Court Attorney and Referee 2009-2010); Magavern, Magavern, Grimm LLP, Counsel 2010-present.

**Areas of Practice:** Civil Litigation; Appellate Advocacy; some Guardian work and some Estate work

**Professional Achievements:** President of the New York State Bar Association (2017-2018), Member of the American Bar Association Board of Governors (2000-2003), President of the Erie County Bar Foundation (2002-2003), Life Fellow of the American Bar Foundation, Life Fellow of the New York State Bar Foundation, Elected Member of the American Law Institute, many officer, director and chair positions within the American, New York State, and Erie County Bar Associations

**Personal Achievements:** Award of Merit by the Bar Association of Erie County, 2008; Many other awards presented by American, New York State and Erie County Bar Associations



**Krista Gottlieb**

**Background:** Ms. Gottlieb resides in Orchard Park, New York; Ms. Gottlieb was born in Prague Czechoslovakia, now Czech Republic. Because Czechoslovakia separated into two countries, amicably and without conflict or violence, she may be “genetically” or “nationality” predisposed to mediation. Upon “escaping” communism, and a one year “waiting period” in then West Germany to be eligible to enter the U.S. under the then existing political asylum quota, she came to the U.S. with her parents in her early teens. After a New York City area education (Barnard), an upstate law school hiatus (Albany Law) and her 5 initial years of law practice in NYC, she moved to Buffalo in 1986, built a home, a practice, and has become a great promoter of the benefits of mediation and living in Western New York (while travelling the world for fun!).

**Education:** BARNARD COLLEGE, B.A., 1976, Political Science – International Relations and Law Honors: Cum Laude, Dean’s List 1974-1976; ALBANY LAW SCHOOL – Juris Doctor, 1979, Moot Court Semi-finalist; Law Review Candidate; Conference Coordinator for International Law Symposium; Assistant to editor of “Practitioner’s Handbook”

**Work History:** KRISTA A. GOTTLIEB, ESQ. ADR CENTER & LAW OFFICE—Buffalo, NY 2014-Present. MATTAR, D’AGOSTINO & GOTTLIEB, LLP - Buffalo, NY 1986-2013; Partner and manager in full service general practice firm. Emphasis on wide ranging civil, employment, consumer, contractual, corporate and commercial negotiation, mediation, arbitration and all aspects of litigation, enforcement and resolution. Counseling and consulting on cost effective problem-solving strategies, dispute avoidance and resolution, in and outside of litigation. Intensive mediation practice. MORITT, WOLFELD & RESNICK - Garden City, NY 1983-1985; Full range general civil practice, notably in corporate, commercial and employment related fields. All aspects from pre-formation, through varied business transactions, substantial state and federal litigation, private and public offerings, selected securities work, contracts, real estate and bankruptcy; REICH, ROSEN, BARRISON & FELZEN - New York, NY 1982-1983, Civil practice with concentration on litigation, contracts, real estate, corporate and commercial matters; FISHER & FISHER - Brooklyn, NY 1979-1982 General civil, trial and appellate practice before courts, administrative agencies and in arbitration with firm headed by the leader of the Brooklyn Democratic organization and the former Chairman of NYC Metropolitan Transportation Authority and Urban Development Corporation allowing for extensive related experience; BALLON, STOLL & ITZLER - New York, NY Summers 1977 & 1978 General civil practice and bankruptcy; PROBATE COURT & PRIVATE PRACTITIONERS - Portland, ME - Summer 1975 Assistant at probate court; Independent legal researcher.

**Areas of Practice:** Ms. Gottlieb has served as arbitrator, mediator and facilitator in disputes and matters of varying complexity and subject matter, from simple interpersonal issues to multi million, multi-party, multi-state, multi-issue business and employment concerns, including multiple fortune 500 companies, as well as Federal, State and local departments and agencies. Substantive areas of experience include: Business, Corporate and Commercial Matters-Contracts, Corporate Structure/Dissolution, Partnership/stock agreements; Startup & organization, Shareholder Issues & Disputes, Business Acquisitions & Mergers, Fiduciary Duties Employment Related Issues, Institutional & Individual, Discrimination (Including Race, Religion, Gender, Age, Disability, Pregnancy, Sexual Orientation, FMLA, ADA and Retaliation), Sexual Harassment, Regulatory compliance, Employment and Severance Agreements, Restrictive Covenants and Agreements Not to Compete, Handbooks, Policies and Manuals, Hiring, Discipline, Termination and Separation IP-Patent, Trademark, and Trade Secrets; Public Interest & Public Sector; Civil Rights; Securities and Investment Claims; Educational Institutions; Health Care Institutions; Physicians Issues – Employment and Businesses; Insurance; Mass Disaster and Wrongful Death; Banking

**Professional Achievements:** 300+/- hours of Mediation Training taken over 18 +/- years; Mediation Teacher/Trainer, including for Cornell School ILR and 8th Judicial District Commercial Division; Member of various ADR mediation and arbitration panels, including WDNY Certified Federal Court Mediator, 8th Judicial District, AAA, EEOC, DHR, ECBA, BBB, FINRA; **ADR Related Honors:** "Who's Who in Law" Mediation/ADR, Buffalo Law Journal & Business First 2007 – Present; “Best Lawyers” in the New York Area - NY Magazine 2007; Present Mediation/ADR America’s Most Honored Professionals - 2011 – Present; “Best Lawyers” in America 2004 - Present - Including ADR - one of 4 in Buffalo Who is Who in American Lawyers 1990- Present United Who is Who - Empowering Executives & Professionals 2005 Present; Marquis Who’s Who - 2004 – Present; Madison Who’s Who - 2005 – Present ;Who’s Who in American Women - 2005 – Present; Who’s Who Among Executive and Professional Women - 2008 – Present

**Personal Achievements:** Pro Bono Mediation in various settings, including WDNY, 8th Judicial District, BBB, Family Court, Small Claims Courts, EEO Crimestoppers Board (1994-2000) Volunteer at mediation/conflict avoidance events.



**Garry M. Graber**

**Background:** Born in Buffalo New York grew up in the Town of Tonawanda.

**Education:** Elementary School k through 8: St. John the Baptist Elementary School Kenmore, NY;  
High School: Cardinal O’Hara High School – Tonawanda, NY;  
College: SUNY Buffalo; Law School: SUNY Buffalo Law School

**Work History:** Kavinoky Cook et. al. Buffalo, N.Y. 1979; Hodgson Russ LLP, Buffalo N.Y. 1980 to present; SUNY Buffalo Law School – Adjunct Professor 1991 – present

**Areas of Practice:** Commercial Litigation and transactions, disputes involving involving business, lending/credit and real/personal property transactions and land use, business divorces, foreclosures, landlord/tenant matters, construction law, bankruptcy, receiverships and trusteeships.

**Professional Achievements:** Past President, Director and Treasurer - Bar Association of Erie County, N.Y. Past President and Director - SUNY Buffalo Law School Alumni Association. Past President of the Erie County Bar Foundation. Buffalo Business First/Buffalo Law Journal's Legal Elite of Western New York. Best Lawyers Buffalo Lawyer of the Year. Upstate New York Super Lawyers and Best Lawyers in America. Top 50 Upstate New York Super Lawyers. Buffalo Business First's Who's Who in Law.

**Personal Achievements:** Past President - Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project. Director - Center for Elder Law and Justice. Director and Past President - Upstate N.Y. Turnaround Management Association. Director - MusicalFare. Inc. Director - World Trade Center Buffalo Niagara. Director - Risk Management Association – Buffalo Chapter. SUNY Buffalo Law School Alumni Award as Distinguished Alumni as a Private Practitioner. SUNY Buffalo Law School Award for Excellence in Teaching. Member - SUNY Buffalo Law School Dean’s Advisory Committee.



**James W. Gresens**

**Background:** Born in Rochester, New York, 1943; transferred to Buffalo in 1967 as a member of the New York State Police and stayed.

**Education:** J.D., State University of New York at Buffalo, *magna cum laude* (1973), Managing Editor of Buffalo Law Review; B.A., State University of New York at Buffalo, *magna cum laude* (1973), *Phi Beta Kappa* National Honor Society.

**Work History:** Duke Holzman Photiadis & Gresens LLP (2008-present); Gresens & Gillen LLP (1997-2007); Duke Holzman Yaeger & Photiadis, LLP (1995-1997); Saperston & Day, P.C. (1979-1984 and 1988-1995); Hodgson Russ LLP (1974-1976 and 1985-1988); Harris Beach & Wilcox (1977-1979); and U.S. Department of Justice, Organized Crime Strike Force (1976-1977); New York State Police (1966-1972); United States Marine Corps (1960-1965).

**Areas of Practice:** Business, Contracts, Construction, Corporate

**Professional Achievements:** Adjunct Professor of Law at the State University of New York at Buffalo (1986 to present); Arbitrator, American Arbitration Association (1985 to present); N.Y State General Building Contractors, Associate Member & Counsel (1985 to present); Construction Exchange of Buffalo & Western New York, Member Board of Governors (1990 to 2003); frequent writer and lecturer on matters concerning construction industry.

**Personal Achievements:** Served as board member of the Erie County Construction Exchange for over 25 years; received award for outstanding pro-bono work in the Federal District Court for the Western District of New York in 2012; provides tutoring and assistance to under-privileged students at St. Luke’s Mission of Mercy in Buffalo.





**Joseph M. Hanna**

**Background:** Joseph Hanna is a commercial litigator and legal adviser nationally recognized for his work in media and entertainment law, as well as for being a leading voice for diversity in the legal and business communities. Joe is the founder and chair of Goldberg Segalla’s Sports and Entertainment Practice Group, chair of its Retail and Hospitality Practice Group, editor of the Sports and Entertainment Law Insider blog, and chair of the firm’s Diversity Task Force. He is the founder and president of Bunkers in Baghdad, a nonprofit that collects and sends golf equipment to U.S. soldiers and veterans worldwide to aid in recreation and rehabilitation from injuries.

Joe dedicates his practice to serving the sports and entertainment, retail, hospitality, and commercial development industries. He represents national-league sports franchises, professional athletes, movie studios, and others in the sports and entertainment world on a wide range of high-value matters involving licensing, contracts, and day-to-day business management. Major retail and restaurant chains, global hotel and hospitality enterprises, shopping centers, property owners, and developers rely on Joe to find creative and cost-efficient resolutions to disputes with other parties, to represent them in commercial litigation, and to handle a broad array of legal and business challenges. An accomplished mediator, he is also a member of the International Institute for Conflict Prevention and Resolution’s Panels of Distinguished Neutrals, a group of global leaders in providing and promoting alternative dispute resolution.

Joe is widely recognized for his extensive work as an innovator, mentor, author, editor, and speaker on diversity and inclusion in the legal world. He has held diversity-related leadership positions at national organizations like DRI as well as the ABA, where he served for several years as chair of the Minority Trial Lawyer Committee and editor-in-chief of *Minority Trial Lawyer*. In 2014 Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD) selected Joe for their Fellows program; he now chairs the New York chapter for the LCLD Success in Law School Mentoring Program. He is also a mentor with New York Legal Education Opportunity (NY LEO), an organization designed to ensure a diverse legal community by promoting academic success in law school for individuals historically under-represented in the legal profession and administered through the New York State Judicial Institute.

In 2016, Joe participated in Harvard Law School’s Executive Education Program, an intensive accelerated program designed to enhance leadership development in law firm partners.

**Education:** Canisius College, M.S.A., summa cum laude, 2018; Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, M.P.A., Public and Nonprofit Management Concentration, Top 5% of Class, July 2014; State University of New York at Buffalo Law School, J.D., cum laude, 2005, State University of New York at Buffalo, B.A., Middle Eastern Politics and Cultural Affairs, summa cum laude, 2002; B.A., Political Science, Public Affairs Concentration, summa cum laude, 2002

**Work History:** Law Clerk, Texas Court of Appeals and Texas District Court

**Areas of Practice:** Sports and Entertainment; Retail and Hospitality; Corporate Services and Commercial Litigation; Higher Education

**Professional Achievements:** In 2015, Joe was the youngest honoree ever to be named Lawyer of the Year in the Bar Association of Erie County’s 130-year history, and multiple times he has ranked among the top 10 attorneys in Western New York in Business First’s annual Legal Elite. In 2014, Joe was one of just over 160 lawyers under 40 in the entire country to receive Law360’s Rising Star honor, and one of only five in the Media and Entertainment category, that year. Then, in 2017, the American Bar Association (ABA) placed Joe on its prestigious “On the Rise — Top 40 Young Lawyers” list, honoring him alongside only 39 others from a competitive crop of over 2,800 nominees nationwide. He has received accolades that include the Minority Corporate Counsel Association George B. Vashon Innovator Award, the New York State Bar Association Diversity Trailblazer Award, and the University at Buffalo George W. Thorn Award.

**Personal Achievements:** Bunkers in Baghdad, which Joe founded in 2008 and still runs as its president, has sent 10 million golf balls, over 700,000 clubs, and messages of thanks from “Bunkers Buddies” — students in 500 schools — to U.S. soldiers and veterans in 65 countries.



**Katie Nichols Harrod**

**Background:** Born in Buffalo, 1957 to parents of the Great Migration from South Carolina. Completed Mt. St. Joseph Academy High School in 3 years through Buffalo State College Early Admit Program. Traveled to Europe during Freshman Year High School.

**Education:** Graduated from Ivy League University of Pennsylvania with BA in Child Psychology, 1978; Juris Doctor from University of Maryland School of Law 1984.

**Work Experience:** Law Clerk with Baltimore State's Attorney's Office 1984 - 1986 Juvenile Division; Appointed Assistant State's Attorney 1986 - 1990, Child Support Division; Associate with Domestic Relations firm, Robert Ades & Associates 1990 - 1991. Opened Law Office as Sole Practitioner 1994 - Present. General Civil matters including Surrogate's Court, NYS Supreme Court, Erie County Family Court (Attorney for the Child-AFC, including numerous Mediation Sessions), Real Estate.

**Judicial Work Experience:** Judicial Hearing Officer for Buffalo City Small Claims Court 1998 – 2010; Hearing Officer for Buffalo Parking Violations Division 2002; Appointed Administrative Law Judge; 2004 - Present at Buffalo City Hall Adjudication Division (PT). Appointed Impartial Hearing Officer for NYS Dept of Education ACCESS-VR 2013 - Present.

**Professional Achievements:** Sworn-in to US Supreme Court 2009. Sworn-in to 2nd Circuit Federal Court and US District Court for Western District of NY 2011. Ran for Erie County Family Court Judge in 2015.

**Personal Achievements:** In 1990's, Founded 2 Inner-City, Church-Run Tutoring Programs for School-age Children. 2012-Present "Toys for Children on the Playground" with my Grandson, Xavier to Donate Toys during Summer months; Selected as City Shaper of the Year by Channel 2 News in 2018.



**Carol E. Heckman**

**Background:** With more than 40 years of experience as a trial lawyer and judge, Judge Heckman (Ret.) has an active practice as an arbitrator for the American Arbitration Association and conducts arbitrations in most major metropolitan areas with a particular concentration in New York City. In addition to arbitrations and mediations, Judge Heckman was recently selected as a Fellow to the College of Commercial Arbitrators, an exclusive group of commercial arbitrators representing the best in the United States. Judge Heckman also engages in litigation counseling and trial work for American Indian tribes and a group of business clients, providing representation in government investigations, complex commercial matters, taxation, and gaming. She has tried numerous cases as a lawyer, a judge, and an arbitrator in a broad range of disputes.

Judge Heckman served as a Magistrate Judge in the Western District of New York for eight years where she was selected to sit on the Federal Judicial Conference's Education Committee for Magistrate Judges and served as an Officer in the Federal Magistrate Judges Association. She has also served as a trial attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Buffalo, New York, and as a law clerk for Hon. John T. Curtin, former Chief Judge of the Western District of New York.

She has significant training and experience as a mediator and has trained federal judges in mediation techniques. She is admitted to both the Panel of Mediators and the Panel of Arbitrators of the American Arbitration Association, as well as the Western District of New York Panel of Mediators. Successful mediations include the entire range of federal court cases, including high stakes business disputes, employment disputes of all kinds, environmental claims, products liability and other tort claims, securities claims, patent claims, and §1983 claims.

Arbitration experience includes all aspects of executive compensation, complex commercial disputes, employment litigation, FLSA, non-compete agreements, construction cases, ERISA liability and several international cases. Judge Heckman is a frequent speaker and panelist at Bar Association meetings and at CLE programs across the state. She also has presented at AAA trainings and programs.

<p><b>Mary M. Helenbrook</b></p>	<p><b>Background:</b> A native of Western New York, currently residing in Williamsville, New York.</p> <p><b>Education:</b> State University of New York at Buffalo, Bachelor Degree, 1964.</p> <p><b>Work History:</b> Labor Mediator and Arbitrator with the New York State Mediation Board, 1985 - 1990. Supervising Labor Mediator of the New York State Employment Relations Board, 1990 - 2007. Currently in private practice arbitrating and mediating labor disputes.</p> <p><b>Areas of Specialty:</b> Mediating between labor unions and employers involved in collective bargaining for the purpose of resolving disputes to forestall labor problems and strikes. Mediating grievances arising under the collective bargaining agreement during the term of the agreement. Functioning in a quasi-judicial role as an arbitrator conducting evidentiary hearings and rendering dispositive opinions and awards on areas of contract interpretation and just cause discipline and discharge.</p> <p><b>Professional and Personal Achievements:</b> Mary has successfully mediated hundreds of disputes involving business, individuals, unions and not-for-profit agencies, involving a wide range of issues and industries, including a large number of employment issues such as sexual harassment, discrimination based on race and gender, and discipline/discharge cases. Mary was the first female Supervising Mediator of the State Employment Relations Board in Western New York. She served on the Executive Board of the Association of Labor Relations Agencies of the United States and Canada. She has been a guest lecturer at many of the area colleges and high schools as well as the University of Buffalo Law School. Her many professional affiliations include the Labor and Employment Relations Board and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service Panel of Arbitrators. She is also included on permanent panels of arbitrators for many businesses and unions. Her community service and volunteer activities include the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site and Millard Suburban Hospital.</p>



**Marilyn A. Hochfield**

**Background:** Ms. Hochfield is Counsel to Kavinoky Cook LLP. Her practice is concentrated primarily in appellate advocacy, mediation and all aspects of employment law. She is a certified mediator for the United States District Court, WDNY.

**Education:** Ms. Hochfield received her law degree magna cum laude from State University of New York at Buffalo and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Pennsylvania State University. She is admitted to practice in all New York Courts; United States Supreme Court; U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit; U.S. District Courts, Western, Southern, Eastern and Northern Districts of New York; and the U.S. Tax Court.

**Areas of Practice:** Ms. Hochfield is a member of Erie County, New York State and the Women's Bar Association of New York. She is former Chair of the Appellate Practice Committee and Human Rights Committee of the Erie County Bar Association, a member of the ADR Section of the N.Y.S. Bar Association, and a member of the Federal Court Practice, Labor Law, Appellate and Human Rights Committees of the Erie County Bar Association. <sup>SEP</sup>

**Professional Achievements:** Ms. Hochfield's honors and awards include Who's Who in the Law, Business First and Buffalo Law Journal, 2007, 2008 and 2009, for Appellate Practice; Outstanding Legal Service Award, Buffalo Citizens' Council on Human Relations; Outstanding Service Award, Buffalo Branch, N.A.A.C.P.; Human Relations Award, Citizens' Council on Human Relations; Faculty Award for Distinguished Achievement in Federal Taxation, SUNY at Buffalo Law School; and Commendation, Organization for Security & Cooperation in Europe for supervising elections in Bosnia pursuant to the Dayton Peace Accords. Ms. Hochfield has lectured at the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Law in a seminar on Law and Social Change and a seminar on Federal Practice. She has been a frequent lecturer in continuing legal education programs in employment law, appellate practice and civil rights.



**Kevin M. Hogan**

**Background:** I am a resident of Buffalo, NY; Born and raised in Albany, NY

**Education:** University of Connecticut, B.S. 1983 (Dual degree: Mechanical Engineering and Materials Sciences); Vermont Law School, J.D. 1991

**Work History:** General Electric Co., 1983-1988, Manufacturing Manager in Ohio, Massachusetts, and Vermont; U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, 1991-92, Confidential Law Clerk to Judge Richard Cardamone; Phillips Lytle LLP, 1992 – Present

**Areas of Practice:** My legal expertise extends to all aspects of environmental law and litigation of disputes involving environmental law, toxic torts, intellectual property disputes, and other matters involving commercial law.

**Professional Achievement:** Erie County Medical Center Corporation, Board of Directors, 2004-2016; Board Chair, 2012-2016.





**Hon. Barbara Howe (ret.)**

**Background:** Buffalo, New York, resident for 40 plus years

**Education:** University of Connecticut, BA with highest honors; Cornell University, MA and PhD, Sociology; University at Buffalo, JD

**Work History:** Assistant and Associate Professor with Tenure, Department of Sociology, University at Buffalo, 1974-1987; Buffalo City Court Judge, 1988 – 1991; NY State Supreme Court Judge, 1992 – 2003; NY State Surrogate Judge for Erie County, 2004-2017; Senior Counsel, Woods Oviatt Gilman LLP, 2018-2019.

**Areas of Practice:** During my 30 years as a NY State Judge, I presided over almost every type of case. Now, I am a Court Roster Mediator for Civil, and Surrogate’s Court for the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of the New York State Courts. I am on the Roster of Mediators/Neutrals for the U.S. District Court for the WDNY. From March 2018 through June 2019, I was Co-Administrator of the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program of the Diocese of Buffalo, NY. As a member of the WDNY Mediator Panel, I have experience mediating federal cases involving allegations of sexual and other types of discrimination in educational and employment settings.

**Professional Achievements:** Elected as Member of the American Law Institute, 2014; Recipient of Bar Association of Erie County Outstanding Jurist Award, 2017; Recipient of University at Buffalo Law School's Jaeckle Award, 2018; Elected as Member, Board of Directors, New York State Academy of Trial Lawyers, 2019.

**Personal Achievements:** Current Member of Board of Directors, SPCA Serving Erie County, NY.



**Brittany Jones**

**Background:** Brittany was born in Washington, D.C. She grew up in Connecticut, and she now resides in Erie County.

**Education:** Syracuse University College of Law, Juris Doctor; Syracuse University School of Information Studies, Master of Science in Telecommunications and Network Management; Emerson College, Bachelor of Science in Political Communication: Leadership, Politics, and Social Advocacy.

**Work History:** Brittany currently works at Mental Hygiene Legal Service (MHLS) in Buffalo, NY. MHLS offers legal representation, advice and assistance to persons residing in facilities for the mentally disabled concerning retention, release, care, and treatment. The facilities may be state, city, voluntary, or private, and may be community based or institutional. Before joining MHLS, Brittany worked in private practice at the law firm Webster Szanyi, LLP. While at Webster Szanyi, Brittany handled professional liability disputes, product liability litigation, commercial litigation, and personal injury matters. Before working in private practice, Brittany also clerked at the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Fourth Department in Rochester, New York.

**Areas of Practice:** Brittany has training and experience in the field of alternative dispute resolution. She has not only studied conflict resolution but has also had been trained as a mediator. She has served as a comediator and a sole mediator in primarily employment and civil rights matters. As a litigator, she has seen a variety of cases, including but not limited to civil rights matters, product liability matters, and personal injury matters.

**Professional Achievements:** Minority Bar Association of Western New York, President, 2019; Rochester Black Bar Association Excellence in Leadership Award, 2016; Syracuse University’s Chancellor’s Award for Public Engagement and Scholarship, 2014; Syracuse University College of Law’s Robert W. Miller Award for Excellence in Trial Advocacy, 2014.



**Dan D. Kohane**

**Background:** Practicing for 39 years, Tried scores of bodily injury and commercial lawsuits. Handled many hundreds of insurance disputes for both insurers and policyholders. Extensive mediation experience as advocate and mediator. Completed AAA Complex Coverage Neutral Evaluation training. Adjunct professor of Insurance Law at Buffalo Law School for 30 years. National coverage practice.

**Education:** SUNY New Paltz (BA, Political Science, magna cum laude, 1975); Buffalo Law School (JD, 1979)

**Work History:** Hurwitz & Fine, P.C., entire legal career.

**Areas of Practice:** Insurance coverage, commercial litigation, personal injury, some civil rights

**Professional Achievements:** Member, American Law Institute; Past President, Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel; Past Director, Defense Research Institute (DRI); Founding Fellow, Board of Regents, American College of Coverage Counsel; Foreign Legal Consultant, Permit No. 000241, Issued by Law Society of Upper Canada; Member, American Arbitration Association Complex Coverage Neutral Evaluation Panel

**Personal Achievements:** Lifetime Achievement Award for Service to the Organization and Legal Profession, Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel (2022), John E. Leach Memorial Award for Outstanding Service and Distinguished Contributions to the Legal Profession as a Member of the New York State Bar Association Torts, Insurance and Compensation Law Section (2013); Lawyer of the Year for Insurance Law, Best Lawyers in America (2013, 2017); "Top 10 Super Lawyers" in Upstate New York and "Super Lawyer" in Category of Insurance Coverage (2013, 2014); Best Lawyers in America (2009 – 2017) in categories of Insurance Law, Litigation - Insurance and Commercial Litigation; "Top 50 Super Lawyers" in Upstate New York and "Super Lawyer" in Category of Insurance Coverage (2007 – 2018) Law and Politics Magazine; Legal Elite of WNY (formerly known as Who's Who in Law) (2004 – 2018) Named one of "Top Ten Legal Elite" (2014) Buffalo Business First and Buffalo Law Journal; Listed in Euromoney Guide to the World's Leading Insurance and Reinsurance Lawyers; Service Award, DRI – The Voice of the Defense Bar (2008); DRI Leadership Award, Defense Research Institute (2002); Sarah G. Metzger Human Rights Award, Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Inc. (2000); Pro Bono Award for Litigation, Volunteer Lawyers Project (1993); The James Crawford Award for Outstanding Service to HOME in the Cause of Fair Housing, (1993).





**Lindy Korn**

**Background:** Williamsville, New York; Born in NYC - lived in Hicksville, NY. While growing up (which I am still doing) my family moved 17 times and I was always the "new" kid. We lived mostly on the east coast and for 2 years in Quebec. Graduated from high school at Amherst High School

**Education:** Boston University - B.A. in History; Ohio Northern University, School of Law - J.D. Senior Fulbright Fellow of American Forensic Association Former P/T ALJ for State Liquor Authority; Mediation Certifications - Cornell School of Industrial Relations, WNY and Harvard College Mediation and Negotiations Project Columnist for 3 local papers: Buffalo Law Journal , Daily Record and Jewish Review Consults on Workplace Issues and Risk Management Training Created and teach a Bridge Course at UB Law School – Sexual Harassment Mediation; Member of Sports Law & Recreation Association; Appointed by Gov. Mario Cuomo to sit as a Commissioner of Workers' Compensation

**Work History/Areas of Practice:** "Workplace Doctor" - The entire focus of my practice is Plaintiff Discrimination with an emphasis on collaboration and problem solving. Recent areas of focus include: retaliation of Plaintiff's complaints based on sex (same sex), race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age and pregnancy. Areas of Study: Forgiveness and apology in mediation: **Specialty:** Discrimination - state and federal forums Workers' Compensation; Sexual Harassment Mediation Disability Issues - access & service animal issues Transgender Issues Same Sex Issues Representation of artists and musicians in matters of discrimination Representation of veterans in matters of sexual harassment

**Professional/Personal Achievements:** Trailblazer Award: for early involvement with WDNM Mediation Program Keybridge Foundation Mediator: Issues of disability mediation Involved with issues of discrimination & domestic violence and connections between the two Speaker at February 2012 Sports Law Association in Greensboro: topic - "Come out of the closet to be shoved into a locker: Treatment of gay, lesbian and transgendered athletes on sports teams; Member of National Employment Lawyers Association, and NELA, NY Mother of 2 daughters - best work product, owner of basset hound, Homer.

**MISC.** Generate creative options for parties Emphasize comfort and respect when mediating Reality checking and reframing of positions as they develop is important Time and certainty are values discussed in mediation. Urge creative solutions/brainstorms in midst of conflict being mediated.



**Kenneth A. Manning**

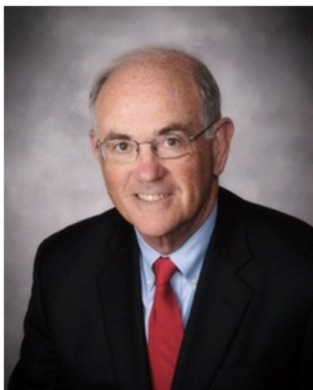
**Background:** Mr. Manning has experience in bet-the-company corporate and commercial litigation, including dissolution proceedings, employment termination disputes and controversies involving the sale of goods and services. In addition to personal injury and wrongful death claims involving products liability, workplace accidents, negligence and environmental exposure experience, Mr. Manning has prosecuted and defended class actions in both state and federal courts. Mr. Manning also has experience in challenges to governmental actions, including taxes and assessments, as well as actions for declaratory relief. Mr. Manning also concentrates his practice in the area of education law and is the leader of Phillips Lytle’s Education Practice Team.

**Education:** State University of New York at Buffalo Law School, J.D., 1977; State University of New York at Buffalo Engineering School, M.S., Electrical Engineering, 2009; State University of New York at Buffalo Engineering School, B.S., summa cum laude, 1974

**Work History:** Partner - Phillips Lytle LLP 1985-Present; Associate - Phillips Lytle LLP 1979-1984; Law Clerk - Hon. Reid Moule, Appellate Division, Fourth Department 1977-1979

**Areas of Practice:** Appellate; Class Action; Commercial Litigation (Breach of Contract, Business Torts, Consumer Finance Defense, Fraud/RICO, Shareholder/Member/Partnership Disputes, Workplace Fraud/Unfair Competition); Construction Litigation; Education; Government Operations; Insurance Coverage; Manufacturing; Personal Injury Defense Litigation (Workplace Accidents); Product Liability and Mass Tort Litigation (Chemical Exposure/Toxic Torts, Consumer Products); White Collar Criminal Defense & Government Investigations.

**Professional Achievements:** Lawyer of the Year Award, Bar Association of Erie County, 2017; Listed as a Leading Individual in Chambers USA: America’s Leading Lawyers for Business, 2016-2019; Selected for America’s Top 100 Attorneys® Lifetime Achievement, Upstate New York; Selected for America’s Top 100 Civil Defense Litigators®, Upstate New York, 2018; New York State Bar Association President’s Pro Bono Service Award, Eighth Judicial District 2008; Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent Rating; Listed in The Best Lawyers in America©; Named the Best Lawyers® Bet-the-Company Litigation “Lawyer of the Year” in Buffalo, 2015, 2017, 2019; Named the Best Lawyers® Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants “Lawyer of the Year” in Buffalo, 2016; Selected for the Upstate New York Super Lawyers® list, 2007-2018; Named Top 50 Lawyer, 2011; Listed in Legal Elite of WNY, Business First of Buffalo and Buffalo Law Journal, 2013, 2015-2018; University at Buffalo Law Alumni Association 2002 distinguished alumnus award for leadership by example as a private practitioner; NCCJ Brotherhood/Sisterhood award for outstanding leadership in promoting goodwill and understanding in our community, 2004; Honoree of the New York State Bar Association Empire State Counsel® Program for Pro Bono Work, 2011-2013, 2016; Honored for participation in the Joint Seminar Program of the Appellate Divisions for the First & Second Judicial Departments, 2012; Dress For Success Buffalo, Vanguard Award.



**Joseph V. McCarthy**

**Background:** Currently resides in Orchard Park, New York; Lived in Buffalo except for college and law school

**Education:** St. Bonaventure University - Economics – BS Catholic University JD.

**Work History:** Clerk US District Court Judge Western District of New York; Roach, Brown, McCarthy & Gruber, PC Civil Trials - Negligence - Product Liability - Medical Malpractice – Appeals

**Areas of Practice:** Civil Trials – Negligence Product Liability Medical Malpractice

**Professional Achievements:** President Erie County Bar Association 1993-94; Executive Committee New York State Bar Association 1997-2000- American College of Trial Lawyers American Board of Trial Advocates



**Michael P. McClaren**

**Background:** Born in Clarence, New York. Married with three children and live in East Aurora, New York. Board Member of both the East Aurora Cooperative Market and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Buffalo.

**Education:** St. Lawrence University, B.A.; Albany Law School of Union University, J.D.

**Work History:** I began work at Falk & Siemer in the City of Buffalo in 1992 focusing largely on commercial litigation, ERISA and securities arbitration. In 1997 I joined Harris Beach where I practiced primarily in personal injury defense work. In 1999 I, along with 4 other partners, founded Webster Szanyi LLP. My practice now focuses largely on commercial, Civil Rights and employment litigation. I have successfully tried cases to verdict in the Federal District Courts in Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse, and Erie County Supreme Court. I am a certified Arbitrator for the American Health Lawyers Association.

**Areas of Practice:** I have represented one of Western New York's largest health insurance companies for over 25 years. The issues presented include complex breach of contract claims, ERISA, provider disputes, AHLA arbitration, fraud and abusive billing. I also regularly represent municipalities in a variety of Civil Rights and general liability matters. Litigated cases have involved Fourth Amendment, Fifth Amendment, Eighth Amendment, Fourteen Amendment, high speed chase, false arrest, malicious prosecution, excessive force, road design, road maintenance and signage. I also regularly represent Plaintiffs in personal injury actions and have represented many Plaintiffs in securities arbitration. Additionally, I represent employers who have been sued in Federal Court in employment discrimination cases. I have handled age, gender, sexual orientation, race, hostile work environment and ADA matters. I have also represented Plaintiffs in employment discrimination lawsuits.

**Professional Achievements:** Along with four other partners, I successfully founded Webster Szanyi LLP in 1999. The firm has organically grown from six attorneys when we started to 18 attorneys now. I have successfully tried numerous cases to verdict in both Federal and State Court on issues such as Eighth Amendment failure to protect, Fourth Amendment search and seizure, age/gender discrimination, Labor Law 240, road design and sidewalk maintenance. I have successfully developed and maintain a vibrant and diverse client base. I have developed and maintained a strong team of lawyers and staff to help provide outstanding legal representation in a cost-effective manner.

**Personal Achievements:** Board of Directors Boys and Girls Clubs of Buffalo; Board of Directors East Aurora Cooperative Market; Rated AV-Preeminent by Martindale-Hubbell; Super Lawyer designation. Member, DRI Government and Liability Committees; New York State Bar Association; Erie County Bar Association; Best Lawyers in America, 2020 Edition.



**Michael Menard**

**Background:** Born and raised in Buffalo, NY

**Education:** B.S., Political Science, SUNY Buffalo 1974; J.D., *Cum Laude*, University of Miami School of Law, 1977

**Work History:** Previously a litigation partner at Saperston and Day, P.C., and partner at Rodgers, Menard & Coppola concentrating in personal injury litigation for plaintiff and defense.

**Areas of Practice:** Has served as a neutral arbitrator/mediator in over 3,000 disputes pending in state and federal courts; mediator for Resolute Systems, INC., and NAMS member, Florida Bar section of ADR charter member, NYSBA section of ADR; over 30 years' experience in the litigation of personal injury claims

**Professional Achievements:** Lecturer on ADR for Erie County bar association, Erie Institute of Law, and NYSBA, along with various in-house presentations; former president, WNY Trial Lawyers Association

**Personal Achievements:** Former member of Frontier Central School District Board of Education



**Michael F. Perley**

**Background:** I have been in practice for 42 years and tried cases to verdict in State and Federal Courts. I have extensive experience in mediation, both as party and a neutral, in matters involving personal injury, commercial disputes, environmental, municipal and civil rights litigation.

**Education:** Canisius High School – 1969; College of the Holy Cross – A.B. – 1973; Duke University School of Law – J.D. – 1976

**Work History:** Canale, Madden and Burke, P.C. – 1977 to 1992; Bovier, O'Connor – 1993; Law Office of Joseph Ables (CIGNA Staff Legal) – 1993-1997; Walsh, Perley & Wilkins (Zurich Staff Legal) – 1997-2002; Hurwitz & Fine, P.C. – 2002 to present

**Areas of Practice:** Personal Injury Litigation, Commercial Litigation, Municipal and Civil Rights Litigation, Insurance First Party Litigation, Construction Litigation.

**Professional Achievements:** Past President/ Director – Western New York Trial Lawyers Association; National Board Member – American Board of Trial Advocates; Senior Life Fellow – Foundation of the American Board of Trial Advocates; Past Board Member – Bar Association of Erie County; Director – Charles S. Desmond Inns of Court; Rated AV – Martindale Hubbell-2003 to present; Listed in Best Lawyers in America 2010 to present; Super Lawyers (Top 50) 2007 to present; Buffalo Legal Elite 2017 to present.

**Personal Achievements:** Former President – Orchard Park Symphony Orchestra; Former President – Youth Orchestra Foundation of Buffalo; Former Trustee – The Buffalo Seminary; USDC WDNYSpecial Service Award – Pro Bono Service – 2008



**Paul I. Perlman**

**Background:** Born in Hudson, NY. Have resided in WNY since 1979, and in Orchard Park since 2002.

**Education:** SUNY College at Oneonta (BS in Ed.); Harvard Law School, JD (cum laude)

**Work History:** I joined the litigation department at Hodgson Russ (then Hodgson, Russ, Andrews, Woods, and Goodyear) in 1979, where I practice for 38 years, until my retirement at the end of 2017. I now teach a course in Personal Finance at Buffalo State College in the Economics and Finance Department.

**Areas of Practice:** Intellectual Property (including patent, trademark, copyright, trade secret), employment, commercial, and wage and hour class action litigation.

**Professional Achievements:** NY Upstate Lawyers Super Lawyers; taught at University at Buffalo Law School 1995-2013 (taking and defending depositions, appellate advocacy)

**Personal Achievements:** President, SUNY Oneonta Foundation Board, 2013-2017; Director, SUNY Oneonta Foundation Board, 2009-2017, 2018 to present. I have a single-engine, instrument rated, pilot's license and am an amateur radio operator (W2PIP).



**Gregory P. Photiadis**

**Background:** Born and raised in Buffalo and have always resided in the WNY area.

**Education:** State University of New York at Buffalo School of Law, *Magna Cum Laude*, 1977. Attended Columbia College, and received undergraduate degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo, *Magna Cum Laude*, 1974.

**Work History:** Senior partner, Duke, Holzman, Photiadis & Gresens LLP; began as an associate in 1977, became partner in 1980, and senior partner in 1993. Assistant Professor, Niagara University (1976-77).

**Areas of Practice:** Served as lead trial counsel in major construction, business and environmental litigation, since 1978. Have extensive trial experience in complex business and commercial litigation, including shareholder/partnership disputes, business fraud, securities law, antitrust contract matters and landlord/tenant issues. Practiced construction law for more than 30 years and represented many developers, general contractors, subcontractors and architects/engineers on contract matters and claims. Serve as general counsel for privately held companies, which representation has included complex financing, capital restructure, acquisitions, mergers, divestitures and everyday business affairs.

**Professional Achievements:** Member of the NYS Bar Association, the Commercial and Federal Litigation Section of the NYS Bar Assoc., the Erie County Bar Assoc., and the Western NY Chapter of the Women's Bar Association.





**Sharon M. Porcellio**

**Background:** Orchard Park, New York Buffalo, New York – Born on west side, raised in South Buffalo and Lackawanna

**Education:** Northwestern University School of Law, J.D., 1982 – Member, Editorial Board, Northwestern Journal of International Law & Business University of Rochester, B.A., cum laude, 1979, Economics and Political Science, (Washington Semester Internship – Hon. Daniel K. Akaka), Mount Mercy Academy

**Work History:** Ward Greenberg Heller & Reidy LLP – Partner – 2008 to PresentLippes Mathias Wexler Friedman LLP – Partner – 1992 to 2008Damon & Morey – Associate & Partner – 1986 to 1992Phillips, Lytle, Hitchcock, Blaine & Huber – Summer Assoc. & Associate – 1981 to 1986 United States Attorney for the Western District of New York – Summer Law Clerk – 1980

**Areas of Practice:** Business & Commercial Litigation, Labor & Employment, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Administrative Litigation & Regulatory Proceedings, Medical Device & Pharmaceutical Education, Intellectual Property, Class Actions.

**Professional Achievements:** Co-Chair, Advisory Group to the New York State – Federal Judicial Council Past Chair, Commercial & Federal Litigation Section of the NYSBA Co-Chair, Committee on Women in the Law, NYSBA 2011 American Inns of Court Professionalism Award for the Second Circuit 2010 Leaders in Law, The Nathaniel Award Nominee, The Daily Record Top 25 Women Upstate New York, Super Lawyers.com, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011 New York Super Lawyers, Upstate Edition, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 Fellow, American Bar Foundation Fellow, The New York Bar Foundation

**Personal Achievements:** Board Member, Luminina Corp.,d/b/a Hope Chest , provides free exercise classes and Dragon Boat Festival opportunities for breast cancer survivors.



**Vivian M. Quinn**

**Education:** Univ. of Notre Dame BS; Columbia University MA; New York University JD (Mathematics and science honors degree (U/G) and Master’s in Psychology prior to law degree).

**Work History:** Starting at NYC firm and continuing to present day at Nixon Peabody.

**Professional/Practice History/Subject Matter Experience:** Commercial Litigation; Class Actions; Product Liability.

**Professional Achievements:** NY Super Lawyer (2009 to present): Who’s Who in Life Sciences (2010 to present).

**Personal Achievements:** Heritage Center Foundation, Board member.





**Amy Habib Rittling**

**Background:** Amy was born and raised in Buffalo. Following college and then law school, Amy spent several years working in Washington D.C. before returning to Buffalo. Amy now resides in Eggertsville with her husband and four children.

**Education:** University at Buffalo Law School, J.D.; Boston College, B.A., Political Science

**Work History:** Following college and prior to law school, Amy worked as a staff assistant/health care legislative assistant to U.S. Congressman Henry J. Nowak. Following law school, Amy worked for the Law Office of Thomas H. Burton where she practiced general litigation, including in the areas of personal injury, contracts, and estates. Amy then relocated to Washington, D.C. and worked for McGuiness Norris & Williams, LLP. At this firm, she practiced in the area of labor and employment – both litigation and lobbying. Amy’s work covered a broad range of labor and employment issues, including state and federal labor and employment litigation involving equal employment opportunity, temporary worker visa program, and wage and hour claims. Amy also worked at the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in Washington, D.C. as Special Assistant to Commissioner Leslie E. Silverman. While at the EEOC, Amy advised the Commissioner on investigations, litigation, and proposed guidance and regulations. She also completed its Mediation Training Program. Amy is now a partner at Lippes Mathias Wexler Friedman LLP where she co-chairs the Litigation and Dispute Resolution and chairs the Labor & Employment practice groups. Amy concentrates her practice in employment and general business law and litigation. Her employment law experience includes counseling and advising employers on all aspects of employment relationships and employment practices and policies. She also assists employers with self-audits and workplace investigations. Amy also represents employers before administrative agencies including the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the New York State Division of Human Rights, the U.S. Department of Labor, the New York State Department of Labor, and other various state and local employment agencies. She frequently defends clients in legal claims involving discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination, state and federal wage and hour laws, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Amy’s employment law experience also includes drafting and negotiating employment and severance agreements and litigating claims involving misappropriation of trade secrets and breach of restrictive covenants.

**Professional and Personal Achievements:** Amy was one of the recipients of Buffalo Business First’s “Power 125 Women” in 2018 and 2019. She received the Buffalo Niagara Partnership’s ATHENA Award in 2016 and Buffalo Business First’s “40 Under Forty” and Women of Influence: Community Supporter. Amy was recognized by The Daily Record Excellence in Law as one of the Top Women in the Law in 2014. In addition, Amy was named one of Upstate New York’s Super Lawyers in the years 2015 through 2018 and also named as Legal Elite by the Buffalo Law Journal in the years 2014 through 2017. Amy is a Recognized Practitioner by Chambers USA in Litigation, General and Commercial (Upstate New York).

**Amy serves or has served as a board member on several community related boards including:** the John R. Oishei Children’s Hospital of Buffalo Foundation, University of Buffalo Foundation, Inc., Maria M. Love Convalescent Fund, Zoological Society of Buffalo (The Buffalo Zoo), Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo, Elmwood Franklin School, Buffalo Seminary, Western New York Women’s Fund, UB Law Alumni Association, Westminster Presbyterian School, and the National Federation for Just Communities of Western New York (formerly NCCJ).

## Michael J. Roach

**Background:** Michael J. Roach is a 1992 magna cum laude graduate of the State University of New York at Buffalo Law School. As an assistant executive editor of the Buffalo Law Review, Mr. Roach was responsible for editing professional and student articles. Upon graduation, he received the Robert J. Connelly Award presented for excellence in the Trial Technique course.

Mr. Roach is a graduate of Williams College where he majored in English and History. Mr. Roach is a past member of the Nichols School Board of Trustees. He is a past Treasurer and Director of the Western New York Trial Lawyers Association. He is a member of the American Bar Association, the New York State Bar Association, and the Bar Association of Erie County. Mr. Roach is a partner in the firm. He engages in general trial practice with a particular concentration in representing physicians in medical malpractice lawsuits. He has tried numerous cases to successful verdicts on behalf of his clients. Mr. Roach devotes a significant percentage of his practice to the representation of physicians and other health care professionals in investigations and disciplinary proceedings conducted by the New York State Department of Health. In 2012, Mr. Roach was selected by the Bar Association of Erie County to receive the Charles H. Dougherty Award. This is an award presented annually to an attorney who exhibits the highest degree of professionalism and civility on a daily basis. Mr. Roach is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Fellowship is conferred by invitation after a rigorous screening process and is limited to a maximum of one percent of the lawyers in any given state. Mr. Roach is also a Fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America. He is listed in The Best Lawyers in America for his work defending physicians in malpractice litigation. Since 2007, Mr. Roach has been one of a select number of attorneys in upstate New York identified by their peers as a top lawyer in the field of medical malpractice defense as published by New York Super Lawyers Magazine. He has been regularly recognized in the area of medical malpractice defense in the Buffalo Business First "Who's Who in Law." Mr. Roach has an AV peer ranking from Martindale Hubbell which is the highest rating for ability and ethics.

**Education:** State University of New York at Buffalo Law School, JD, Magna Cum Laude 1992; Williams College, BA History/English (Double Major)

**Work History:** 1988-89 Tatnall School, Wilmington Delaware. Private day school teacher of high school English and History. Head Varsity Soccer Coach and Assistant Varsity Basketball Coach. 1992 - Present CONNORS LLP, (previously Connors & Vilardo, LLP, Partner 2000 – Present.

**Areas of Practice:** Medical Malpractice, Legal Malpractice, General Trial Practice

**Professional Achievements:** Robert J. Connelly Award (1992): presented by the SUNY Buffalo Law School in recognition of excellence in the Trial Technique course. Charles H. Dougherty Award (2012): presented by the Bar Association of Erie County in recognition of conduct reflecting the highest degree of professionalism and civility on a daily basis. Fellow: American College of Trial Lawyers; Fellow: Litigation Counsel of America; Associate: American Board of Trial Advocates; NYSBA and ABA Member; Bar Assoc. of Erie Co. Member (Director 2014-17); Western New York Trial Lawyers Assoc. Member; Listed in Best Lawyers in America, NY Super Lawyers, and Who's Who in Law- WNY (Business First).

**Personal Achievements:** Nichols School, Trustee (2001 – 2007), Alumni Board President (2000 – 2001); Mt. St. Joseph Academy – Founder and Board member (2005 – 2010); WNY Williams College Alumni Assoc., Past President (1995 – 2017); Delaware Soccer Club, Girls and Boys Travel Soccer Coach (2006 – 2012).



**Hugh M. Russ, III**

**Background:** Snyder, NY Summer Home - Point Abino, Ontario; I was born in Buffalo, NY. I have resided in Western New York for most of my life.

**Education:** Harvard University, BA *Cum Laude* 1982; University at Buffalo Law School, JD, *Magna Cum Laude* 1987.

**Work History:** I have worked at Hodgson Russ, in various capacities since 1986, and have been an equity partner since January 1, 1995. For my entire career, I have been a trial lawyer. I've argued more than 100 cases before juries in the last 30 years, and represented individuals and businesses in virtually all areas of civil litigation throughout New York and the Northeast. I was appointed by the U.S. District Court to be plaintiffs' liaison counsel in the Continental Flight 3407 multi-district litigation. In addition to serving as lead counsel for all 50 plaintiffs, I also represented seven families of victims killed in the crash. I've represented major industries in environmental class action lawsuits. I've represented a major insurer in one of the largest environmental insurance coverage litigations in the nation, and represented numerous international businesses in product liability cases. I've tried catastrophic personal injury cases, including those involving claimed medical malpractice. I also have substantial trial experience on insurance cases involving arson and fraud, on personal injury cases, in employment and environmental litigation, and in shareholder and business disputes. Additionally, I have extensive experience in pro bono and civil rights work. Now, I devote much of my time to alternative dispute resolution, especially mediation and arbitration.

**Areas of Practice:** Personal injury; Employment law; Business disputes; Insurance disputes; Product liability

**Professional Achievements:** President of the Bar Association of Erie County; Fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers; America's Top 100 Attorneys Lifetime Achievement Member; Listed, Best Lawyers in America (Commercial Litigation; Product Liability Litigation-Defendants) 2011-2022; Buffalo Business First/Buffalo Law Journal's Legal Elite of Western New York, 2008-2020; Listed, Upstate New York Super Lawyers (Civil Litigation: Defense) 2007-2022; Listed, New York Areas Top Lawyers; *Buffalo Business First's* Who's Who in Law; U.S. District Court for the Western District of New York Pro Bono Award; National Conference for Community and Justice Brotherhood/Sisterhood Award; Former articles editor, Buffalo Law Review; Board member and former president, Harvard Club of Western New York.

**Personal Achievements:** Director, Executive Committee member, and Chair of the Audit and Corporate Compliance Committees, Roswell Park Alliance; Nichols School Board of Trustees; Director, Say Yes Buffalo; Director, United Way of Buffalo and Erie County; Director, Forest Lawn Cemetery; Director and Former President, Buffalo Renaissance Foundation.



**Joseph F. Saeli, Jr.**

**Background:** I am a Western New York native and live in Williamsville, New York.

**Education:** Canisius College, B.A., *Magna Cum Laude* 1973; Boston University School of Law, J.D., 1976.

**Work History:** I am currently Of Counsel to Colligan Law LLP. Prior to joining Colligan Law LLP I operated my own law practice for 16 years. Before that, I was General Counsel and V.P. of Human Resources at *The Buffalo News*, a division of Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Corp. I was also a partner at Hiscock & Barclay, and an associate at the former Cohen Swados law firm.

**Areas of Practice:** Employment law, including employment discrimination cases; Employment contracts; Business disputes; Civil Rights cases; ERISA cases.

**Professional Achievements:** Former Chair of Labor Law Committee, Bar Association of Erie County; *Business First* Who's Who in Law; Upstate New York Super Lawyers.

**Personal Achievements:** Former Board member of American Red Cross, Greater Buffalo Chapter; Rental Assistance Corporation; and Pet Emergency Fund.



**Harvey P. Sanders**

**Background:** My first exposure to alternative dispute resolution was in college, where I eventually became president of the student-run organization, Society for Arbitration and Neutral Education and became trained as a Community Dispute Resolution Center mediator. As an attorney, I became a per diem mediator for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in the 1990s. I am pleased to be able to further my passion for the ADR process by helping parties resolve disputes as a member of the WDNY mediation panel.

**Education:** J.D., New York University; B.S., Cornell University, Industrial and Labor Relations; Amherst High School

**Work History:** Law Clerk to Magistrate Judge Michael Dolinger, SDNY; Associate at Kaye Scholer, Benetar Bernstein Schair & Stein and at Mayer Brown; Partner, Sanders & Sanders

**Areas of Practice:** Labor & Employment Law and related workplace disputes, including claims related to contract, non-compete and other restrictive covenants, and tort claims

**Professional Achievements:** Satisfied clients with results pre-litigation, at administrative agencies, in court and on appeal, published articles, lecturer

**Personal Achievements:** Proud parent of two teenage sons, volunteer for various community organizations



**Daniel L. Schoenborn**

**Background:** East Aurora, New York; Fountain Hills, Arizona. I was born and raised in Buffalo, New York and attended Bennett High School, graduating in 1965. Briefly, I lived in Cheektowaga, New York, subsequently, for 30 years in Elma, New York and currently reside in East Aurora, New York.

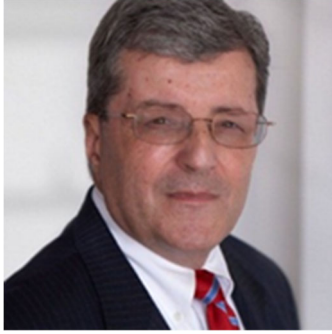
**Education:** I graduated in 1969 with a BA from SUNY at Buffalo and received my Juris Doctor degree in 1972 from SUNY Buffalo. In college, I became a brother in Theta Chi Fraternity and was member of the Inter-Fraternity Council. In Law School, I was on staff of the 8th Judicial District Law Library and a member of the Prisoner Release Program.

**Work History:** After graduation from Law School I worked in the Law Department of Delaware North Corporation (then Sports service Corporation) where I was involved in contracts, labor-related issues, property issues and other related corporate matters. I briefly worked with Charles Spinner, Esq. and then went on to my current firm. My work has primarily been plaintiff and defense of personal injury litigation, estate planning and litigation, and insurance disputes. I also represent a number of business interests.

**Areas of Practice:** My entire career has largely focused on personal injury litigation, both defense and plaintiff. I have also represented plaintiffs and defendants in insurance claims, fire losses, and property claims. I also have a fairly large estate practice and business practice which have resulted in estate and business litigation. I have also served, when it existed, on the Buffalo City Court arbitration panel, arbitrating numerous cases in the 1970s and early '80s.

**Professional Achievements:** I was honored to be elected to the Board of Directors of the Bar Association of Erie County, having also served on a number of committees including the Judiciary and the Unlawful Practice of Law. I have also been asked and accepted on a number of occasions, to be a fee-dispute arbitrator on behalf of the Bar Association.

**Personal Achievements:** I have served as President, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Elma Kiwanis Club; Vice President of the Leukemia Society of Buffalo; served on the Board of Directors of the EMW Soccer League and coached both soccer and softball when my children were younger. Having been involved in literally hundreds of mediations over the years and being an attorney who has handled a variety of matters, in particularly representing the plaintiff's and defendant's interests, I believe that I can fairly look into the position of all parties and attorneys and to reasonably deal with anyone to try to reach fair and acceptable conclusions.



**James W. Smyton**

**Background:** Jim has practiced in the area of corporate law for nearly 50 years.

**Education:** Kent College of Law J.D. with distinction State University of New York at Buffalo; Clarkson College

**Areas of Practice:** Jim's practice has focused in the areas of corporate counseling, including acquisitions, close corporations, shareholder disputes and related contract disputes. He has also worked with many not-for-profit corporations.

**Professional Achievements:** Jim is a Federal Court Mediator for the Western District of New York. He has been listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*<sup>®</sup>; Selected for the *Upstate New York Super Lawyers*<sup>®</sup> list, 2007-2020; Listed in Legal Elite of WNY, *Business First of Buffalo* and *Buffalo Law Journal*; and has received the Volunteer Services Award from the Legal Services for the Elderly, Disabled or Disadvantaged of Western New York, Inc.

**Community Achievements:** Jim has dedicated his time and resources to support the Western New York community in a variety of ways. He has held leadership roles and provided volunteer support to the following organizations all while maintaining a business law practice: National Federation for Just Communities, National Board of Directors, Former Chair; Presbytery of Western New York, Board of Trustees, Past President; Zoological Society of Buffalo, Former Chair and Board Member; Shea's Performing Arts Center, Former Chair and Board Member; Erie County Bar Foundation, Former member of the Board of Directors.

**Jeffrey Allan Spencer**

**Background:** Married with 5 adult children.

**Education:** Numerous ADR seminars and trainings (2002-present)  
Cornell Extension University, Certification in Alternate Dispute Resolution Studies (2001)  
Syracuse University, Master's Degree in Public Administration (1974) (MPA)  
State University of New York at Buffalo School of Law (1972) (JD)  
Canisius College, Bachelor's Degree (1969)

**Work History:** Private Mediation and Arbitration practice (2011- present); Confidential Law Assistant to NYS Supreme Court Justices (1996-1998) (settlement conferences, hearing officer, research and writing); Court Attorney/Referee (1999-2011) (facilitated settlement negotiations, hearing officer, assisted in the organization of the Commercial Division of Erie County Supreme Court including inclusion of ADR options, and developed expedited hearing process); Misc. Employments -Adjunct instructor at a number of area colleges. Early in my career served as a local representative for a Member of Congress.

**Professional Achievements:** For 40 years authored a column in the Erie County Bar Newspaper called "Citations" dealing with recent developments in the law. In 2015 was awarded the Erie County Bar Media Award.



**Surinder K. Virk**

**Background:** Moved to Buffalo New York from Pennsylvania in 1985. Currently resides in East Amherst, New York.

**Education:** Undergraduate education in Biology from SUNY Buffalo, New York, 1988; Graduate education in Epidemiology, Department of Epidemiology and Environment Health, SUNY School of Medicine, Buffalo, New York, 1994; J.D. University at Buffalo School of Law, Certificate in Health Law and Tax Law, 2000

**Work History:** Law practice, 2000-current; Arbitrator, 2017-current; Mediator, 2017-current.

**Areas of Practice:** Health Care Law and Tort Law including Medical Malpractice; Employment and Corporate Law; Intellectual Property including Patent law.

**Professional Achievements:** American Health Lawyers Association, Arbitrator/Neutral and Mediator on AHLA Exclusive Mediator Panel, 2017-current; Arbitrator on Arbitration Panel of FINRA, Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, 2017-current; Buffalo Niagara Realtors Association, Mediator on BNAR Mediation Panel, 2019-current; Erie County Bar Association, Commercial Mediation Training, 2015; NYS Court System, Child Permanency Mediation Training, 2015; FINRA Arbitration Training, 2017; WDNY Mediator Training, 2019 ; member of WDNY District Court’s panel of mediators, 2019. Court Admissions: New Jersey State 2000; New Jersey U.S. District Court, 2000; New York State, 2001; U.S. District Court, Western District of New York, 2001; U.S. Bankruptcy Court, 2001; U.S Tax Court, 2001; California State 2004; U.S. Supreme Court, 2007.



**Benjamin M. Zuffranieri**

**Education:** Mr. Zuffranieri attended the State University of New York, College at Buffalo, obtaining a B.A. in Economics, Magna Cum Laude, in 1980. Ben received his J.D. from the University at Buffalo School of Law, Cum Laude, in 1983.

**Work History:** Mr. Zuffranieri is a Partner in Hodgson Russ LLP where he has practiced since 1985 in the firm’s Buffalo, New York office. Since 1999, Ben has been the Leader of the Business Litigation and Construction Practices. He served as Chair of the Firm’s Litigation Practice Area from 2008 to 2015. Ben held the position of Adjunct Faculty Member from 1987 to 1989 at the University at Buffalo School of Law. From 1983 to 1985, he was Confidential Law Assistant to the Hon. Reid S. Moule, New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Fourth Department.

**Areas of Practice:** Mr. Zuffranieri has extensive knowledge and experience with complex commercial, construction and international law. Other areas of experience include business dissolution, contract disputes and product liability litigation. He is an arbitrator for the American Arbitration Association, National Roster of Neutrals, Commercial and Construction Panel, and has arbitrated disputes both as a single arbitrator and as a panel member. In addition, he has successfully mediated numerous disputes involving a wide variety of subject matters.

**Professional Achievements:** Mr. Zuffranieri’s legal expertise has been recognized by several organizations and in several contexts. Ben is a Fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America (LCA). He is also a Fellow in the Construction Lawyers Society of America (CLSA). Mr. Zuffranieri has been listed by Best Lawyers in America in multiple categories: Commercial Litigation, Bet-the-Company Litigation, Litigation – Construction and Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants for 2018 and 2019. Best Lawyers selected Ben as “Lawyer of the Year” in 2016 for Buffalo in the category of Bet-the-Company Litigation. Upstate New York Super Lawyers has recognized Mr. Zuffranieri every year since 2007. Other recognitions include: Buffalo State College President’s Distinguished Service Award; SUNY Buffalo Law School Moot Court Board; and the Matthew J. Jasen Appellate Practice Award for academic achievement and appellate advocacy.

**Personal Achievements:** Ben is a Director Emeritus and long-time Chair of the Legal/Audit Committee at the Buffalo State College Foundation, Inc. He is also a Trustee of the Burchfield Penney Art Center.