

# Rhode Island Bar Journal

Rhode Island Bar Association Volume 70. Number 1. July/August 2021



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**Bar Annual and Committee Reports**  
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**Tech-Facilitated Sexual Abuse During COVID-19**

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Front Cover Photograph by Brian McDonald

**10,000 Suns – Public Art Installation, Interim Park, Providence, RI**  
Ten Thousand Suns is a summer-long botanical performance, led by Payette Landscape Architect Adam Anderson, started in the Summer of 2016 in which over 10,000 sunflower seeds were planted and nurtured over the course of the summer months.



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### RHODE ISLAND BAR ASSOCIATION LAWYER'S PLEDGE

As a member of the Rhode Island Bar Association, I pledge to conduct myself in a manner that will reflect honor upon the legal profession. I will treat all participants in the legal process with civility. In every aspect of my practice, I will be honest, courteous and fair.

### Association Officers

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# Looking Toward the New Normal for the Legal Profession



**Lynda L. Laing, Esq.**  
President  
Rhode Island Bar Association

**RIBA has not lost sight of the challenges and hopes to continue to be a voice assisting the Court as they reopen to conduct jury trials and other in-person hearings.**

After 15 months of COVID restraints, we see Rhode Island reopening. RIBA has an opportunity to help our members emerge from the pandemic to the “new normal.” As we transition from working from home and virtual learning, the Bar can help identify the things we learned from the pandemic and adopt what worked well going forward. Attorneys and the courts adapted to new technology; we worked and learned remotely. Earlier this year, RIBA conducted a COVID-19 Impact Survey of our members which showed that well-being and financial stability are among the issues of concern within the practice.

The survey showed that many members struggled to balance work and family. Many members enjoyed the flex policies allowing them to work from home. Most members do not want to see remote work disappear completely. They found they were just as efficient working remotely as when they were in the office and enjoyed the work/life balance it afforded them. However, despite this, some attorneys found they missed socialization, felt isolated, and many of the childcare issues fell to female attorneys. RIBA hopes to support our members and encourage participation in our wellness programs.

I encourage you to make time for yourself and enjoy mindfulness, exercise, and/or other stress-reducing activities. The Bar intends to use the survey data to develop resources and programs to help it meet the ongoing challenges as we move into the “new normal.”

The survey showed that many attorneys experienced only a slight decrease in business volume and their income remained the same. We worked about the same number of hours. The ABA also conducted a COVID-19 Impact survey which found that 55% of those surveyed found it harder to get new business. Some attorneys will be rethinking where they practice, and some may decide to leave the practice. RIBA hopes to assist our members during this time by providing seminars and encouraging members to use limited scope representation. This a la carte menu for legal services helps our members get new business and allows litigants to pay for the services they need. Using limited scope representation will

permit those litigants an opportunity to hire a lawyer when they might not otherwise be able to afford one. Also, Limited Scope Representation (LSR) transitions into the virtual platform easily as the tasks to be performed are determined by the attorney and the litigant. The best feature of LSR allows the client to retain the attorney for the next step of the litigation or task to be performed by creating a new agreement.

Our members did like WebEx hearings and are looking forward to keeping remote proceedings and hearings by appointment going forward. Attorneys found remote hearings to be efficient and cost-effective. This allowed attorneys to handle more cases without travel time and waiting in the court hallways. Clients benefited as the costs of the hearings decreased. RIBA hopes that the courts will continue remote hearings. Despite the change to remote hearings, attorneys still worked tirelessly for their clients and found civility increased between attorneys.

Other attorneys used remote notarization to carry on their real estate practices when conducting remote closings. Probate attorneys also used remote notarization of probate documents. Many attorneys found remote notarizations to be challenging, but they prevailed. Some attorneys surveyed expressed a desire for remote notarization to continue.

RIBA has not lost sight of the challenges and hopes to continue to be a voice assisting the Court as they reopen to conduct jury trials and other in-person hearings. The survey showed that the Bar wants the courts to “open up,” which they are moving towards. As stated in Presiding Justice Gibney’s May 10, 2021 letter to Bar members, the Superior Court is restricted to two jury trials at any one time. In order to assist the Bar, the Court is offering a Mediation Program to assist counsel and their clients. You can find the form on the Superior Court website.

RIBA wants to support our members in their practice as we reopen. We will continue to provide Continuing Legal Education courses and hope to transition to a hybrid format for seminars starting in the fall. RIBA will continue to provide our members with the opportunity to learn by covering topics related to changes in representation of

clients after COVID-19. Our survey gave us suggestions for topics along with a request to continue updating attorneys with any changes made by the courts. The survey responses also suggested that members want RIBA to provide assistance with technology issues. We encourage our members to watch Red Cave Consulting's free, non-credit, Compare & Contrast webinar series. The series covered a variety of technology-related topics and is available to view on the Bar's Law Practice Management page of our website. The Compare & Contrast programs will start up again in the fall.

As we transition to the new normal, we hope to keep Bar members up to date on changes within the court system and the new rules that may develop from the re-entry. Our focus remains on serving and supporting our members as we face new challenges in the practice of law. ◇

**STAY CONNECTED!**

**Facebook:** @RIBarAssociation  
**Twitter:** @RIBarAssoc  
**Instagram:** @RIBarAssociation  
**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/company/ri-bar-association](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ri-bar-association)

## Rhode Island Bar Journal

### Editorial Statement

The *Rhode Island Bar Journal* is the Rhode Island Bar Association's official magazine for Rhode Island attorneys, judges and others interested in Rhode Island law. The *Bar Journal* is a paid, subscription magazine published bi-monthly, six times annually and sent to, among others, all practicing attorneys and sitting judges, in Rhode Island. This constitutes an audience of over 6,000 individuals. Covering issues of relevance and providing updates on events, programs and meetings, the *Rhode Island Bar Journal* is a magazine that is read on arrival and, most often, kept for future reference. The *Bar Journal* publishes scholarly discourses, commentary on the law and Bar activities, and articles on the administration of justice. While the *Journal* is a serious magazine, our articles are not dull or somber. We strive to publish a topical, thought-provoking magazine that addresses issues of interest to significant segments of the Bar. We aim to publish a magazine that is read, quoted and retained. The *Bar Journal* encourages the free expression of ideas by Rhode Island Bar members. The *Bar Journal* assumes no responsibility for opinions, statements and facts in signed articles, except to the extent that, by publication, the subject matter merits attention. The opinions expressed in editorials are not the official view of the Rhode Island Bar Association. Letters to the Editors are welcome.

### Article Selection Criteria

- > The *Rhode Island Bar Journal* gives primary preference to original articles, written expressly for first publication in the *Bar Journal*, by members of the Rhode Island Bar Association. The *Bar Journal* does not accept unsolicited articles from individuals who are not members of the Rhode Island Bar Association. Articles previously appearing in other publications are not accepted.
- > All submitted articles are subject to the *Journal's* editors' approval, and they reserve the right to edit or reject any articles and article titles submitted for publication.
- > Selection for publication is based on the article's relevance to our readers, determined by content and timeliness. Articles appealing to the widest range of interests are particularly appreciated. However, commentaries dealing with more specific areas of law are given equally serious consideration.
- > Preferred format includes: a clearly presented statement of purpose and/or thesis in the introduction; supporting evidence or arguments in the body; and a summary conclusion.
- > Citations conform to the Uniform System of Citation
- > Maximum article size is approximately 3,500 words. However, shorter articles are preferred.
- > While authors may be asked to edit articles themselves, the editors reserve the right to edit pieces for legal size, presentation and grammar.
- > Articles are accepted for review on a rolling basis. Meeting the criteria noted above does not guarantee publication. Articles are selected and published at the discretion of the editors.
- > Submissions are preferred in a Microsoft Word format emailed as an attachment or on disc. Hard copy is acceptable, but not recommended.
- > Authors are asked to include an identification of their current legal position and a photograph, (headshot) preferably in a jpg file of, at least, 350 d.p.i., with their article submission.

Direct inquiries and send articles and author's photographs for publication consideration to:  
**Rhode Island Bar Journal Editor Erin Cute**  
 email: [ecute@ribar.com](mailto:ecute@ribar.com)  
 telephone: 401-421-5740

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## Build your Client Base and Gain Experience with the Bar's Lawyer Referral Service!



Attorney **Erica Sciacca**, a member of the Lawyer Referral Service, enthusiastically supports the program. *"As a new attorney, the Bar's Lawyer Referral Service has helped me to build my practice and to gain experience. LRS is a valuable resource to the public, and I'm so happy to be a participant."*

Membership in the Rhode Island Bar Association's Lawyer Referral Service (LRS) is an excellent and inexpensive way to increase your client base and visibility within the community while expanding public access to legal representation. Optional special LRS projects include: **Ask A Lawyer** providing live, television studio lawyer panels in partnership with Channel 10; **Senior Citizen Center Clinics** throughout the year and the state; **Reduced Fee Program** offered to qualifying clients; and the **Arts Panel** for local artists' legal needs all offer unique opportunities for increasing your business while you provide an important public service to your community.

**Applications and more detailed program information and qualifications may be found on our website [ribar.com](http://ribar.com) in the Members Only section. You may also request information by contacting Public Services Director Susan Fontaine at 401-421-7799 or email [sfontaine@ribar.com](mailto:sfontaine@ribar.com).**

# GREATER JUSTICE FOR ALL

## The Rhode Island Bar Foundation and Its Role in Social Justice



**Victoria M. Almeida, Esq.**  
Vice President  
Rhode Island Bar Foundation

**“Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the Philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary.”**

MARTIN LUTHER, KING, JR.

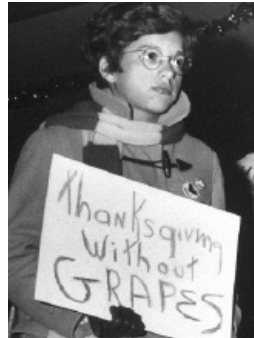
Dear Friends,  
It is indeed an honor for me to write this message as Vice President of the RI Bar Foundation (“The Foundation”). The Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the RI Bar Association. The Foundation’s Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program makes significant grants in four main areas including providing legal services to the poor in Rhode Island.

It was as your President of the RI Bar Association, 2009-2010, that I first shared with you this photo of me as a college freshman in November 1969, taken by the *ProJo*. In the photo, I am protesting in solidarity with the plight of migrant farmworkers. I had decided then that I wanted to do more than protest; I wanted to be a voice for those who were oppressed. I wanted to be a lawyer. This photo is worth sharing again, 12 years later. When it first appeared in the *Bar Journal* I received countless emails and calls from many lawyers and judges who shared similar stories as to why they became lawyers. For those admitted after 2010, you can find the article associated with this photo [here](#).

Today, this photo continues to remind me of why I became a lawyer in the first place, namely to do more than just protest and to become a voice for those who have no voice. Today, this photo is also a vivid realization to me of the significant intersection and role of the Foundation’s mission in addressing the intrinsic evils known to humankind – poverty, racism, and militarism that are at the heart of social justice concerns. These and other conditions remain barriers for those who still do not have access to justice. You see, today, I am not in a picket line boycotting non-union grapes, but the same fervor I had in 1969 is sustained and enriched as I chair the Board of Directors of RI Legal Services (“RILS”). RILS is a recipient of vital funding from the Foundation, which is the philanthropic arm of the RI Bar. RILS is a non-profit law firm incorporated in 1969 by an Act of the Rhode Island General Assembly to ensure equal access to the civil justice system for low-income Rhode Island-

ers who would otherwise be unable to afford an attorney. They are the significant provider of civil legal aid to low-income individuals, families, veterans, and the elderly.

RILS knows and understands that without equal access there is no equal justice, and some would say, and I agree, there can be no lasting peace. RILS seeks to be the voice of the poor and the cry for justice that can be lost in the hurricane of social destruction when basic human rights are denied or unasserted. Martin Luther King, Jr. reminds us “Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the Philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary.”



RILS provides high-quality legal assistance and representation to low-income individuals and eligible client groups for the purpose of improving their economic conditions and overall well-being by protecting and enforcing legal rights, stabilizing the family unit and communities where clients live, promoting self-reliance, ending domestic violence, preventing homelessness and affording dignity to all people, and reaching out to groups with added burdens on their ability to access the civil justice system.

To accomplish its goals, RILS work focuses on seven priority areas including:

- 1) Safe, Affordable Housing;
- 2) Income Maintenance and Food;
- 3) Affordable Health Care;
- 4) Family Safety;
- 5) Family Preservation;
- 6) Financial Stability; and
- 7) High Quality, Appropriate Education.

RILS collaborates with others, including the RI Bar Association’s Voluntary Lawyer Program, governmental agencies, social work organizations, community action groups, and law school affiliated poverty law providers and law student interns.

**“If we are to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment: thou shalt not ration justice.”**

JUDGE LEARNED HAND



## Rhode Island Bar Foundation

Founded in 1958, the Rhode Island Bar Foundation is the non-profit philanthropic arm of the state's legal profession. Its mission is to foster and maintain the honor and integrity of the legal profession and to study, improve and facilitate the administration of justice. The Foundation receives support from members of the Bar, other foundations, and from honorary and memorial contributions.

Today, more than ever, the Foundation faces great challenges in funding its good works, particularly those that help low-income and disadvantaged people achieve justice. Given this, the Foundation needs your support and invites you to complete and mail this form, with your contribution to the Rhode Island Bar Foundation.

*Help Our Bar Foundation Help Others*

### RHODE ISLAND BAR FOUNDATION GIFT

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My enclosed gift in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please accept this gift in my name

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Cranston, RI 02920

Questions? Please contact Virginia Caldwell at 421-6541

or [gcaldwell@ribar.com](mailto:gcaldwell@ribar.com)

I think you will agree with me that the Foundation, and its support of RILS and many other vital programs and services to our community, ensures that justice will not be rationed. As we go about our everyday lives as lawyers and as neighbors in communities, let us be mindful of opportunities to be graced and blessed with service to those in need of justice.

We who have been given so much and who have the ability to announce "greater justice for all" must be open to those gifted opportunities when we can ensure that someone in need of legal assistance to stay in their apartment or be free from abuse or discrimination gets the justice their human dignity deserves.

Remember why you became a lawyer. While our profession dictates our common oath as lawyers, the Foundation provides opportunities for us to recall and to be true to our younger selves and what led us to the law as we honor our common humanity and duty to those denied access to justice. Ours is a glorious vocation. Dr. Margaret Mead, a famed author-anthropologist, spoke at my college 51 years ago. Her message was as relevant then as it is to us today as lawyers. She told us "[n]ever doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

May I ask you to consider becoming a Fellow of the RI Bar Foundation and join this group of thoughtful, committed lawyers to change the world? Please call me to chat about this. I would love to hear from you. My cell is 401.744.2500. ◇

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# New Rhode Island Bar Association President and 2021-2022 Executive Officers' Profiles

## New Rhode Island Bar Association President

Past Rhode Island Bar Association President Richard P. D'Addario passed the Bar's gavel to new Bar President Lynda L. Laing who thanked Richard for his inspiring leadership during an incredibly difficult pandemic year and pledged to uphold and further the Bar Association's core mission and goals.



LYNDA L. LAING



MARK B. MORSE



NICOLE J. BENJAMIN



CHRISTOPHER S. GONTARZ

**Lynda L. Laing, Esq.** is President of the Rhode Island Bar Association. She is a partner at Strauss, Factor, Laing & Lyons concentrating her practice in creditors' rights. Lynda graduated from Albion College and earned her law degree from Case Western Reserve University. She has been nominated as a "Super Lawyer." Lynda has taught numerous seminars for the Rhode Island Bar Association and other national groups. She was chairperson of the District Court Bench/Bar Committee, the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, and the Committee on Limited Scope Representation. Lynda is married to Thomas Lyons, Rhode Island Bar Association President 2007-2008, and has two daughters.

**Mark B. Morse, Esq.** is President-Elect of the Rhode Island Bar Association. He graduated from the

University of Rhode Island and the New England School of Law where he served as research editor of the *New England Law Review*. Mark lectures on a variety of legal issues, including ERISA litigation, evidence, subrogation liens, expert testimony, civil trial practice, the Rhode Island Rules of Civil Procedure, and Rhode Island domestic law. He has volunteered as a judge to the regional law school mock trial competition, and acted as chief judge for the regional competition on multiple occasions. Mark served as editor in chief of the *Rhode Island Bar Journal*. He is a member of the Animal Law Committee, the Family Court Bench Bar Committee, the Superior Court Bench Bar Committee, and past chair of the Superior Court Bench Bar Committee and Annual Meeting Planning Committee. He also chaired the Subcommittee to Review and Revise the Rhode Island Civil Rules

of Procedure enacted June 15, 2006. He is a fellow of the Rhode Island Bar Foundation. He is past president of the RI Association for Justice and presently serves on its Board of Governors. Mark is also active in the American Association for Justice and served as Chair of the State Delegates, and as a member of its Executive Committee. He has been nominated through peer recognition as a “Super Lawyer” by Thomson Reuters for twelve consecutive years in the state of Rhode Island. Mark was chosen by the Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education Commission to be co-editor of the Discovery and Depositions Rhode Island Practice Volume published in September 2010. The publication was honored with an ACLEA’s Best Award from the Association for Continuing Legal Education (ACLEA) for outstanding achievement in the category of Best Publication. He is legal counsel to Defenders of Animals, the Friends of the Music Mansion, and The Feinstein Foundation. In 2011, Mark was awarded the Dorothy Lohmann Public Service Award for his work with Defenders of Animals. Mark is married with three children.

**Nicole Benjamin, Esq.** is Treasurer of the Rhode Island Bar Association. She is a shareholder at Adler Pollock & Sheehan P.C. where she focuses her practice on complex commercial litigation. With more than a decade of courtroom experience, Nicole has been recognized for her commercial litigation work by The Best Lawyers in America and Chambers USA America’s Leading Business Lawyers and she has been honored for her appellate advocacy with a Professional Excellence in the Law award. She also is the recipient of the 2017 *Rhode Island Bar Journal* Lauren E. Jones, Esq. Writing Award. Nicole was first introduced to the Rhode Island Bar Association while in college, having received the Rhode Island Bar Foundation Thomas F. Black Memorial Scholarship. Since then, Nicole has been motivated by a desire to give back to the association that gave her the opportunity to pursue a law degree. By her fourth year in practice, Nicole was elected to the Bar Association’s House of Delegates and, later, to the Executive Committee. She also has co-chaired the Bar Association’s Strategic Planning Committee and served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Rhode Island Bar Journal*. Nicole is a graduate of Roger Williams University School of Law and serves as Vice Chair of its Board of Directors.

**Christopher S. Gontarz, Esq.** is the Secretary of the Rhode Island Bar Association. He is of counsel at Lynch & Pine, Providence & Newport, concentrating on criminal defense, ethics, and professional misconduct. He is a former Special Assistant Attorney General in the Rhode Island Department of Attorney General. He serves on the Rhode Island Supreme Court Ethics Advisory Panel and was previously a commissioner on the Rhode Island Supreme Court Judicial Tenure and Discipline Commission. He is the 2008 recipient of the Dorothy Lohmann Community Service Award and the 2017 Joseph T. Houlihan Lifetime Mentor Award. He was chairperson of the Criminal Law Bench Bar Committee and was the president of the Newport County Bar Association from 1993 to 2007. He has represented the Bar Association on numerous legislative committees involving criminal law. He was elected to the American Law Institute (ALI) in 2017. He is the author of *Sentencing in Superior Court, Guide to Superior Court Practice in Rhode Island* published by MCLE, New England. He graduated from Salve Regina University, The American University, and The New England School of Law. ◇

## Bar’s Executive Director Helen D. McDonald Retiring

After 42 years of professional service to the Rhode Island Bar Association and its members, our Executive Director Helen Desmond McDonald is retiring from her position as of August 2021.

Helen started her Rhode Island Bar Association career as Assistant Executive Director in 1979 and was appointed Executive Director in 1985. At that time, the Bar Association, in its rented offices, was comprised of approximately 1,800 members, a staff of three, and had four basic services: the Lawyer Referral Service, Continuing Legal Education seminars, Bar committees, and the *Rhode Island Bar Journal*. Under Helen’s leadership, the Rhode Island Bar Association grew in size and purpose, offering its members a law center to facilitate the delivery of educational programs, practice management services, and professional and personal benefits to its more than 6,500 members. She oversaw the administration of the budget, extensive educational programming, publications, and several public service programs, much of which is executed through the day-to-day management of a staff of 12. Helen is responsible for integrating the vision and goals of the Bar’s

**According to Past Bar President J. Robert Weisberger Jr.: I have known Helen for 38 years; I met her when I was first admitted to the practice of law in 1983. She was then, and is now, a vibrant, intelligent, enthusiastic, creative, inclusive, well informed, diligent, personable and extremely effective Executive Director of the Rhode Island Bar Association who is highly regarded by both members of the Bar and the Judiciary. Helen’s leadership, without exaggeration, is among the finest I have seen anywhere in the country.**

**According to Past Bar President and current Bar Foundation Secretary Armando E. Batastini: I benefitted greatly from Helen’s intelligence and perspective. One abiding memory is attending conferences where the hot topics affecting Bar Associations were discussed, and being pleasantly surprised (although I should not have been) to discover that RIBA had already addressed or avoided these issues—because of Helen’s perspicacious leadership.**

**According to Past Bar President and Past Bar Foundation President Michael A. St. Pierre: A critical part of being an exemplary Executive Director is not only the ability to interact and motivate staff, but to interact and motivate its lawyers on the various committees and in the various bar programs. Helen has always been able to accomplish these objectives with style, commitment, and good humor.**





leadership with the management of the Association, while ensuring the Bar's activities are in keeping with its strategic direction. Helen also served as Executive Director of the Rhode Island Bar Foundation, which manages the scholarship programs, administers the Bar's Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program, and funds annual grants to improve the justice system in Rhode Island.

Helen's unique advocacy for and loyalty to her staff fostered a positive and innovative atmosphere at RIBA headquarters. She has long facilitated collaboration among staff and encouraged growth, always reminding staff of their value to the Association.

Several of Helen's colleagues from over her many years of service highlighted their experiences working with her. It is clear to see that any Bar president or colleague who has served alongside her has quickly regarded her as a dear friend. While we are sorry to say goodbye to our friend and colleague, we wish her the very best in her life and new adventures!

**According to Past Bar President and current Bar Foundation President Michael R. McElroy:** "Helen is the very definition of a true professional. She has devoted her entire working life to Bar Association activities and service to the community. She is an Executive Director whose character and integrity are unquestioned. Her vision and leadership have been demonstrated through the continued growth of programs offered to the members of RIBA, but more importantly, to the members of the public served by the RIBA and by the Rhode Island Bar Foundation."

**According to Past Bar President Hon. Linda Rekas Sloan:** I can confidently say that were it not for Helen pushing me into leadership positions, I would not be where I am today on the bench. Helen changed the path of my career with her confidence, guidance, and friendship.

**According to Past Bar President David N. Bazar:** Being President of the Rhode Island Bar Association is a heavy commitment, but Helen made it a light lift. Under Helen's tutelage, the RI Bar Association has become a strong, self-sustaining organization. Through the years, she has cultivated and mentored a terrific staff. I know that Helen is nationally respected for the work she has done, but locally she is treasured. There is only one Helen Desmond McDonald.

**According to Past Bar President and current RI Bar Foundation Vice President Victoria M. Almeida:** Leadership is not about being the best. Leadership is about making everyone else better.

**According to Past Bar President Lauren E. Jones:** Helen "recruited" me, just as she has recruited any number of the leaders of the RI Bar. I was a young lawyer who wrote an article for the *Bar Journal* and got an award for it. Helen got hold of me and never let go. That's her M.O. She's very, very good at it. Her judgment about what has been best for the Bar Association and for attorney-members practicing in Rhode Island has always been spot-on. Her commitment has been almost at the level of a fiduciary. The interests of the bar and its members have been her constant concern and she has approached it as a trustee would: "How will this help or hurt my beneficiaries (the members of the Bar Association)?"

**According to Past Bar President Robert D. Oster:** There are too many superlatives for me to list in our 40 year careers and friendship. Helen is the consummate Bar professional, dedicated beyond words—I know from personal experience with her. "Integrity" is another word that stands out in my thoughts of Helen. She worked incredibly hard to promote the Bar, always a strong advocate of lawyers. I saw the Bar under her leadership grow from a two-person office to a great organization, largely due to her leadership. She and I would disagree occasionally, but not often, and we always knew where each stood—straight up. I am so happy for Helen to enjoy her retirement with Brian et al.

**According to Past Bar Association President Susan Leach DeBlasio:** Helen has always been a leader, from her first day after elevation to the position of Executive Director to her last day before retirement, looking for innovative ways to keep the Bar Association ahead of the curve, constantly developing new programs, expanding its reach to our members, adding new benefits and services, and continually helping both the Bar Association as well as the Bar Foundation evolve into the fiscally sound and programmatically strong organizations they are today. She also encouraged and supported countless lawyers over these years, extending herself without any desire for recognition, and keeping their confidences. I was lucky to be one of them.

**According to Past Bar President Lise M. Iwon:** Helen is truly one in a million, and the Rhode Island Bar Association is lucky to have had her. I believe Helen's greatest gift has been her no-nonsense, down-to-earth, discrete, but dynamic, ability to successfully manage the needs and demands of a wide range of personalities among our members and those in our Bar's leadership positions. Helen has the commonsense ability to keep people on track, and she has had an amazing gift for bringing out the best in Bar leaders and active members, ensuring our Bar stays on course.

**According to Bar President Lynda L. Laing:** Helen has always been RIBA's biggest advocate and has inspired all of us, including myself, to become active in the Bar. She has always shared her wealth of knowledge and vast experience with issues facing RIBA. I will miss her laugh and funny jokes during our meetings. Most of all, I will miss her encouraging words and helping me along the way. Congratulations Helen! RIBA has much to thank you for and now it is time for a fantastic retirement. Enjoy!

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# Tech-Facilitated Sexual Abuse During COVID-19



**Lindsay Lieberman, Esq.**  
Attorney and Consultant  
Newport, RI

**People are experimenting with dating and intimacy online through some of the thousands of websites that allow for online sexual encounters, which all hold the potential for abuse.**

As if we hadn't already been spending too much time in front of our screens, the COVID-19 pandemic has left us all home-bound and more screen-saturated than ever. Children are learning, playing, and socializing on screens. Adults are working, dating, and receiving medical care on screens. As a result, more people are becoming victims of online abuses. Cyber sexual abuse is among the many and proliferating types of cyber offenses. It is a particularly heinous crime that can cause significant harm to a victim's personal life, finances, reputation, and career.

I am a plaintiffs' attorney who specializes in cyber sexual abuse. I represent individuals who are typically going through the worst time of their lives. My typical clients are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, extortion, and/or privacy invasions. These offenses aren't new, but we've seen a drastic uptick in cases since the pandemic started. Such cyber offenses often arise in the context of other social and legal conflicts that Rhode Island lawyers encounter in their practices. This article seeks to provide guidance and practical remedies to help you when your clients confront these new and developing issues in the law.

## Cyber Sexual Offenses

Increasingly, technology plays a central role in facilitating sexual abuse. Technologies like social media, smartphones, and online communications are both the instruments for abuse and the mechanisms to proliferate the harm caused. Technology provides the platforms and means for individuals to stay intimate with one another – particularly during times in which we aren't able to be together in person. But it likewise allows for bad actors to abuse the trust of their victims and attack when relationships go bad.

For example, many of my clients are victims of nonconsensual pornography or unauthorized dissemination of indecent material,<sup>1</sup> whereby abusers distribute naked photographs or videos without the consent of the person depicted. This usually occurs after an online or offline intimate encounter. In addition to sharing intimate content through direct message and email, abusers post it publicly on social media and upload it to pornog-

raphy sites. A private moment between consenting adults turns into a humiliating exposure when the offender attaches the victim's name and other personally identifying information to the content and it starts appearing in the victim's Google search results.

Recording a partner in an intimate state without consent is a separate and distinct offense that is also criminal – regardless of whether the content is shared with third parties or not.<sup>2</sup> The crime of video voyeurism is an example of *in-person* abuse which can have detrimental consequences if the internet is used to proliferate the violation. A perpetrator may distribute such intimate material online for financial gain or to humiliate the person depicted.

We've also seen a significant uptick in "sex-tortion" cases.<sup>3</sup> People are experimenting with dating and intimacy online through some of the thousands of websites that allow for online sexual encounters, which all hold the potential for abuse. In sextortion cases, people are often groomed into relationships and tricked into exposing themselves sexually. As soon as the wrongdoer receives any sort of intimate content, they immediately make demands for money or additional sexual material.<sup>4</sup> The threat is always exposure. The victims are humiliated, horrified, and in urgent need of help. Sextortion is a crime in Rhode Island,<sup>5</sup> and on the federal level,<sup>6</sup> so legal remedies can and should be pursued. Unfortunately, many people believe they have done something wrong for having had the sexual encounter in the first place, and don't seek help but rather continue providing content or money to their abuser. They are afraid that if they seek help, or stop paying, the sextortionist will publish the content, and humiliate them in front of their loved ones, friends, employers, and colleagues.

Cyber-stalking and Cyber-harassment are both crimes that are facilitated on phones, computers, and tablets.<sup>7</sup> These offenses are frighteningly easy to perpetrate for anyone who intends to cause harm to another. Any jilted ex-lover, obsessed stranger, or bored misanthrope can simply pick up a smartphone and stalk or harass an innocent victim. Cyberstalking often involves repeated and unwanted communications through multiple plat-

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If you have not yet signed up as a member of a 2021-2022 Rhode Island Bar Association Committee, please do so today. Bar Committee membership runs from July 1st to June 30th.

**Even Bar members who served on Bar Committees this year must reaffirm their interest for the coming year, as Committee membership does not automatically carry over from one Bar year to the next.** Bar members may complete a Committee registration form online or download and return a form to the Bar. Please join no more than three committees.

We anticipate offering Bar committee participation in a hybrid manner starting in the fall, whenever possible, to accommodate those who would prefer to attend meetings virtually.

**To sign up for a 2021-2022 Bar Committee, go to the Bar's website at [ribar.com](http://ribar.com) and go to the MEMBERS LOGIN. After LOGIN, click on the BAR COMMITTEE SIGN-UP link.**

As an alternative, you may download the Bar Committee Application form appearing above the button and mail or fax it to the Bar Association. Please only use one method to register to avoid duplication. If you have any questions concerning membership or the sign-up process, please contact the Bar's Communications Director Erin Cute at (401) 421-5740 or [ecute@ribar.com](mailto:ecute@ribar.com).



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forms, such as texts, emails, and social media messages. It can include “following” or “liking” another person’s posts, contacting their friends or family, and creating harassing social media profiles, in order to continue their contact with the victim and cause them harm. Often times the abuser may use anonymizing techniques to attempt to evade detection, which can be an added challenge for law enforcement if criminal reports are made.<sup>8</sup>

Tech-facilitated abuse is also common in domestic violence cases. Abusers may install keylogging software into their victims’ phones and computers, tracking their every move online. They may read texts and communications and monitor the websites their victims visit – some of which may be visited in an effort to seek help and relief from that very pattern of abuse. This kind of surveillance often compounds and enhances other methods of control and manipulation in abusive relationships. Concern about domestic violence is at an all-time high considering many of these survivors are stuck at home with their abusers without the outlet of being able to go to work or see friends during the pandemic.

### Cases You May See And How You Can Help Your Clients

These types of cyber sexual offenses arise in various legal cases you will encounter in your Rhode Island practice. All of these offenses are criminal, so if the client is willing, a police report and criminal case may be appropriate. However, turning to the police isn’t always the ideal choice for people suffering such privacy violations. Survivors are often embarrassed and prefer to handle these situations quietly and discreetly.

For victims of domestic violence, you could assist them in obtaining a restraining order in Family Court or District Court. You might ask the judge for special terms and conditions to be added to the standard “no contact” language to cover the cybercrimes specifically. For example, the judge may require the deletion of naked photographs, prohibit the distribution of intimate images, and remove tracking software from devices.

Privacy violations are often found in divorce cases. Vengeful spouses who record their partners in the nude or in sexual encounters without their permission may try to use the content against their partner in a proceeding. Tracking a partner’s behaviors online in an effort to prove infidelity or other misconduct is also common and yet strongly discouraged as these behaviors may be criminal hacking.<sup>9</sup> In contentious divorces, your clients may benefit if you can identify and call attention to such criminal acts.

In business disputes, I’ve seen bad actors attempt to use inap-

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Free and available for all actively practicing Rhode Island attorney members, the Bar’s List Serve gives you immediate, 24/7, open-door access to the knowledge and experience of over 700 Rhode Island lawyers. If you have a question about matters relating to your practice of law, you can post the question on the List Serve, and it will be emailed to all list serve members. Any attorney who wishes to provide advice or guidance can, and hopefully will, quickly respond. Help us grow our online community by joining TODAY! Visit [ribar.com](http://ribar.com) and the Members Only section, and click [List Serve](#) for instructions to join.

appropriate material obtained as leverage to negotiate a desired outcome. If the leverage is sexual or private in nature, this may be extortion and a serious violation of the law. In employment settings, employees may be suffering (or perpetrating) cyber abuse on their work computers, impacting their performance and experiences at work.

Not only does Rhode Island have criminal laws that address many of these wrongs,<sup>10</sup> the state likewise has privacy tort laws that allow clients to sue their perpetrators for monetary damages and injunctions. The following civil claims may apply to a case of cyber sexual abuse depending on the facts: Intrusion Upon Seclusion, Appropriation of Likeness, Publicity to Private Life, and False Light.<sup>11</sup>

Cyber offenses aren't going to disappear as the pandemic abates. Cyber sexual abuse is enabled by technology and will continue to rise in frequency and severity. As technology evolves, people will find new harmful ways to use it to hurt one another. If you have a case involving cyber sexual abuse, don't be scared away by the technological and sexual nature of the offenses. These are serious violations, and legal remedies are available.

*Lindsay Lieberman is a sexual privacy attorney and legal consultant with over ten years of experience in criminal and civil court. Specializing in sexual abuse, Lindsay brings claims on behalf of victims and consults with firms and organizations on their sexual misconduct policies. Lindsay welcomes your inquiries at info@lindsaylieberman.com.*

#### ENDNOTE

1 R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-64-3(a), *Unauthorized dissemination of indecent material*. "Nonconsensual pornography" is commonly used to describe this offense. However, the term is a misnomer, as the word "pornography" suggests that this content is entertainment. Because this type of material is shared without consent, it should not be deemed pornography.

2 R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-64-2, *Video voyeurism*.

3 R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-42-2, *Extortion and blackmail*.

4 It is commonly referred to as "Sextortion" when the threat is sexual in nature – either the content threatened to be shared is sexual or the demand is for additional sexual content.

5 R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-64-3(e).

6 18 U.S.C. 41.

7 R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-52-4.2.

8 Cyberstalking can also be prosecuted at the Federal level. See 18 U.S. Code § 2261A.

9 R.I. Gen. Laws § Section 11-52, *Computer Crimes*.

10 See *Unauthorized Dissemination of Indecent Material, Video Voyeurism, Cyberstalking*, R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-64-3, R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-52.4.2

11 R.I. Gen. Laws § 9-1-28.1. ◇

## Establish Yourself As An Expert in An Area of Law

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# Do you or your family need help with any personal challenges?

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Confidential and free help, information, assessment and referral for personal challenges are available **now** for Rhode Island Bar Association members and their families. This no-cost assistance is available through the Bar's contract with **Coastline Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** and through the members of the Bar Association's Lawyers Helping Lawyers (LHL) Committee. To discuss your concerns, or those you may have about a colleague, you may contact a LHL member, or go directly to professionals at Coastline EAP who provide confidential consultation for a wide range of personal concerns including but not limited to: balancing work and family, depression, anxiety, domestic violence, childcare, eldercare, grief, career satisfaction, alcohol and substance abuse, and problem gambling.

When contacting Coastline EAP, please identify yourself as a Rhode Island Bar Association member or family member. A Coastline EAP Consultant will

briefly discuss your concerns to determine if your situation needs immediate attention. If not, initial appointments are made within 24 to 48 hours at a location convenient to you. Or, visit our website at **coastlineeap.com** (company name login is "RIBAR"). Please contact Coastline EAP by telephone: 401-732-9444 or toll-free: 1-800-445-1195.

*Lawyers Helping Lawyers Committee members choose this volunteer assignment because they understand the issues and want to help you find answers and appropriate courses of action. Committee members listen to your concerns, share their experiences, offer advice and support, and keep all information completely confidential.*

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## Lawyers Helping Lawyers Committee Members Protect Your Privacy

SOLACE, an acronym for Support of Lawyers, All Concern Encouraged, is a new Rhode Island Bar Association program allowing Bar members to reach out, in a meaningful and compassionate way, to their colleagues. SOLACE

communications are through voluntary participation in an email-based network through which Bar members may ask for help, or volunteer to assist others, with medical or other matters.

Issues addressed through SOLACE may range from a need for information about, and assistance with, major medical problems, to recovery from an office fire and from the need for temporary professional space, to help for an out-of-state family member.

The program is quite simple, but the effects are significant. Bar members notify the Bar Association when they need help, or learn of another Bar member with a need, or if they have something to share or donate. Requests for, or offers of, help are screened and then directed through the SOLACE volunteer email

## SOLACE ..... Helping Bar Members in Times of Need

network where members may then respond. On a related note, members using SOLACE may request, and be assured of, anonymity for any requests for, or offers of, help.

To sign-up for SOLACE, please go to the Bar's website at [ribar.com](http://ribar.com), login to the Members Only section, scroll down the menu, click on the SOLACE Program Sign-Up, and follow the prompts. Signing up includes your name and email address on the Bar's SOLACE network. As our network grows, there will be increased opportunities to help and be helped by your colleagues. And, the SOLACE email list also keeps you informed of what Rhode Island Bar Association members are doing for each other in times of need. These communications provide a reminder that if you have a need, help is only an email away. If you need help, or know another Bar member who does, please contact Executive Director Helen McDonald at [hmcdonald@ribar.com](mailto:hmcdonald@ribar.com) or 401.421.5740.

## 2021 Chief Justice Joseph R. Weisberger Judicial Excellence Award

Named in honor of its first recipient, retired Chief Justice Joseph R. Weisberger, this Award is given to a Rhode Island jurist for exemplifying and encouraging the highest level of competence, integrity, judicial temperament, ethical conduct, and professionalism.



**Hon. Gilbert V. Indeglia**, Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court (ret.), is honored with the 2021 *Chief Justice Joseph R. Weisberger Judicial Excellence Award*. Justice Indeglia was nominated to the Supreme Court by former Governor Donald L. Carcieri, confirmed by the General Assembly, and sworn in on April 28, 2010. He was born in Providence and educated at Classical High School. He graduated from Boston College cum laude

in 1963 and the University of Michigan Law School with distinction in 1966. After admission to the Rhode Island and federal bars, he began his practice of law as a staff attorney in the Office of Economic Opportunity at Neighborhood Legal Services in Providence. At the same time, he began six years of service in the Rhode Island Air National Guard. He moved to the firm of Abedon & Abedon in 1968, partnered in a firm with his uncle, Angelo Cianciarulo, for seven years, and then ran a solo practice for 10 years until he was appointed to the District Court. Justice Indeglia served in local government, first as Probate Judge and Assistant Town Solicitor in South Kingstown from 1971 to 1973, and later as a member of the Town Council from 1977 to 1984, serving two years as its vice president and four years as its president. In 1984, Justice Indeglia was elected to the Rhode Island House of Representatives, where he served three terms including tenure as deputy minority leader. Justice Indeglia served as an Associate Judge of the District Court from 1989 to 2000 and as an Associate Justice of the Superior Court from 2000 to 2010. He is a former member of the Supreme Court's Advisory Committee on the Code of Judicial Ethics and the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Commission. He has instructed at Roger Williams University School of Law and has been a frequent lecturer at other venues. He is a co-founder and former member of the Board of Directors of the Courthouse Center for the Arts, and co-founder and member of the South Kingstown Land Trust. An advocate for mass transit, Justice Indeglia is a member of the Rhode Island Passenger Train Association.

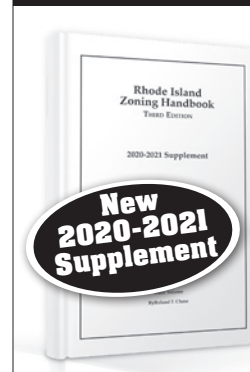
According to Attorney Lauren E. Jones: *Appearing before (Justice Indeglia) was a pleasure, even when he was clearly not in support of my case. Like Chief Justice Weisberger, Justice Indeglia was always courteous and respectful, while asking pointed and difficult questions. While he did not shy away from participating in oral argument, he also was a quiet, constantly attentive presence on the right side of the bench. Again, like Chief Justice Weisberger, he never dominated oral argument, always allowed attorneys to give*

*full answers to his questions, always allowed the other members of the court to engage with counsel, and typically only injected a few questions. But when he did ask questions, they were direct, specific, and often got to the nub of the issue. Even when counsel did not answer the questions he asked, he remained courteous, sometimes pressing and sometimes simply deferring. He was confident enough in his own thinking that he did not need to dominate.*

According to Clerk of the RI Supreme Court Debra A. Saunders: *I learned a great deal from (Justice Indeglia's) character, intellect, kindness and grace. One of my fondest memories is as a young prosecutor in the Newport County District Court when he suggested that we move our trial to the historic Newport Colony House to commemorate RI Independence Day. It was a great day – not just because I won – but because he invited us to be a part of something truly special and memorable. It was one of the first times that I realized that as an attorney I am part of something that is so much bigger than myself. I am a better lawyer and person for knowing him and for that I am truly grateful.*

According to RI Superior Court Associate Justice Daniel A. Procaccini and previous Weisberger Judicial Excellence Award recipient: *As I recall Justice Indeglia's approach to judging, Socrates described it perfectly: "Four things belong to a judge: to hear courteously, to answer wisely, to consider soberly, and to decide impartially." Justice Indeglia's body of work on the Superior Court was devoid of attitude or predisposition. His courtroom was a level playing field for all and a place where the pursuit of "justice" was palpable. As a past recipient of the Weisberger Award, I would be honored to have Justice Indeglia join our ranks.*

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## 2021 Joseph T. Houlihan Lifetime Mentor Award

Named for the late Joseph T. Houlihan who was known for his generosity of spirit and legal expertise in and out of the courtroom, the Joseph T. Houlihan Lifetime Mentor Award honors individuals who, during their careers, have consistently demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to successfully mentoring in the Rhode Island legal community. The Award recognizes an attorney who serves as a role model to other lawyers in Rhode Island and who has significantly contributed to the profession and/or the community, and those who, with their excellent counsel, have excelled as mentors and contributed to the ideals of ethics, civility, professionalism and legal skills.



**Lise M. Iwon, Esq.**, 2010-2011 Rhode Island Bar Association President, is honored with the Rhode Island Bar Association 2021 Joseph T. Houlihan Lifetime Mentor Award. She received a BA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1978 and her JD from the Franklin Pierce Law Center in 1983. Lise began her legal career as a partner in the firm Margolis, Laurence & Iwon which later became Laurence & Iwon. Her practice was primarily focused

on family law; civil rights; and sexual orientation, gender, and health discrimination. She has been a certified divorce mediator for the RI Family Court since 1995. She has served on the Bar's House of Delegates since 1992 as well as the Executive Committee for twelve years. She has been a RI Bar Foundation Fellow since 1998. Lise has dedicated much of her legal career to public service and increasing access to justice for all. She has volunteered for the American Civil Liberties Union since 1983, handling cases in both state and federal courts regarding free speech, student rights, child custody, discrimination, and constitutional law. She has also volunteered for the RI Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyer Program since its inception in 1986 and was honored with the Bar's Pro Bono Publico Award in 1988. She is one of only a handful of attorneys to have received the Bar's Continuing Service Award twice for her continued dedication to pro bono through the Program. Lise has been recognized for her service and expertise countless times throughout her career. She was the recipient of the Bar's Dorothy Lohmann Community Service Award in 2005. She has twice received the American Bar Association's Pro Bono Publico Award as well as

their Stonewall Award from the Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in 2015. Lise was honored with the National Organization of Women's Susan B. Anthony Award in recognition for work on behalf of sexually abused women in 1990. She was also the recipient of the Julie Pell Empowerment Award for Social Change and Civic Engagement in Rhode Island. Throughout her years of practice, she also offered her time and knowledge to the Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Rhode Island Foundation, the Cane Child Development Center, The Court Appointed Special Advocate, the Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County, and the Rhode Island Council of Family Mediators, among many others. She has also educated her fellow Bar members through countless Bar CLE programs and committees, Roger Williams University Law School lectures and courses, Supreme Court committees, the Edward P. Gallogly Family Law Inn of Courts seminars, and as a guest lecturer at Rhode Island College. She has prepared amicus briefs on numerous issues including child custody, drug testing, discrimination, due process and other constitutional issues in both the Rhode Island Supreme Court and the federal court.

According to past Houlihan Award winner and RI Legal Services Deputy Director Janet Gilligan: "*(Lise's) enthusiastic personality and personal charm often encouraged others to accept her offers of help. As a result, she succeeded in teaching many attorneys how to navigate the confusing waters of the Family Court courtroom. As she developed her own skills and reputation, the number of people who benefitted from her assistance increased. She became expert in various substantive areas of family law, and it was well known that any attorney could call Lise and receive the benefit of her expertise.*"

*An instance of formalized mentoring is Lise's involvement in 2016 and 2018, with a joint project of the Rhode Island Bar Association and Rhode Island Legal Services, called the Partners Overcoming Domestic Violence Project (PODV). Lise participated in the design, creation, and implementation of the PODV. She donated many hours to planning the extensive training program, to teaching at its sessions, and in mentoring her two-attorney team to the end of their case. Since it was Lise, she also assisted other mentors as the project went on.*

*As an adjunct professor of law at Roger Williams University School of Law, Lise developed mentoring relationships with her students, and the line to speak to her after class was long and intense. At the end of each semester, Lise would confidently announce to each of her fifty students, 'You have a free pass to call me for legal advice for the rest of your lives!! Call me.' It was clear to everyone that she meant it; and over the years many have taken advantage of her extraordinary generosity."*

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## 2021 Dorothy Lohmann Community Service Award

The Rhode Island Bar Association's Dorothy Lohmann Community Service Award is named in memory of Rhode Island attorney Dorothy Lohmann who devoted her entire professional life to helping the poor. The Dorothy Lohmann Community Service Award honors lawyers who make noteworthy contributions in time and effort to a Rhode Island non-profit organization on a strictly voluntary, non-paid basis.



**Nancy Davis, Esq.**, of Cranston, is recognized for her outstanding work on behalf of Habitat for Humanity of Rhode Island – Greater Providence, Inc. Habitat for Humanity Greater Providence is a chartered affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International. They strive to build decent, affordable housing for needy individuals in their geographic areas of Providence, Central Falls, North Providence, and Pawtucket, though they will soon merge

with Habitat for Humanity East Bay and be responsible for more areas. They recently received a considerable grant that will allow their organization to expand beyond the traditional home building model and work to repair senior citizens' homes so they can age in place.

Nancy Davis has volunteered for Habitat for Humanity Greater Providence for approximately 21 years. She volunteers her time and makes herself available at a moment's notice, assisting with any and all real estate legal issues that arise. She analyzes deeds that were drafted in the 1980s and will provide opinions on the various restrictions, she assists when they are contacted by a bank or subsequent purchaser of a Habitat home, and assists with rental contracts, to name just a few of the ways Nancy helps the organization.

According to the Habitat for Humanity Greater Providence's President of the Board of Directors John Meara: *It should be noted that Nancy does not volunteer in hopes of building relationships where she ultimately lands a client. She volunteers out of the goodness of her heart and her desire to assist our organization in working towards fulfilling our mission. Nancy is also very kindhearted and a delightful person to interact with. She is wholly deserving of the Dorothy Lohmann Community Service Award.*



**Allyson M. Quay, Esq.**, of Howe & Garside in Newport, is recognized for her outstanding work on behalf of Providence Youth Student Movement. PrYSM was founded nearly twenty years ago as a way for Southeast Asian youth and their families to organize to find solutions to violence within and outside their community. PrYSM's Community Defense Project (CDP) provides legal services connected to our organizing work to help victims

of police misconduct and other forms of racial injustice.

Over the last six years, Allyson Quay has given incredibly freely of her time, her experience, skills, and compassion, wells that never seem to run dry, in service to over 30 clients in cases where she represented people who have been arrested while protesting in search of a more just, equitable, free, and sustainable society. She routinely stayed awake until 2 or 3 am to make sure everyone who needed a bail commissioner to be released got one and would take long and lonely watches at a police station until everyone was released. She has also provided legal support, guidance, and advice to dozens of other people whose troubles with the legal system never reached the point where they needed formal representation, generally because she was able to resolve the matter before such representation was needed. Not only did Allyson represent individual clients pro bono, but she also developed a triage system for the arrests. She also worked all the lists to recruit her colleagues in the defense bar to take cases pro and low bono.

According to PyRSM's Co-Executive Director Steven Dy: *The most valuable thing about Allyson's volunteer commitment is that she's just there. When you need her, she appears like one of those magical creatures in the storybooks – finding and filling the gaps of what's so needed. And in doing that, her confidence and kindness just spread a feeling of reassurance – not only in her clients but in our case, to a nonprofit community organization desperately trying to meet the urgent needs of young people who have been buffeted by the perfect storm of pandemic and social unrest.*

## 2021 Volunteer Lawyer Program Pro Bono Publico Award Recipients

Established in 1987, this award recognizes the outstanding efforts of attorneys who have provided equal access to justice to the needy through the Bar Association's Pro Bono Programs during the past few years. Award criteria includes: case type and difficulty, the number of hours served, and the total number of cases. Length of service through the program, attorney's professionalism, compassion and commitment to public service are considered.



### Volunteer Lawyer Program 2021 Pro Bono Publico Award

**Janne Reisch, Esq.** received an MS in Chemical Engineering from the University Fresenius in Wiesbaden Germany and her law degree from the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, MA. She immigrated to the US in 1998 with her husband and young daughters and her initial career was in the pharmaceutical industry. With

the unwavering support of her family, Janne entered law school in 2011 and today is a sole practitioner in Westerly. She is also admitted to practice in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Attorney Reisch has been a member of the Volunteer Lawyer Program since 2016. From 2018 she has contributed 210+ pro bono hours, the majority of which have been for VLP family law matters. Always willing to accept a new case, Janne is currently handling an ongoing custody matter but also accepts cases in other areas of law. A colleague handling a difficult pro bono guardianship matter let the program staff know Janne had volunteered to be a pro bono GAL. This occurred when the placement of a seriously ill senior citizen was being challenged during the height of COVID. Communication had broken down during an intense dispute between the family and hospital until Attorney Reisch became involved. Attorney Elizabeth Santilli stated the following: *If she did not spend 50 plus hours in this role, I'd be shocked. On discharge day I know her entire day was devoted to facilitating problem-solving. Many days ran into the evening with emails and phone calls. Her extraordinary effort for this family should be noted!*

In addition to the Volunteer Lawyer Program, Janne is a member of the Bar Association's Public Service Involvement Committee and Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. She is dedicated to her community and is involved with numerous activities to inform and help others. She is the volunteer legal guardian of two handicapped adults and has opened her door to international exchange students, soccer coaches, traveling artists, and seasonal workers. Furthermore, Janne is the Treasurer of the League of Women Voters of South County and a member of the Board of Canvassers in Westerly.

A VLP client sent in the following evaluation that reflects her constant compassion and commitment to justice, *Janne Reisch, Esq. relieved my burdens by finishing my case. She was kind and professional and provided the light at the end of the tunnel.*



### US Armed Forces Legal Services Project 2021 Pro Bono Publico Award

**James J. Bagley, Esq.** graduated from the University of Rhode Island and received his law degree from Roger Williams University School of Law. He is an Associate at the Law Office of Leonard Cordeiro in East Providence where he handles all aspects of Social Security Disability matters. His practice also includes personal injury,

workers compensation, criminal defense, and family law.

Attorney Bagley has always had a deep interest in volunteering for those who serve our nation. Starting in law school, he organized volunteers to help with bingo night at the nearby Bristol Veteran's Home and has been a volunteer lawyer for Operation Stand Down in the past. He joined the Bar Association's US Armed Forces Legal Services Project in 2013 and within the last two years alone has contributed an amazing 260 plus hours of pro bono, including an appeals case for a disabled war veteran. He is currently handling a custody case for a veteran and a divorce for a senior citizen. His dedication to the Bar Association's pro bono effort extends to his membership in the Volunteer Lawyer Program and Pro Bono Program for the Elderly but his first calling for pro bono work is accepting cases through the Armed Forces Legal Services Project. James is also involved in volunteering for the Bar Association's Law Day events and is a member of the Lawyer Referral Service.

In addition to his love of the law, James has a major interest in the fine arts, especially improvisational comedy. Prior to the pandemic he actively trained in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and taught and performed improvised comedy. During COVID, this very busy and proud Dad of Luc 8 and Pepper, 8 months, continued his performances virtually.

Attorney Bagley sums up his view of helping others by stating the following: *There is no better reward, as an attorney, than calling someone who has no expectation of the positive in life to let them know they have won their case.*

## Rhode Island Bar Journal Lauren E. Jones Writing Award

Established in 1986, Rhode Island Bar Journal Lauren E. Jones, Esq. Writing Award authors are selected on the basis of: 1) presentation, clarity, grammar, organization, and need for editorial revisions; 2) article interest and information presentation; 3) information usefulness for the practice of law, presentation of an important legal issue, and timeliness; and 4) accuracy and depth of research and information provided.



**John F. Corrigan, Esq.**, of John F. Corrigan Law P.C., LLC, received the 2021 Rhode Island Bar Journal Lauren E. Jones, Esq. Writing Award for his article, *Going Out of Business: Revocation or Dissolution?*, published in the *Rhode Island Bar Journal*: Volume 69, Number 2, September/October 2020.

The Editors and Editorial Board of the *Rhode Island Bar Journal* congratulate Attorney Corrigan and strongly encourage all Rhode Island Bar Association members to read the Article

Selection Criteria included in every issue of the *Rhode Island Bar Journal*. Based on those guidelines, please submit articles for consideration to: *Rhode Island Bar Journal* Editor Erin Cute via email: [ecute@ribar.com](mailto:ecute@ribar.com). For information, telephone (401) 421-5740.

As a reminder, this article, and the full contents of *Rhode Island Bar Journals* from the July/August 2009 issue forward, are available and may be viewed online and downloaded by clicking on the *Bar Journal* icon on the Bar's website home page. Articles may also be accessed through Casemaker, the free-to-Bar-members, 24/7, online law library on the Bar's website.

## 2021 Rhode Island Bar Association Honorary Members

At the 2021 Annual Meeting Luncheon held on June 25th at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick, the Rhode Island Bar Association recognized and honored the distinguished attorneys who achieved a noteworthy 50 years of service to the legal profession in both 2020 and 2021, since the pandemic prevented the Bar from hosting a proper celebration last year.

### Honoring our colleagues achieving fifty years of legal service in 2021

Richard I. Abrams, Esq.  
Eugene A. Amelio, Esq.  
Paul A. Anderson, Esq.  
Richard A. Boren, Esq.  
Kenneth A. Colaluca, Esq.  
John F. Corrigan, Esq.  
Richard P. D'Addario, Esq.

James H. Farrell, Esq.  
William E. George, Esq.  
Charles Greenwood, Esq.  
Hon. Michael A. Higgins  
Kinnaird Howland, Esq.  
Raymond E. Lambert, Esq.  
Hon. Richard A. Licht

Biagio L. Longo, Esq.  
Thomas A. Lynch, Esq.  
Matthew T. Marcello III, Esq.  
Thomas J. McAndrew, Esq.  
John V. McCloskey, Esq.  
James J. McGair, Esq.  
Steven H. Musen, Esq.

Hon. Edward H. Newman  
Richard M. Peirce, Esq.  
Raymond R. Pezza, Esq.  
George M. Prescott, Esq.  
Brendan P. Smith, Esq.  
Ronald A. Tutalo, Esq.  
Marcia McCabe Wilbur, Esq.

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(401) 739-4500  
[Mike@favilaw.com](mailto:Mike@favilaw.com)

## 2021 Rhode Island Law Day – *American Society and the Rule of Law*



The Rhode Island Law Day Committee, chaired by Rhode Island Supreme Court Associate Justice (ret.) Gilbert V. Indeglia, voted to conduct the majority of Law Day presentations virtually again this year due to the uncertainty of class schedules related

to the pandemic. Teachers received a PowerPoint presentation put together by volunteer attorneys and were given the option of having an attorney and judge team join them for a virtual presentation on or around Law Day, April 30, 2021.

We want to thank all of the attorneys and judges listed below who volunteered their time for a virtual Law Day program. We sincerely appreciate their generous efforts and willingness to adapt to a virtual format. A special thank you is needed for William Connell, Esq. and Jillian Nobis, Esq., the volunteers who designed an excellent and informative slide show which was distributed to schools on the Law Day topic.



One team that was happy to be able to present in person this year included Bar Secretary Christopher S. Gontarz (left) and RI District Court Magistrate J. Patrick O'Neil (right) who presented to Dr. Michael J. Browner's (middle) classroom at Frank E. Thompson Middle School in Newport.

### Rhode Island Bar Association

Steve Bagian, Esq.  
MaryJo Carr, Esq.  
William Connell, Esq.  
Angelyne Cooper, Esq.  
David Coughlin, Esq.  
Richard P. D'Addario, Esq.  
Marc Desisto, Esq.  
Gina DiCenso, Esq.  
Mary Dunn, Esq.  
David Fitzpatrick, Esq.  
Philip Gasbarro, Esq.  
Jenna Giguere, Esq.  
Michael Goldberg, Esq.  
Amy Goins, Esq.  
Christopher Gontarz, Esq.  
Jennifer Griffith, Esq.  
Michael Hagopian, Esq.  
Robert Humm, Esq.  
John Izzo, Esq.  
Lynda Laing, Esq.  
Melissa Larsen, Esq.  
Tracy Laignon, Esq.  
Thomas W. Lyons III, Esq.  
Valerie Leon, Esq.  
Mary Welsh McBurney, Esq.  
Mackenzie McBurney, Esq.  
Samantha McCarthy, Esq.  
Carolyn Medina, Esq.

Eric Miller, Esq.  
Sarah Miller, Esq.  
Mark B. Morse, Esq.  
Jeri Muccio, Esq.  
Diana Pearson, Esq.  
Matthew Perkins, Esq.  
Kristin Pettey, Esq.  
Sarah Oster Kelly, Esq.  
Gregory Sorbello, Esq.  
Nicholas Solitro, Esq.  
J. Patrick Youngs, Esq.

### Rhode Island Judiciary

Hon. Alberto Aponte Cardona  
Hon. Keith A. Cardoza, Jr.  
Hon. William E. Carnes, Jr.  
Hon. Alfredo T. Conte  
Hon. Melissa A. Darigan  
Hon. Lauren D'Ambra  
Hon. Michael DiChiro, Jr.  
Hon. Melissa R. Dubose  
Hon. Brian A. Goldman  
Hon. Alan R. Goulart  
Hon. Gilbert V. Indeglia (ret.)  
Hon. Stephen M. Isherwood  
Hon. Paul T. Jones  
Hon. Susan L. Kenney  
Hon. Erika Kruse Weller  
Hon. Jeffrey A. Lanphear  
Hon. Richard A. Licht  
Hon. Melissa Long  
Hon. Karen Lynch Bernard  
Hon. Erin Lynch Prata  
Hon. Luis M. Matos  
Hon. John F. McBurney, III  
Hon. Mary E. McCaffrey  
Hon. Susan E. McGuirl  
Hon. Edward H. Newman  
Hon. J. Patrick O'Neil  
Hon. Elizabeth Ortiz Whited  
Hon. Susan Pepin Fay  
Hon. Richard Raspallo  
Hon. Kevin B. Reall  
Hon. Linda Rekas Sloan  
Hon. William P. Robinson  
Hon. Christopher Smith  
Hon. Brian P. Stern  
Hon. Sarah Taft-Carter  
Hon. Brian Van Couyghen  
Hon. Netti C. Vogel  
Hon. Pamela Woodcock-Pfeiffer

## 2021 Hon. Francis J. Darigan, Jr. Rhode Island Law Day Essay Contest



Celebrating Veronica's and McKenzie's awards during a ceremony at the McGrath Judicial Complex in Wakefield were (l to r): RI Bar Association President Richard P. D'Addario, RI Superior Court Associate Justice (ret) and initiator and namesake of the RI Law Day Essay Contest Award Francis J. Darigan, Jr., RI Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell, Veronica Sabatino, McKenzie Gardner, Narragansett High School teacher Mathew Joubert, and Law Day Committee Chairperson and RI Supreme Court Associate Justice (ret) Gilbert V. Indeglia.

The Rhode Island Law Day (RILD) Committee, with particular help from the Rhode Island Bar Association, the Rhode Island Judiciary, Roger Williams University School of Law, and the Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association, sponsored the 2021 *Hon. Francis J. Darigan, Jr. Rhode Island Law Day Essay Contest*. Open to all Rhode Island 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students, the contest focused on American Society and the Rule of Law, the same topic offered through this year's RILD Classroom Programs.

Veronica Sabatino, a student at Narragansett High School, won first place in this year's contest. Veronica received a \$1,000 scholastic award made possible through the combined generosity of the Rhode Island Bar Association and the Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association. She also received a personalized engraved trophy cup, and her school received the Hon. Francis J. Darigan, Jr. Rhode Island Law Day Essay Contest trophy cup for a one-year display, and a permanent plaque commemorating her achievement. And, thanks to the generosity of the Edward P. Gallogly Family Law Inns of Court, a second place winner, McKenzie Gardner, also a Narragansett High School student, was awarded a \$250 scholastic award and a personalized engraved trophy cup.



Essay contest winners Veronica Sabatino (left) and McKenzie Gardner (right) received their awards at a ceremony held at the McGrath Judicial Complex in June.

## HONOR ROLL

# Volunteers Serving Rhode Islanders' Legal Needs

The Rhode Island Bar Association applauds the following attorneys for their outstanding pro bono service through the Bar's Volunteer Lawyer Program, Elderly Pro Bono Program, VLP Mentor Program, and US Armed Forces Legal Services Project during April 2021 and May 2021.

### APRIL 2021

#### Volunteer Lawyer Program

Crystal Abreu, Esq., *Frank S. Lombardi Law Associates, P.C.*  
Barbara A. Barrow, Esq., *Moore, Virgadamo & Lynch, Ltd.*  
Andrew H. Berg, Esq., *Sammartino & Berg*  
Robert J. Burke, Esq., *Central Falls*  
Michael A. Castner, Esq., *Jamestown*  
Michael F. Cuqua, Esq., *Michael Cuqua, Esq. Attorney at Law*  
Nicholas A. DaSilva, Esq., *Law Offices of Edward G. Lawson*  
Jeffrey L. Eger, Esq., *Warwick*  
John F. Killoy, Jr. Esq., *Law Office of John F. Killoy, Jr., LLC*  
Robert H. Larder, Esq., *Woonsocket*  
Laurie A. Meier, Esq., *Providence*  
Richard A. Pacia, Esq., *Pawtucket*  
Kimberly Ann Page, Esq., *North Kingstown*  
Susan M. Pires, Esq., *The Law Office of Susan Pires*  
Janne Reisch, Esq., *Janne Reisch, Attorney at Law*  
Frank A. Ribezzo, Jr., Esq., *Law Office of Devane, Fogarty & Ribezzo*

#### Elderly Pro Bono Program

Robert A. Arabian, Esq., *Arabian Law Offices*  
David N. Bazar, Esq., *Bazar & Associates, P.C.*  
Andrew S. Caslowitz, Esq., *Rappoport, DeGiovanni & Caslowitz, Inc.*  
Frederick A. Costello, Esq., *Warwick*  
Gregory S. Dias, Esq., *East Providence*  
Thomas M. Dickinson, Esq., *Law Offices of Thomas M. Dickinson*  
Christopher E. Friel, Esq., *Law Office of Christopher E. Friel, LLC*  
Thomas D. Goldberg, Esq., *Goldberg Law Offices*  
John J. Lanni, Esq., *East Providence*  
Robert H. Larder, Esq., *Woonsocket*  
Mark B. Laroche, Esq., *Providence*  
Rachael K. Pierce, Esq., *Figliola & Romano*  
Jack D. Pitts, Esq., *Pitts & Burns*  
David F. Reilly, Esq., *Law Office of David Reilly*  
Gregory P. Sorbello, Esq., *Peter M. Iascone & Associates, LTD.*  
David J. Strachman, Esq., *McIntyre Tate LLP*

### MAY 2021

#### Volunteer Lawyer Program

Crystal Abreu, Esq., *Frank S. Lombardi Law Associates, P.C.*  
Robert A. Arabian, Esq., *Arabian Law Offices*  
Neville J. Bedford, Esq., *Providence*  
Elizabeth A. Bourke, Esq., *Hines & Corrigan, Inc*  
Michael A. Castner, Esq., *Jamestown*  
Geraldyn M. Cook, Esq., *Coventry*  
William J. Delaney, Esq., *The Delaney Law Firm, LLC*  
Joshua R. Karns, Esq., *Karns and Kerrison*  
Robert H. Larder, Esq., *Woonsocket*  
Tracy A. Loignon, Esq., *Warwick*  
Eileen C. O'Shaughnessy, Esq., *Providence*  
Charles A. Pisaturo, Jr., Esq., *Providence*  
Allyson M. Quay, Esq., *The Law Offices of Howe & Garside, Ltd.*  
Frank A. Ribezzo, Jr., Esq., *Law Office of Devane, Fogarty & Ribezzo*  
Timothy J. Robenhymer, Esq., *Warwick*

#### Elderly Pro Bono Program

Crystal Abreu, Esq., *Frank S. Lombardi Law Associates, P.C.*  
Kerri L. Anzivino, Esq., *Warwick*  
Armando E. Batastini, Esq., *Nixon Peabody, LLP*  
David N. Bazar, Esq., *Bazar & Associates, P.C.*  
Michael A. Castner, Esq., *Jamestown*  
Joanne C. D'Ambra, Esq., *Cranston*  
Gregory S. Dias, Esq., *East Providence*  
Jacqueline M. Grasso, Esq., *Grasso Law Offices*  
Patrick O. Hayes, Jr., Esq., *Corcoran, Peckham, Hayes, Leys & Olaynack, P.C.*  
Kevin D. Heitke, Esq., *Heitke Cook Associates LLC*  
Elizabeth Peterson Santilli, Esq., *Cutcliffe Archetto & Santilli*

#### VLP Mentor Program

James L. Sheridan, Esq., *Narragansett*

#### US Armed Forces Legal Services Project

James J. Bagley, Esq., *The Law Office of Leonard M. Cordeiro*

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For information and to join a Bar pro bono program, please contact the Bar's **Public Services Director Susan Fontaine** at: [sfontaine@ribar.com](mailto:sfontaine@ribar.com) or **401-421-7758**. For your convenience, Public Services program applications may be accessed on the Bar's website at [ribar.com](http://ribar.com) and completed online.

### An Interview with Emily Heisler, Esq.

by Nicole P. Dyszlewski, Esq., MLIS and Meghan L. Hopkins, Esq.

Focus on the Future is a spotlight series where members of the *Rhode Island Bar Journal* Editorial Board interview attorneys who are newer to the Rhode Island Bar.

> **What is your current title and position?**

I am an associate attorney at Mancini Law LLC. My practice engages exclusively in Workers' Compensation Law, representing employers. Before starting my current position, I clerked for the Rhode Island Workers' Compensation Court.

> **What do you actually do all day?**

I am always busy. For a small office, we have a lot of clients. I spend my workdays reviewing medical records, deposing doctors and employees, conducting legal research, and attending hearings. This morning, I had 3 pre-trial conferences, although all were via telephone because of COVID-19. However, we look forward to returning to the courtroom in person again, hopefully soon.

> **Can you tell us what you have learned while being a new attorney in Rhode Island?**

I have had a wonderful experience. As a law student, I interned at the Rhode Island Attorney General's office three times and knew almost nothing about the Workers' Compensation Court. When I began my clerkship with that Court, I was blown away by the differences in litigation practice among the different courts in Rhode Island. I have the pleasure of working in an area which has a small bar and is so collegial. Someone once described the Workers' Compensation bar to me as "Rhode Island's hidden legal gem," and it really is.

> **Who is your biggest inspiration inside or outside of law?**

My inspiration comes from both of my parents. My dad exemplifies kindness, decency, and intelligence. My mom is an example of courage, leadership, and independence. Together they inspire my strong work ethic and have given me the support to pursue a career I am passionate about.

> **What do you do to de-stress?**

I spend time with my boyfriend, who is also a new attorney. We have a dog, Lumi, who we rescued. Her name means snow in Finnish. We enjoy hiking and exploring all the beautiful scenery in Rhode Island – especially the water views. I also just got a Peloton and am enjoying the convenience of it after a busy workday.

> **What is the next goal you hope to accomplish in your career?**

I would like to develop my reputation as both a fair and effective lawyer. In the future, I would like to work toward becoming a partner at my current firm or starting a firm of my own. I would also like to teach a Workers' Compensation law course at RWUSOL as an Adjunct Professor someday.

> **What is your favorite restaurant in Rhode Island?**

Pomodoro Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria in Bristol is my favorite place to get dinner. They have the best vodka sauce.



EMILY HEISLER, ESQ.

> **You are not originally from Bristol – how did you end up here?**

I am from Gwynedd, PA. When I was applying to law schools, my older sister was attending JWU's Physician Assistant Studies program. During a visit to see her, I toured RWU Law and was very impressed. I toured the campus and met former Dean Michael Yelnosky. When I returned to my car, he had left a handwritten note on the windshield which read, "[w]e don't have cheesesteaks in Rhode Island, but the Providence food scene is pretty good." That personal touch meant a lot to me and indicated that RWU would care about me as a student. Rhode Island is now home to me.

> **Name one thing that you could not live without and why?**

My planner! President Eisenhower said, "plans are useless but planning is everything." I believe this quote rings particularly true for attorneys.

> **Name the most influential lawyer in your career so far.**

Of course, my boss, Nick Mancini, is an inspiration for me. I am constantly amazed by his keen instincts in the courtroom and during depositions. However, the person who has impacted me the most thus far has been Assistant Attorney General Daniel Guglielmo. I was



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## FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Continued

an intern for him when he led the Domestic Violence Unit. Dan taught me that you can be kind and empathetic and still be an effective, successful lawyer. Under his guidance, I developed skills that I will carry with me throughout my entire career.

> **What do you find the most meaningful in your work?**

For me, the most meaningful part is appearing in the courtroom. I find it rewarding when I can craft and deliver a legal argument, resulting in a fair result for the client. The unique thing about the Rhode Island Workers' Compensation system is that it has its own trial and appellate level courts, which allows me to appear in court quite frequently.

> **How have you chosen to decorate your office?**

I have only been in my office for a few months, but I have added a few green plants and pictures of my family, friends, and dog. The best part of my office is a fireplace that the former (now retired) attorney left behind. Not only does it warm my office, but my boss's French Bulldog named Blueberry, likes to come in and nap in front of it.

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Rhode Island  
Bar Association  
2020-2021

ANNUAL REPORT

# Report of the Executive Director on 2020-2021

*The mission of the Rhode Island Bar Association is to represent the members of the legal profession of the state, serve the public and the profession, and promote justice, professional excellence and respect for the law.*



**Helen D. McDonald**  
*Executive Director*



**Richard P. D'Addario**  
*President*

It is my pleasure to submit my final annual report as Executive Director as I will be entering retirement at the end of the summer. This has been my 42nd year with the Rhode Island Bar Association, 36 as Executive Director, and it has been a joy and a privilege. I have been fortunate to work with you, and I count many of you as my very dearest friends. I thank all you for your incredible service to the organization and the profession. You are truly my heroes.

The last year and a half have brought many challenges to the organization, as they have to everyone. The Association's membership, leadership, and staff continued to work consistently to meet the goals embodied in our mission to represent the legal profession, serve the public, and promote justice, professional excellence, and respect for the law. We continue to place the highest priority on educating our membership and the public about our positions, activities, and services. We build upon exceptional relationships with the judiciary, legal service providers, and the public.

Early on we encouraged our members to take the necessary steps to protect their health and well-being while also protect-

ing their businesses. Committees have availed themselves with offered teleconferencing as well as Zoom videoconferencing in place of in-person meetings and had record attendance. Regular updates were sent by the President updating members on the status of court operations, including municipal and probate operations around the state. Our dedicated President Richard P. D'Addario worked tirelessly to protect, assist, and respond to the members and the courts.

Our law practice management member benefit was particularly helpful during this period of "virtual" law practice. Many members used the free services of our consultant, Jared Correia of Red Cave Law Firm Consulting. We are very pleased that we are able to offer this opportunity to our members which we believe has helped you optimize your practice, become more effective and efficient, and make the best business decisions. Many of these changes will continue going forward.

As of May, all Bar staff have returned to the office. RIBA headquarters is still closed to the public and our members (with exceptions) until September 2021. As of September, committee chairpersons will be given an option to host meetings virtually or in a hybrid manner. Continuing Legal Education programs continue to be hosted via Zoom and, starting in September, panelists will be given the option to host programs virtually or in a hybrid manner.

A COVID-19 Impact Survey was sent to members in February. Members noted that they would like remote hearings, depositions, and remote/electronic notarization to continue to be an option after the pandemic. Many members reported health and wellness issues being one of their top concerns during the pandemic, so our CLE Committee will work to increase programming related to attorney well-being. We also continue to remind members that our Lawyers Helping Lawyers Committee, as well as the consultants at Coastline EAP, are standing by ready to assist our members and their families who are in need.

## Task Force on Diversity & Inclusion

The Diversity and Inclusion Task Force chaired by Hon. Linda Rekas Sloan, is presently working to finalize a condensed version of the data gathered from the fall diversity survey (containing members' perspectives on issues related to diversity and discrimination in the practice) so it can be presented to the Supreme Court and the Bar's membership without any identifying details. The Task Force has broken up into four subcommittees to address various focus areas: Leadership/Pipeline, Messaging/Communication, Education, and Outreach. Each subcommittee has been asked to develop a list of recommendations for the full Task Force to approve before submitting a formal proposal or action plan to the Executive Committee. Among other recommendations, some of the highlights that the Task Force subcommittees are developing include a diversity pledge for members/firms, a diversity action plan for all Association leaders, an area of the website devoted to the Task Force and diversity initiatives, increased programming related to diversity, and a request to the Supreme Court mandating an MCLE requirement related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues. Two editions of the DEI newsletter have been sent to members. The purpose of the newsletter is to bring attention to steps the Bar is taking to be more inclusive and to share relevant information about diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

## Health and Wellness

The Association continues to place great emphasis on attorney wellness. In addition to serving clients, lawyers must also pay attention to their own mental, emotional, and physical health. The COVID-19 pandemic forced changes to daily life, and disrupted normal routines at work, at school, and at home. Physical isolation can negatively affect mental health, and constant news coverage can bring fear and anxiety about the disease. In response, the Bar compiled a comprehensive list of resources to help manage stress and anxiety during the pandemic. In addition, the CLE department created a COVID-19 section in our on-demand catalog dedicated to programs that focus on managing stress and anxiety during these difficult times. As always, the Lawyers Helping Lawyers Committee serves as a confidential resource to Bar members and their families, providing support and encouragement when needed. Committee volunteers give generously of their time to help their colleagues. Their primary role is to lend an ear and assist in making an appropriate referral to professional resources. The communications between lawyers seeking help and members of the Committee are strictly confidential, even within the Committee itself.

## Bar Association offices

When our offices fully reopen in September 2021, we will follow guidelines set out by the Governor. We are also committed to high standards of cleanliness and will provide hand sani-

tizers, masks, and tissues in high-traffic areas and event spaces. We will continue to monitor the CDC-recommended guidelines related to COVID-19 and to keep you informed of our ongoing measures to ensure the health and safety of our members and staff. Thank you for your cooperation.

## Bar Committees

We have exceptionally strong standing and special committees. Over sixteen hundred Bar Association members serve on Bar committees. All the work our members contribute through our committees forms the backbone of the Rhode Island Bar Association. Throughout the year, our committees welcomed 18 different guest speakers at their meetings. Thank you to the dedicated Bar members who volunteered their time to share their experience and expertise with our committee members. This issue of the *Rhode Island Bar Journal* contains summaries of the committees' activities, and I encourage you to read them. Committees continued to meet via Zoom or teleconference for the entire fiscal year. Committee members adapted exceptionally well to the change in meeting format. Most committees who participated in Zoom meetings reported having record attendance.

## Rhode Island Bar Journal

Regarding the production of the *Bar Journal*, we believed it was prudent to consider the ecological and economic benefits of going to a digital publication. Rather than raise Bar Association membership dues, which we have not done in over ten years, the Bar leadership feels this is the best option to reduce overhead while concurrently reducing our carbon footprint. Our digital issue began with the September/October 2020 issue. These digital issues will only be available to members who log in to the website. Members may easily download and print a copy from our website if they prefer a hard copy.

## The Ada Sawyer Centennial Planning Committee

The Ada Sawyer Centennial Planning Committee, chaired by Denise C. Aiken, Esq., was formed in the summer of 2018 to plan a celebration to be scheduled for Thursday, October 14th at Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet. The event was originally scheduled for October of 2020 but had to be pushed back due to the pandemic. More information will be coming out on how to get tickets this summer. Ada Sawyer, being deemed a "person" and being the first woman in Rhode Island to take the RI Bar Exam, opened the doors for women in Rhode Island to become lawyers. We have featured short articles related to Ada Sawyer in issues of the *Rhode Island Bar Journal* and will continue to do so in issues leading up to the event. We continue to regularly publish our RI Women Lawyers interview series in the *Rhode Island Bar Journal* which recognizes the first women of the Rhode Island bar.

# Report of the Executive Director on 2020-2021

## Continuing Legal Education

**Professional Development:** Over the last year, despite the lack of reporting requirement, the CLE Committee has organized more than 40 programs, which is well above the number usually offered. Programming topics during the 2020-2021 year included how the courts and the practice of law have changed during the pandemic, how to work remotely, mindfulness, the RI Parentage Act, implicit bias in the legal profession, and legal issues affecting transgender and non-binary people, to name a few. The Bar's On-Demand Catalog of previously recorded CLE programs continues to be utilized by members, as over 100 members watched on-demand programming despite the lack of MCLE this year.

Since November 2020, the CLE Office has offered a raffle every month. For each CLE program members registered for, they were entered into a raffle to win a gift. The monthly prizes included a webcam, Logitech headset, a ring light to use during video conferences, an ergonomic mouse, and a Sony Bluetooth speaker. The educational programs sponsored by the Association are led by a dedicated CLE Committee and diligent staff.

Starting in January, the Bar contracted with Rev Live Captions, at no cost to members, to offer live closed captions during all future virtual CLE seminars. This new feature helps make our CLE seminars more accessible and inclusive to all our members. Rev Live Captions integrates seamlessly with the Zoom video-conferencing platform. The live captions are powered by the world's best speech recognition A.I., generating accurate captions that enable our members who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or non-native English speakers to better understand the content of our seminars. The feature is not automatic, to turn on the closed captions, members can click on the CC button in the toolbar at the bottom of their Zoom screen.

The free, non-credit Compare & Contrast series presented by the Bar's law practice management provider, Jared Correia of Red Cave Consulting, in collaboration with the Technology in the Practice Committee to offer both the perspectives of the practicing attorney and the consultant, continues to be well received by members. Topics so far have covered case management systems, VoIP phone systems, cloud storage, and video-conferencing etiquette. The programs will pick back up again in the fall. Future topics include electronic signature, business email systems, online payment systems, and IT security. All programs have been recorded and posted on RIBA's law practice management page on our website for members to access at their leisure.

## CLE Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CLE Office converted every in-person CLE to a Zoom program. Zoom allows speakers to present their program in a safe environment (their home or office) and allows presenters to share their webcam and computer screen with attendees. These live, Zoom programs

count for live, in-person programming and provide members the opportunity to view programs of interest and earn CLE credit.

## 2021 Annual Meeting

Because the RI Supreme Court suspended the MCLE reporting requirement for the 2021 year (as they did in 2020), our virtual Annual Meeting, scheduled for June 23rd and 24th, was restructured to offer 17 programs down from the originally planned 32. The pricing for the program was extremely competitive to encourage attendance despite the lack of reporting requirement. A digital brochure was developed in-house and distributed to members. The virtual platform for the 2021 Annual Meeting was Eventmobi, the leader in virtual event apps, and offered live polling, chat channels, Q&A, surveys, and gamification options throughout the platform. Registrants had access to the platform the week before the meeting to ensure they had enough time to create their profile and get used to the format. Approximately 215 attended the two-day event. Most attendees signed up for both days. Some highlights: Civil Case Law Update had over 200 attendees, which is better attendance than we have in-person every year. The Commercial Law Update, a two-part workshop, had over 100 attendees at each session. Ethical Issues for Solos/Small Firms had 70 attendees. Perhaps most surprising was that the Lawyer Well-Being program had about 80 attendees; it was particularly great to see so many members interested in such an important issue for lawyers. The responses to our COVID-19 Impact Survey showed that health and wellness were among the top concerns of many Bar members during the pandemic. In response, our CLE Committee will increase programming related to attorney well-being. In addition to increasing programming content, there were over eight (8) programs during the year dedicated to mental well-being and mindfulness. We encourage you to view the recorded on-demand mindfulness programs we had as live webinars during this year. Finally, we have booked the dates for our 2022 Annual Meeting at the Convention Center, so mark your calendar for June 23-24, 2022.

An in-person Annual Meeting Luncheon also took place on the Friday following the virtual program where the Association honored two years of awards winners, delivered an update from our Bar President and Bar Foundation President, heard the traditional State of the Judiciary from Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul Suttell, and welcomed our incoming President Lynda Laing.

## 2021-2022 CLE Year

The CLE Committee is busy planning programming for the upcoming year. Programming topics for the 2021-2022 year include client intake process, smart devices in your home or office, elder care planning, representing your homeless client, mediation, tax sales, zoning, affordable housing, collections, and mechanics liens.

The CLE department and CLE Committee are always look-

ing for program topics or volunteer panelists, so please reach out to our CLE director if you have any suggestions.

## 2020-2021 Annual Rhode Island Bar Association Award Winners

**Lise M. Iwon, Esq.** was selected to receive the **Joseph T. Houlihan Lifetime Mentor Award**, which honors individuals who, during their careers, have consistently demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to successfully mentoring in the Rhode Island legal community. The Award recognizes those who, with their excellent counsel, have excelled as a mentor and contributed to the ideals of ethics, civility, professionalism and legal skills. The award is named for the late Joseph T. Houlihan, who was known for his generosity of spirit and legal expertise in and out of the courtroom.

**Supreme Court Associate Justice (ret.) Gilbert V. Indeglia** was selected to receive the **Chief Justice Joseph R. Weisberger Judicial Excellence Award**. The Award, named in honor of its first recipient, the late Chief Justice Joseph R. Weisberger, is presented to a judge of the Rhode Island State Courts or Federal District Court for exemplifying and encouraging the highest level of competence, integrity, judicial temperament, ethical conduct and professionalism.

The **Dorothy Lohmann Community Service Award** was presented to **Nancy M. Davis, Esq.** and **Allyson M. Quay, Esq.** The award recognizes Rhode Island attorneys who donate their time and legal expertise for charitable work. It is given to those whose efforts most closely reflect those of Rhode Island Attorney Dorothy Lohmann. Ms. Lohmann devoted her entire professional life working to help the poor. She tirelessly employed her talents as an intelligent and skillful lawyer working for the most vulnerable people in our society.

For our **2021 Pro Bono Awards**, attorney **James Bagley** was selected for the award for his legal assistance (260 pro bono hours) through the US Armed Forces Legal Services Project and **Janne Reich** (285 pro bono hours) through the Volunteer Lawyer Program. Both attorneys were nominated last year, as they have been outstanding advocates for low-income individuals and families for several years.

The **Rhode Island Bar Journal Lauren E. Jones Writing Award** was presented to **John F. Corrigan, Esq.** The award is presented for authoring an article based on presentation, informational content, legal significance, and accuracy and depth of research.

## Public Services

One of the most noble of our goals is facilitating the availability of legal services. We support pro bono publico services for all low-income persons, the elderly, and those of modest means through the Volunteer Lawyer Program (VLP), Pro Bono Program for the Elderly, the Foreclosure Prevention Project, the US Armed Forces Legal Services Project and the LRS Modest

Means program. Many of the members' efforts to provide legal assistance are facilitated through membership in the Bar Association's public service programs.

Our Lawyer Referral Service fields thousands of calls from the public every year asking for assistance in obtaining an attorney. Members of the public receive much needed legal advice and/or representation through this convenient referral process. In the past few years, requests for limited scope representation have become more frequent. For this reason, we make every effort to expand our LRS limited scope panel to provide this option to the public and provide a way for members to expand their practice.

## Pro Bono

Last fall, the Bar's Volunteer Lawyer Program (VLP), in collaboration with the Public Service Involvement Committee, sponsored a two-part Continuing Legal Education series offered free to all members of the Bar's pro bono programs who agreed to accept a case prior to attending. The series, "Unique Aspects of Military Divorces and Ancillary Issues," gave attendees the opportunity to specifically address the unique issues and challenges presented when handling a military divorce, including an outline of the recent changes to the military pension law. As a result, the VLP was able to immediately place 25 pro bono family law cases. This CLE remains available to interested volunteer attorneys on demand in exchange for taking a pro bono case. Throughout December, the VLP also encouraged attorneys to accept pro bono cases for their annual 12 Days of Pro Bono, a holiday promotion. They were able to place 41 cases through this outreach effort.

The "March Pro Bono Madness" promotion resulted in 30 pro bono cases being accepted from the Sweet 16 down to the Final 4. The department hopes to repeat March Madness next year given the positive response. An email highlighting April being National Volunteer Month was sent to the membership to encourage pro bono participation. The April message focused on the availability of mentors with a testimonial from a newer VLP member who had been a corporate attorney. Due to the excellent mentoring experience received she is a permanent member of the VLP.

May is national "Older Americans' Month" and a notice was sent to senior centers statewide, reaffirming our commitment to once again offer our popular legal clinic and Ask a Lawyer programs. Prior to the pandemic we received 40 requests annually for these community outreach events.

This year we were fortunate to have the Volunteer Lawyer Program required paperwork and forms translated into Spanish on a volunteer basis. This exceptional contribution has made the placement process much more effective for Spanish speaking clients and the VLP staff.

COVID-19 relief through legal assistance for the public has been a major goal of the public service programs. Due to the

# Report of the Executive Director on 2020-2021

success of the free live seminar, “An Overview of Tenant Protections & Strategies for Successful Results” in May, we have volunteer attorneys on standby to accept eviction cases that will very likely surface once the moratorium is lifted. This seminar is still available to any volunteer attorneys on demand upon request.

We consistently have a variety of cases in need of immediate pro bono placement including foreclosure, guardianship, probate, bankruptcy/collections, and several family law issues. In addition to direct calls and emails from the public, we receive referrals from the courts, Disability Rights Rhode Island, RI Legal Services, Office of Healthy Aging, and others on a weekly basis. If we are unable to secure a volunteer attorney for certain matters, potential clients are given the option of receiving a referral on a reduced fee, and/or limited scope basis.

We thank and applaud the hundreds of attorney members of all the public service programs for their dedication and commitment to public service. The support of these programs makes it possible to serve and provide justice to thousands on an annual basis.

## Meeting with Supreme Court

The Executive Committee met with the Rhode Island Supreme Court judges in early April via Zoom. The leadership welcomed the new justices, offered an update on RIBA activities, and updated the Court on pandemic-related issues following the Bar’s COVID Impact Survey to members. The judges were advised that the Bar Association is willing and eager to work with them more closely on any issues of mutual concern, to which all seemed amenable. The Bar’s leadership also offered to work with the Court on permanently implementing any pandemic-related changes that would help courts run efficiently, whether directly or through our bench/bar committees.

## Casemaker

Casemaker is a web-based legal research system offered to our members for free (\$950 value). Casemaker has now merged with FastCase and the strength of both companies will ensure that all members have access to the best technology available.

## Website

Our website provides great services. You can access our many discount programs, issues of the *Bar Journal*, easily register for CLE seminars, sign up for Bar committees and public service programs, utilize the calendars and the great member directory. The directory gives you instant information on every member including their email address and photo when provided. You can stay up to date with Bar news by regularly visiting our homepage where you will find the most recent news stories published by the Association and other legal affiliates.

## List Serve

Our email List Serve continues to be a well utilized service for Rhode Island Bar Association members to use for online, law-related discussions. The List Serve is a welcome form of networking for our members, particularly for exchanging referrals for various legal services and contacts.

## Law Practice Management Consultant

Our Law Practice Management Consultant Jared Correia, of Red Cave Law Firm Consulting, provides members with FREE law practice management consulting services. Red Cave was developed specifically for legal professionals. With over a decade of experience, Red Cave offers practical advice to improve your firm’s marketing, accounting, and technology solutions, as well as consistent support and accountability as you push towards your goals.

Bar staff have also developed a monthly e-newsletter summarizing recent Bar activities and news, health and wellness tips, as well as tips and information from affiliated organizations.

## Law Related Education

The Rhode Island Bar Association is dedicated to helping Rhode Island teachers interested in law related education (LRE) by providing volunteer lawyers for classroom presentations and as educational resources. The Association’s goal is to increase public understanding of, and respect for, the law and the role of lawyers and judges in the legal system. 2021 Rhode Island Law Day was held on Friday, April 30th. Because not all court calendars were suspended this year, some presentations were scheduled close to Law Day rather than on the actual date. This year’s topic, which was modeled after the National ABA Law Day program, was American Society and the Rule of Law. Most of our presentations were virtual this year due to the pandemic and the uncertainty of class schedules. We were pleased to have 30 schools sign up for a total of 46 virtual presentations this year. We are grateful for our attorney and judge volunteers for their participation.

## Law Day Essay Contest

We were able to have an in-person Law Day Essay Contest ceremony this year which was held at the McGrath Judicial Complex. The first-place winner, Veronica Sabatino of Narragansett High School, won first place, a \$1,000 scholastic award courtesy of the Bar Association and the RI Police Chiefs’ Association. The second-place winner, McKenzie Gardner, also of Narragansett High School, won a \$250 scholastic award courtesy of the Gallogly Family Law Inn of Court. Though he may be retired from the bench, Justice Indeglia will continue to chair the RI Law Day Committee, so we are sure to have another great Law Day next year, hopefully with in-person presentations. If any members would like to sign up to participate in Law Day or any other law related education programs, please contact Erin Cute

at the Bar. There will also be emails going out urging members to sign up to participate.

## Rhode Island Bar Foundation

Through our continued partnership with the Rhode Island Bar Foundation, we are celebrating six years in our Rhode Island Law Center! We have reduced the pressure on Association dues, allowing enhanced long-term planning; advanced technology; expanded parking; and greater meeting and event flexibility. The Foundation continues their hard work to maximize Interest on Lawyers Trust Account (IOLTA) income and assess legal needs to maximize foundation support for legal services in Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Bar Foundation also administers the Thomas F. Black, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund, established in 1989 to support and foster high legal practice standards by assisting Rhode Island residents who show promise of becoming outstanding lawyers and who need financial assistance to study law. The Scholarship is named in honor of the late Thomas F. Black, Jr., a person known for his impressive ability as a lawyer and banker, his deeply rooted legal scholarship, and his notable participation in civic and charitable causes. Two scholarships of \$25,000 each were awarded this spring for Rhode Island students entering their first year of law school. In addition, a third scholarship of \$25,000 was awarded due to the generosity of the Ralph R. Papitto and Barbara A. Papitto Private Family Foundation. The Papitto Opportunity Connection scholarship is designated to individuals who are black, indigenous or a person of color (BIPOC).

The Rhode Island Bar Foundation continues to work with Roger Williams University School of Law in awarding two annual summer fellowships to incoming second year law students thanks to a generous donation from the late Hon. Thomas J. Caldarone Jr., which he designated be used to establish an endowment for that purpose. This year, two students at Roger Williams University School of Law have been selected to be the recipients of the Hon. Thomas J. Caldarone, Jr. Fellowship. Both have been placed with the Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island.

The Rhode Island Bar Foundation Board was very disappointed that the organization was unable to have our live Annual Meeting in June. The Foundation's business meeting was held remotely, and the hope is to resume a live meeting in June 2022 at the Rhode Island Convention Center.

Finally, I want to acknowledge and thank the staff of the Rhode Island Bar Association, whose hard work and dedication are remarkable. We are fortunate to have these very committed individuals contributing their talent to the delivery of quality services and benefits to our members. The hard work and dedication of the entire staff is remarkable: your new Executive Director Kathleen Bridge, Director of Public Services Susan Fontaine, Director of Continuing Legal Education Tanya Nieves,

Director of Communications Erin R. Cute, Director of Finance Renee Bourbonniere, Rhode Island Bar Foundation Program Director Virginia Caldwell, Gatekeeper and Program Assistant Heather Chea, Office Manager Susan Cavalloro, Volunteer Lawyer Program Coordinator John Ellis, Lawyer Referral Service Coordinators Elisa King and Caitlin Poland, and newly retired CLE Program Coordinator Karen Lomax.

The Rhode Island Bar Association provides relevant and valuable programs and services to our members, increased availability of legal services to our citizens, a more effective and independent judicial system, and increased public understanding about the law. Please feel free to contact any of the officers or staff at the Bar Association with your concerns, questions, or suggestions. We will keep you informed and invite you to become involved as we work to fulfill our mission.

## Rhode Island Bar Association Legislative Positions and Amicus Briefs Official Notice 2021

The Rhode Island Bar Association takes positions as a party or amicus in litigation only on matters related to the practice of law or administration of justice. The Rhode Island Bar Association restricts action on legislation either as a proponent or opponent to that related to the practice of law or administration of justice. In 2020-2021 the Rhode Island Bar Association (RIBA) did not file as amicus curiae in any matters.

With regard to legislation, the Executive Committee voted to support the unanimous recommendations of the Bar's **Committee on Business Organizations:**

**Uniform Limited Partnership Act:** The proposed act is based on the 2013 version of the Uniform Limited Partnership Act originally prepared by Uniform Law Commission. The legislation will modernize the limited partnership act and encourage more entities that would have otherwise organized as limited liability partnerships in other jurisdictions to organize in Rhode Island as limited partnerships.

A member may, within sixty days of the date of the e-mailing of the *Journal*, allege that the lobbying activity for a specific bill or an amicus brief filing in a specific case was impermissible or a "non-core" activity on the part of the Rhode Island Bar Association, by notice, in writing, to the Executive Director of the Rhode Island Bar Association.

## Rhode Island Bar Association Budget 2021-2022

The Bar Association funds derived from members' dues are employed for the furtherance of the Bar's mission which is to represent the members of the legal profession of the state, serve the public and profession, and promote justice, professional excellence and respect for the law. A detailed budget appears on the following page.

# 2021-2022 Annual Budget

The Bar Association funds derived from members' dues are employed for the furtherance of the Bar's mandate which includes the administration of justice.

## GENERAL FUND

(Administrative and Member Services)

Income	Budget 21/22
Bar Journal Ads & Subscriptions	\$ 38,000
Contract Service Income	53,158
Interest Income	10,000
Mailing List Income	0
Malpractice Prevention	25,000
Member Dues & Fees	1,130,000
Royalties & Miscellaneous	7,500
Health Insurance Royalties	15,000
	<u>\$ 1,278,658</u>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Awards	\$ 2,500
Bank Fees	35,000
Bar Journal	30,000
Casemaker	80,000
Computer	55,000
Computer Training & Education	2,500
Consultants	10,000
Copier	9,500
Depreciation Expense	14,000
Dues & Subscriptions	6,000
Insurance	25,000
Lawyer Assistance Program	10,000
Legislative Counsel	27,500
Lobby Tax	7,500
LOMAP	12,500
Maintenance & Repair	40,000
Medical Benefits	60,000
Miscellaneous Expense	1,000
Office Supply & Expense	22,000
Pamphlets & Advertising	0
Payroll Tax Expense	28,000
Printing & Postage	15,000
Professional Fees	25,000
Property Tax	6,000
Public Relations	2,500
Records Management	2,500
Regular Meetings	7,500
Rent & Electricity	190,000
Retirement Plan	40,000
Salaries	376,500
Telephone	15,000
Travel	15,000
Website	15,000
	<u>\$ 1,188,000</u>
Net Income	<u>\$ 90,658</u>

## LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE

(LRS and Public Services)

Income	Budget 21/22
Interest	\$ 250
Dues	22,000
Fees	27,000
	<u>\$ 49,250</u>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Medical Benefits	\$ 30,000
Office Supplies	500
Payroll Tax Expense	7,000
Printing & Postage	500
Retirement Plan	8,000
Salaries	85,000
	<u>\$ 131,000</u>
Net Income:	<u>\$ (81,750)</u>

## CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

(CLE Professional Development)

Income	Budget 21/22
Annual Meeting	\$ 350,000
Publications	2,500
Seminars	100,000
Miscellaneous Income	0
On-Line Income	25,000
	<u>\$ 477,500</u>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Annual Meeting	\$ 200,000
Bank Fees	0
Computer	20,000
Computer Training & Education	100
Copier	1,200
Depreciation	750
Dues & Subscriptions	500
Medical Benefits	20,000
Miscellaneous Expense	500
Office Supplies	7,500
Payroll Tax Expense	10,000
Postage	1,500
Professional Fees	1,500
Publications	1,500
Rent	15,000
Retirement Plan	13,000
Salaries	136,000
Seminar Expense	25,000
Travel	750
Website	0
	<u>\$ 454,800</u>
Net Income:	<u>\$ 22,700</u>

## OPERATING BUDGET

	General Fund	LRS	CLE	Total
Income	\$ 1,278,658	\$ 49,250	\$ 477,500	\$ 1,805,408
Expense	1,188,000	131,000	454,800	1,773,800
	<u>\$ 90,658</u>	<u>\$ (81,750)</u>	<u>\$ 22,700</u>	<u>\$ 31,608</u>

### Grants and Restricted Funds

	2021-2022
ProBono	\$ 171,054
Elderly	52,613
CRF	125,000
Total:	<u>\$ 348,667</u>

### 2021-2022

Total Revenue	\$ 2,154,075
Total Expense	\$ 2,122,467
	<u>\$ 31,608</u>



Rhode Island Bar Association  
(A Non Profit Organization)  
Statements of Financial Position\*  
June 30, 2020 and 2019

<b>Assets</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 971,728	\$ 1,042,266
U.S. treasury bills	5,270,052	5,312,537
Accounts receivable	111,248	142,475
Other assets	41,064	34,095
Property and equipment, net	91,405	107,760
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 6,485,497</b>	<b>\$ 6,639,133</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable	\$ 47,847	\$ 50,465
Accrued expenses	104,171	103,033
Deferred revenues	8,000	-
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 160,018</b>	<b>\$ 153,498</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Without donor restrictions	\$ 3,443,085	\$ 3,764,978
With donor restrictions	2,882,394	\$ 2,720,657
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>6,325,479</b>	<b>6,485,635</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 6,485,497</b>	<b>\$ 6,639,133</b>

*\*The Statement of Financial Position on page 3 of the Audited Financial Statements for the years ended June 30, 2020 and 2019 is the official name of the Balance Sheet for a non-profit organization. Information was derived from Marcum LLP audit report dated December 2, 2020.*

# Bar Association Committee Reports



## **Animal Law**

**Lenore M. Montanaro, Chair**

The Animal Law Committee provides a collegial forum for members of the legal community to exchange ideas and information of mutual concern, to make recommendations on the practices and procedures relating to animal law, to work toward the improvement of this area of law, and to keep the Bar informed of developments in this practice area.

The Animal Law Committee was established in February 2018. Since that time, the Animal Law Committee has held monthly meetings. During Bar Year 2020-2021, the Animal Law Committee met seven (7) times via Zoom. We discussed various topics within the context of the practice of animal law. Some of the topics that we discussed were dangerous dog hearings, housing issues, animal cruelty, family law issues, and the “Link” between maltreatment of animals and abuse of people. The Committee also discussed the inextricable link between people, animals, and the environment, especially in light of coronavirus and zoonotic disease.

The Animal Law Committee hosted an animal law workshop during the 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting. The workshop was titled “View from the Bench: Link Between Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence” and featured two members of the Judiciary: Hon. Paul T. Jones, Jr., Rhode Island Family Court and Hon. Jeanne L. Shepard, Rhode Island Family Court.

The Animal Law Committee is grateful to the Rhode Island Bar Association, Bar President Richard P. D’Addario, Esq., the Executive Committee, the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Mark B. Morse, Esq., and Rhode Island attorneys for providing the Committee with the opportunity to grow. As the Animal Law Committee grows, it will continue to offer programs and educational opportunities related to the practice of animal law to serve members of the Bar.



## **Business Organizations**

**Elizabeth Manchester, Co-Chair**

**Marcus Howell, Co-Chair**

The Business Organizations Committee met on a monthly basis during the past year. Committee members reviewed and responded to legislation introduced during the General Assembly’s 2021 session.

The Committee, in association with the Rhode Island Secretary of State’s Office and the Uniform Law Commission, drafted an initial revision and modernization to the State’s Partnership Act



and the Limited Partnership Act. These Acts were endorsed by the Executive Committee and presented to the legislature in 2021.

The Committee continues to work with the Rhode Island Secretary of State’s Office on revision of the Nonprofit Corporation Act. The Committee hopes to revise this Act in 2021-22.

The Committee would benefit from greater input and a larger volunteer base. If you have interest in matters affecting business or nonprofit organizations, we hope you will join the Committee next year. Even if you cannot attend every meeting, we believe you will find participation in this Committee gratifying and an opportunity to impact the practice of business law in Rhode Island.



## **Client Reimbursement Fund**

**John A. Tarantino, Chair**

The Rhode Island Bar Association’s Client Reimbursement Fund was established as a public service to promote confidence in the administration of justice and the integrity of the legal profession. Our experience continues to confirm the overwhelming majority of Rhode Island lawyers are honest, caring, diligent, ethical, and deserving of their clients’ trust. The Fund reimburses the losses sustained by clients who are victimized by the few Rhode Island lawyers who violate the profession’s ethical standards and misappropriate funds entrusted to them. Losses reimbursed by the Fund include the theft of estate and trust assets, conversion of settlement proceeds in real estate and personal injury cases, money embezzled in investment transactions within an attorney-client relationship and the practice of law, and unearned fees paid in advance to lawyers who falsely promise, but then do not provide, legal services. The Client Reimbursement Fund Committee meets when and as necessary to review and act upon claims and to propose rules and procedures with respect to the Fund. The Committee administers the Fund, which is funded by an annual assessment of \$25 per Bar member, together with interest on the invested funds and any money collected as a result of subrogation rights against the defalcating lawyers. As a fund of grace, all claimants are required to exhaust all alternate sources of recovery before the Committee will consider claims. Since its inception in 1981, Rhode Island lawyers have reimbursed more than \$2.2 million to the victims of the few dishonest lawyers in this state. No public funds are, or have been, involved. Rather, these reimbursement awards are financed solely by payments from lawyers. There are currently four claims awaiting action pending the exhaustion of remedies. I will continue to keep you informed as the Fund serves the public. I am grateful for your support.



### **Continuing Legal Education**

**Krista J. Schmitz, Chair**

In what has been a tumultuous year, the Continuing Legal Education Committee (CLE Committee) has persevered in developing continuing legal education seminars for all Bar members. Working within the unique parameters of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee

worked this year to provide relevant virtual programming that addressed the most up-to-date information available across all practice areas. The CLE Committee continued its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion by recruiting more diverse speakers than ever before.

Due to the pandemic, all CLE programs this year were presented as live webinars. The annual Aon Attorneys' Advantage free ethics seminar was presented via Zoom in September 2020. Through this virtual format, the CLE Committee continued the tradition of providing all Bar members with the opportunity to earn two (2) free ethics credits. This year's speaker was Chris Osborn, Esq. from ReelTime CLE, who co-presented with a group of diverse, national attorneys. Their program, "Don't Let The Jokers Drive You Batty!" discussed tools to use when faced with difficult attorneys, colleagues, clients, or judges using film clips from *Batman Begins* and *The Dark Knight*.

During the 2020-2021 programming year, the CLE Committee offered 92 programs with over 1,000 attendees. Among these innovative programs were technology seminars presented by Jared D. Correia, Esq. of Red Cave Law Firm Consulting, and a series of programming presented by Patricia A. McLaughlin, Esq. addressing lawyer stressors of the pandemic, work/life balance, lawyering, and how to use mindfulness techniques to cope with changes. Other programs offered this year included a variety of topics addressing the unique challenges of COVID-19 in areas such as nursing homes, workers' compensation, employment law, PPP loans, virtual mediation, family law, and unemployment fraud. Other programs presented this year included court costs, fees, and assessments in criminal cases; the Rhode Island Parentage Act; child custody cases and the role of the GAL; dog bite cases; legal issues affecting transgender and non-binary people; and hardship licenses. Overall, the CLE Committee had a very successful year of virtual programming, and we are looking forward to seeing everyone in person with a return to live, hybrid programs in the fall.

moved to Zoom which enabled more members to attend. The Committee had several speakers who educated and enlightened the Committee. Among our presenters were the Hon. Judge Matos, the Hon. Judge Keough, and Chief Legal Counsel for the RI Department of Corrections, Kathleen Kelly.

We look forward to getting back to work and to post-pandemic normalcy in September with additional programs designed to enrich our practice. It remains a primary goal of the Committee to increase participation from members of the Attorney General's Office, U.S. Attorney's Office, Office of the Public Defender, and private attorneys practicing in the area of criminal law. We invite all to join the Committee next year. Until then, we hope you and your families are safe, healthy, and well!



### **Creditors' and Debtors' Rights**

**Richard J. Land, Chair**

As we all know, 2020 was challenging to say the least. I want to thank all of our committee members who committed their time and energy to making the best of a difficult situation. I feel honored and privileged to be able to work with you all on a regular basis. While 2020 limited

our ability to debate issues and ideas with the same vigor we have done in the past, I feel that we made the most of a difficult situation and will jump into the 2021-2022 year with the same spirit and commitment of prior years.

This past year brought further changes to the judiciary. Although Judges Stern and Licht, together with Judge Taft-Carter, remain responsible for the business calendar, the appointment of Judge Rekas Sloan, a long-time, active member of our committee and the Bar Association in general, will prove beneficial to the members of our committee and to the community overall as Judge Rekas Sloan brings her considerable business experience and acumen to the judiciary.

Looking to the future, I am certain the committee will re-engage in thoughtful consideration of legal issues facing creditors, debtors, and their respective counsel, in both state and federal courts. I anticipate that 2021-2022 will be an active year as we emerge from the relative solitude of the COVID-19 era. I encourage committee members to continue to bring forth important legislative initiatives for consideration and lively debate. I look forward to working with you all through the 2021-2022 year.



### **Criminal Law Bench/Bar**

**Melissa Larsen, Chair**

This past year was a productive one for the Criminal Law Bench/Bar Committee despite the challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic. Meetings were



### **District Court Bench/Bar**

**Meghan Barry, Chair**

The District Court Bench/Bar Committee had several meetings with RI District Court Associate Judges Melissa R. DuBose and Christopher K. Smith to

# Bar Association Committee Reports

discuss the challenges facing the Court and practitioners due to the ongoing court restrictions caused by the pandemic. The Committee addressed potential changes in procedure and getting matters heard as efficiently as possible. We look forward to another year of working closely with the Court and the anticipated changes the next year will bring.



## **Ethics and Professionalism**

**Christy B. Durant, Co-Chair**

**Kyla M. Pecchia, Co-Chair**

The Ethics and Professionalism Committee is charged with examining the practice of law in Rhode Island and recommending actions the RI Bar Association can take to foster the highest possible standards of ethics and professionalism. The Committee membership was made up of several dedicated attorneys with diverse personal and professional backgrounds, and their experience illuminated several of the Committee's discussions.

One of the charges of the Ethics and Professionalism Committee is to research, address and discuss potential ethical questions facing the practice of law in Rhode Island. Often, these ethical questions are assigned to the Committee via the Bar Association Executive Committee. Having received no such assignments prior to the Committee's first meeting in October, Co-Chairs Durant and Pecchia presented a topic based meeting to the Committee related to ethical perils in the practice of law, and spanned from developments in recent US Supreme Court appointments to the impacts of COVID-19 on the practice of law.

This year, due to ongoing COVID restrictions, the Committee met only twice via Zoom. As has become customary for the Committee's first meeting each year, Chief Disciplinary Counsel, David Curtin, Esq., addressed the Committee. This year, the topic of discussion with Mr. Curtin was the impact of COVID-19 on lawyer disciplinary actions. As expected, the mandatory closures of offices and working from home presented lawyers with unexpected challenges. However, Mr. Curtin was hopeful that there would not be a large spike in potential disciplinary issues. Professor Diana Hassel of Roger Williams University School of Law, Constitutional Law, also joined the Committee's first meeting of the year to discuss ramifications of the passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and possible ethical pitfalls to "court packing." She also addressed the presence of ethics and civility in the current political environment.

At the Committee's second meeting of the year, committee members that practice in different areas of the law discussed the challenges they had encountered in each field due to COVID-19.

The Committee discussed the Administrative Orders, difficulty meeting with clients who are imprisoned, the unintended consequences of delayed family court hearings, and the increasingly daunting task of client management during unprecedented times. The Committee further explored whether or not there were any ethical concerns surrounding the practice of law via Zoom, as well as if the Court should consider implementing any of these new procedures after the pandemic had passed.

The Ethics and Professionalism Committee provides a forum in which issues related to ethics and professionalism can be identified, discussed, and disseminated amongst the ranks of the Association, and this topic-based approach to meetings helped to further the Committee's goal of maintaining such an important forum for discussion. Members of the Bar are invited to submit topics to the Committee for consideration during the upcoming year.



## **Fee Arbitration**

**Henry V. Boezi III, Chair**

During fiscal year 2020-21, seven petitions for fee arbitration were filed with the Rhode Island Bar Association. Three matters were dismissed because the respondent was unwilling to proceed with the arbitration. Two matters were arbitrated with the Committee's assistance.

Two matters are still pending. The amount of fees in dispute ranged from \$1,200 to \$9,017. We continue to arbitrate controversies that could have been avoided by well-written fee agreements, sound billing practices, and/or better lawyer and client communications. The proceedings are primarily informal, serving as an alternative to litigation. Members of the Committee serve voluntarily without compensation. They are commended for their service to the Bar and the public. This program increases public confidence in the legal profession and accelerates fee dispute resolution. We hope more attorneys utilize this vehicle for fee dispute resolutions to take advantage of the benefits of the program.



## **Government Lawyers**

**Jenna Giguere, Chair**

The Government Lawyers Committee kicked off its 2020-2021 season with a free committee sponsored CLE in November on *Administrative Hearings - Foundational Concepts and Virtual Practice* presented by the State's Administrator of Adjudication (DOA),

Catherine Warren, Esq. Attendees gained knowledge of foundational concepts such as the Administrative Procedures Act, due

process, evidence, and procedure as applied to administrative hearings and practice. Building on that foundation, attendees had the opportunity to discuss how these concepts translate to the virtual hearing context. Understanding that diversity, equity, and inclusion is a current focus area of the Rhode Island Bar Association, GLC also incorporated a segment to consider access to administrative hearings by persons with disabilities and non-English speaking persons.

GLC stepped up to the plate to co-organize a career and networking event in October with students from the Roger Williams University School of Law, Association of Public Interest Law. With many in-person opportunities for law students being cancelled, GLC members recognized the importance to “give back” and share insights on government practice with the future lawyers of our community.

This year has reminded many of us how important it is to have a diverse, anti-racist workplace that is equitable and inclusive. In February, committee member Kara DiPaola of the Office of the General Treasurer presented information on the steps one agency has taken, from changes in hiring practices and RFP requirements, to implementation of efforts towards employee engagement and training.

In March, GLC sponsored its second free committee sponsored CLE, *Elections: RI Law and Practice*. GLC member Amy Goins and John Marion, Executive Director of Common Cause Rhode Island, focused on Rhode Island laws relating to elections with a small segment dedicated to reviewing federal laws. Participants learned the different roles of the Secretary of State, Board of Elections, and local Boards of Canvassers in Rhode Island elections.

In April, GLC member Lynne Radiches presented *Introduction to the Rhode Island Ethics Commission and the Rhode Island Code of Ethics*. Participants learned about the powers of the Rhode Island Ethics Commission, complaints alleging Code of Ethics violations, the advisory opinion process, Financial Disclosure Statements, conflicts of interest, nepotism, recusal, secondary employment, appearance of impropriety, gifts, transactions with subordinates, and representation of self/others before a state/municipal agency.

GLC wrapped up another great season with a virtual networking event in May where we exchanged lawyer humor cartoons and clips and reflected on the silver linings of the pandemic.

In addition to the meetings, GLC also provides its members with periodic e-newsletter content, including sharing articles relevant to government legal practice. GLC is always excited to invite new members, including those in the public sector and anyone else practicing administrative law or having an interest in our meeting topics.



## **Insurance Programs** Holly R. Rao, *Chair*

The Insurance Programs Committee remained available to members and fielded questions concerning the Axis professional liability program and Aon Affinity Services.

Although not in person, Aon continued to sponsor the annual loss prevention series of CLE programs. Last fall, the 27th annual free ethics program was presented in three live webinars, *Don't Let the Jokers Drive You Batty! - What We Can Learn from Batman About Maintaining Our Sanity (And Ethics) in the Practice of Law*. In total, 619 members attended the thought-provoking and interactive live webinars.

The Committee also worked with Aon to market and educate members regarding insurance issues impacting the practice, including cyber insurance articles published in the *Rhode Island Bar Journal*.

Our health insurance broker, USI, continued to provide consultations regarding medical and dental insurance coverage. In addition, USI New England is contracted to provide Bar members with enrollment, billing service, insurance advice, and assist Bar members with other health/dental and benefits insurance alternatives.



## **Labor Law & Employment** Matthew H. Parker, *Chair*

The Labor Law & Employment Committee had a lot to cover over the past year given all of the relevant issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic and the change in presidential administrations.

Over the course of the 2020-21 year, the committee held four meetings over Zoom.

At our first, on October 9th, we caught up with our colleagues regarding how everyone's practices have been faring during the pandemic, and we came up with some topics for our subsequent meetings. Members also discussed potential legislative proposals such as automatic discovery disclosures in employment cases and protections against discrimination on the basis of political affiliation.

At our second meeting, on December 11th, we were joined by arbitrators John B. Cochran and Michael C. Ryan from the American Arbitration Association (AAA), as well as AAA's Assistant Vice President, Frank Binda. Our members enjoyed hearing from the guests regarding their experiences conducting arbitrations over Zoom, and we discussed best practices for conducting arbitrations “virtually.”

At our third meeting, on February 12th, we heard from Attorney Siobhan L. Stephens-Catala, from the R.I. Department

# Bar Association Committee Reports

of Labor and Training. She covered a broad set of topics including COVID-related unemployment claims and COVID-related issues associated with Temporary Caregiver Insurance, Temporary Disability Insurance, and paid sick leave.

Our final meeting of the year was on April 9th, and we were joined by Field Attorneys Catherine Terrell and Alan Merriman from the National Labor Relations Board. They spoke with us regarding temporary election procedures that the NLRB has implemented during the pandemic and employers' bargaining obligations during the pandemic. They also covered new developments under the Biden administration as well as pending legislation (the Protecting Right to Organize Act), which (if it becomes law) would significantly rewrite the National Labor Relations Act as we all currently know it.

Overall, although we certainly look forward to resuming our regular lunch meetings in person, the 2020-2021 year was a productive year for the Labor Law & Employment Committee. It was certainly easier to get guest speakers to talk to us over Zoom (since it did not involve travel time), and we learned a lot from some very qualified experts who were extraordinarily generous with their time.



## Lawyers Helping Lawyers

Nicholas Trott Long, *Chair*

The Lawyers Helping Lawyers Committee serves as a confidential resource to Bar members and their families, providing support and encouragement when needed. Committee volunteers give generously of their time to help their colleagues. Their primary role is to lend an

ear and assist in making an appropriate referral to professional resources. The communications between lawyers seeking help and members of the Committee are strictly confidential, even within the Committee itself. Lawyer-Committee member contacts are noted only for statistical purposes and no names are ever mentioned.

The RIBA contracts with Coastline EAP, which provides professional clinical assessments and facilitates getting appropriate treatment for Bar members and their family members. Long-time Coastline EAP liaison Judith G. Hoffman has retired after giving the Bar Association 34 years of outstanding confidential service to Bar members. Our new liaison is Paula Hamilton who has been with Coastline EAP since 1997. Coastline is available to members of the bar and their families 24/7 and can be reached at 800-445-1195, or email address [intake@coastlineeap.com](mailto:intake@coastlineeap.com). The website, [coastlineeap.com](http://coastlineeap.com), contains a large database of helpful resources.

Throughout the year the Committee circulated a variety of well-being articles to the bar using social media, the Association's website, and the *Bar Journal*.

At the 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting the Lawyers Helping

Lawyers Committee coordinated a presentation on Lawyer Well-Being. The session presented the progress made and continuing challenges in Rhode Island and the national effort to improve lawyer well-being. Moderated by Chairperson Long, it featured attorneys Stacie Collier, Cassandra Feeney, and Charlene Pratt.

The pandemic has created unprecedented opportunities for lawyers to address their well-being needs and generated an unprecedented plethora of valuable resources. Although not in person this year, the Aon Lawyers Professional Liability Insurance company continued to sponsor the annual loss prevention series of CLE programs. Last fall, the 27th annual free ethics program was presented in three live webinars, *Don't Let the Jokers Drive You Batty! - What We Can Learn from Batman About Maintaining Our Sanity (And Ethics) in the Practice of Law*. In total, 619 members attended the thought-provoking and interactive live webinars.



## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Legal Issues

James Bagley, *Co-Chair*

Christopher J. Gerlica, *Co-Chair*

We would like to thank the Committee members for a successful committee year. We appreciate everyone's efforts in attending meetings and contributing to the Committee during these trying times. Further, while virtual, we continued to be a space for LGBTQ and ally attorneys to come together to discuss the needs of our growing community and what efforts can be made to foster a more engaged and thriving LGBTQ and ally legal community.



## Probate and Trust

David T. Riedel, *Chair*

The Committee on Probate and Trust considers proposed changes in the legal system as the changes relate to the probate, trust and estate tax areas. The Committee was active during the 2020-21 year meeting virtually three times. Unfortunately, our schedule had to be abbreviated due to the COVID-19 virus and meeting difficulties caused by it. The General Assembly and its respective committees also had abbreviated schedules. It is doubtful whether any legislation submitted or reviewed by the Committee can be taken up during the present legislative session.

The Committee consists of over one hundred members, many of whom were regular attendees and active participants at

committee meetings. Several probate judges were members of the Committee, and the judges provided a useful perspective for committee discussions. All “virtual” meetings of the Committee were well-“attended” by committee members, particularly in light of logistics difficulties brought on by COVID-19.

The Committee reviewed proposed legislation dealing with state estate tax modifications, the Uniform Directed Trust Act (revised and submitted by the Committee; this legislation would permit so-called “directed trusts” which would permit a settlor to designate a person other than a trustee as responsible for trust investments), elder adult exploitation and the Uniform Real Property Transfer on Death Act. The Committee has prepared and submitted in the past, with the approval of the Bar Executive Committee, proposed legislation with respect to portability between spouses of the Rhode Island estate tax credit. All bills are being held for further study by the appropriate committees of the House or Senate at this time, and passage is uncertain, as noted.

The Committee intends to pursue the directed trusts and estate tax portability legislation, in the current year, if possible, and in the 2021-2022 year, if necessary. In addition, the Committee will consider uniform legislation on non-judicial settlements and trust decanting (the latter as an update of the current Rhode Island statute).

The Chair was given invaluable assistance by a number of Committee members who made themselves available to review proposed legislation in the probate and trust area; several members also agreed to make themselves available to testify regarding legislation before Committees of the General Assembly.



### **Public Service Involvement** **Christine J. Engustian, Chair**

The Public Service Involvement (PSI) Committee met virtually and regularly through this past year, committed as ever to helping others gain access to justice and to increasing the number of attorneys who become members of the various public service programs of the

Bar Association. This challenge appeared more pressing than normal due to the pandemic, but many strides were made by the Committee members who shared with one another the various governmental programs and means that arose to assist low-income residents of our state.

A PSI subcommittee, initiated and led by long-standing and devoted committee member, Barbara L. Margolis, created a two-part family law series entitled *Unique Aspects of Military Divorce: and Ancillary Issues*, that was presented virtually in the Fall of 2020. The series provided free continuing legal education (5 CLE credit hours) to those volunteer attorneys who agreed to accept a family law case from the Bar Association. The first session covered a myriad of family law issues that military person-

nel and families encounter. The second session focused on military pensions (new & old), the 10-year rule, 20/20/20, etc. The subcommittee was able to plan and present this well-received program due to the support of the outstanding panel comprised of Attorneys Francis J. Flanagan, Paul P. Pederzani III, Kristy Garside, and PSI Committee members, Barbara L. Margolis and Kerry Reilly Travers. The Committee is very grateful to the panelists and to the subcommittee members since over twenty cases were immediately placed with the volunteer attorneys attending these seminars.

Last year, the PSI Committee reported that its proposed seminar called “Crimmigration,” which had been approved for the Bar Association’s 2020 Annual Meeting, was postponed due to the pandemic. This seminar, originally proposed by committee member Zachary Lyons to address the intersection of criminal law and immigration law, was presented as a virtual option for the 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting in June.

Annually, a PSI subcommittee selects the pro bono program members to receive the Bar Association’s awards for their outstanding contributions to the pro bono effort. Attorneys Janne Reisch and James J. Bagley were chosen to receive the 2021 Pro Bono Publico Award for their outstanding service to the less fortunate through the Volunteer Lawyer Program and US Armed Forces Legal Services Project, respectively. Each recipient is selected based on the number and complexity of cases taken, pro bono hours reported, length of service to the programs, professionalism, compassion and commitment to public service. The Committee is grateful to Janne and James for their commitment to the pro bono programs of the Bar Association and congratulates them for their well-deserved awards.

On the Committee’s behalf, I extend continued gratitude to the Public Services Director, Susan Fontaine, and all staff members whose knowledge, experience, and support guide the Committee throughout the year. We simply could not do our work without them.



### **Real Estate Title Standards and Practices**

**John A. Comery, Chair**

The Real Estate Title Standards and Practices Committee met via Zoom eight times this year with strong attendance and participation throughout. Each meeting included informative presentations related to recent cases of interest to real estate practitioners decided in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and federal courts, as well as lively discussions related thereto. Also discussed were numerous issues common to committee members in their transactional practices, with an emphasis upon assisting and informing one another.

Sincere thanks are offered to the following individuals who graciously presented cases and updates at meetings

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this year: Nicole J. Benjamin, Carlita A. Annicelli, John S. McNicholas, Michael B. Mellion, Hon. Linda Rekas Sloan, Michael Hagopian, Nancy M. Davis, Francis J. Nolan, Richard D'Addario, Neil Heiger, Kenneth R. Rampino, Christine M. Sturtevant, Rebecca C. Cox, Philip W. Gasbarro and David M. Dolbashian.

The Chair and the Committee once again offer sincere thanks to Nancy M. Davis, the Committee's Recording Secretary, for her tireless and exemplary preparation of comprehensive minutes of our meetings.

On November 19, 2020 the Committee participated in a tribute upon the passing of former Committee Chairman, Anthony J. Montalbano, who impacted our profession and individual practitioners in innumerable ways over many decades. His kindness and impact will be sorely missed.

The Committee had a very productive year as well, with the drafting of four new Title Standards and a Practice Form, as follows:

- a. Title Standard 12.5 "Reliance Upon Notice of Disposal in Tax Lien Case" enacted on December 15, 2020
- b. Title Standard 9.4 "Reliance Upon Certificate of Descent" enacted on March 3, 2021;
- c. Title Standard 8.7 "Affidavit Regarding Occupancy" enacted on April 27, 2021;
- d. Proposed Title Standard 3.18 "Validity of Condominium and Execution Lien Foreclosure Sales" which was passed by the Committee on April 15, 2021, and is pending approval by the Executive Committee as of this writing; and
- e. Proposed Practice Form 16 - "1-4 Unit Residential Property Disclosure Statement Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws §5-20.8-8" which was passed by the Committee on April 15, 2021, and is also pending approval by the Executive Committee as of this writing.

The Committee looks forward to the upcoming year and will continue to address issues pertaining to transactional, recording and abstracting practices with the goal of improving and modernizing same for the benefit of all.



## Superior Court Bench/Bar Zachary Mandell, *Chair*

The Superior Court Bench/Bar Committee met regularly by remote means during the 2020-2021 term. This was a unique year for the Committee given the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee, however, still managed to accomplish a number of important agenda items.

The following are a few highlights from the year:

First, for several years the Committee has been heavily involved with proposed rule changes to R.I.R.C.P. 26(b)(4). The Committee had previously drafted a proposed rule, worked to get approval from the necessary committees and leadership positions at the Rhode Island Bar Association, and worked with members of the Superior Court to get approval from the entirety of the Superior Court bench. I am pleased to report that this year the Rhode Island Supreme Court officially adopted these proposed rule changes and entered an Order on December 12, 2020, entitled, "In re Amendments to the Superior Court Rule of Civil Procedure," to that effect. Justice Stern and Justice Darigan were instrumental in the process to obtain approval from both the Superior Court bench and the Supreme Court.

Second, the Committee discussed strategies for the Superior Court both during and following the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee spent time working on a court-sponsored mediation program for cases awaiting trial dates, on procedures for motion and other calendars during the pandemic, and finally on ideas for how to use some of the efficiencies discovered during this past year following the pandemic. There were many Superior Court Justices that graciously gave their time to be on these Zoom meetings and alert the Committee as to court procedures during the pandemic.

A subcommittee was set up to formulate recommendations to the Court as to issues and procedures that could be helpful following the pandemic. The Committee unanimously approved the recommendations of the subcommittee and those recommendations were given to the Executive Committee of the Rhode Island Bar Association.

Third, the Committee heard from, and was able to have a discussion with, Justice Raspallo, who shared his views about the motion calendar and the proposed changes he is contemplating making to the calendar.

It has been an honor and pleasure serving as the Chairperson of the Superior Court Bench/Bar Committee this year. I am proud of the accomplishments this year, particularly given the many issues faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. I hope that the work of the Committee has benefited both the Court and the attorneys who practice in the Superior Court. Thank you to all who helped with the Committee's work this year. It was a team effort. We are all looking forward to another great year ahead.





### **Technology in the Practice**

**Michael M. Goldberg, Co-Chair**  
**Rhiannon S. Huffman, Co-Chair**

As the COVID-19 Pandemic changed the practice of law, the Technology in the Practice Committee shifted its focus in 2020 and 2021 to not only assisting lawyers with technology but also enhancing lawyers' capabilities with now necessary technology (e.g., WebEx and Zoom video Conferencing software).



The Technology in the Practice Committee continued its role as a conduit between the Rhode Island Bar and the Rhode Island State Courts to improve the Case Management System

(CMS) and Electronic Filing (E-Filing) System.

The Technology in the Practice Committee joined with Red Cave Law Firm Consulting, the Bar's free law practice management consultant, to present a series of webinars focusing on introducing less tech-savvy attorneys to technology that can improve their performance in the field and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Compare & Contrast series covered topics including Firm Management Software, Cloud Storage Services, Voice over IP (VOIP) Phone Systems and virtual meeting etiquette.

The Technology in the Practice Committee continued to serve as a resource for the Rhode Island Bar members concerning all technology-related questions.

The E-Filing Working Group and the Judiciary representatives again jointly presented a seminar reviewing the current status and previewed future developments relating to the CMS and E-Filing System during the 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting.

The Committee continued to organize and moderate the E-Filing Working Group, consisting of bar members and representatives from multiple Bar Association Bench/Bar Committees. The E-Filing Working Group acts as a conduit between Bar members and the Rhode Island Judiciary. The E-Filing Working Group has developed into a resource for Bar members to utilize various features of the CMS and E-Filing Systems effectively. The E-File Working Group has likewise brought Bar members' concerns relating to the systems to the Judiciary for possible resolution.

Committee members have spoken upon invitation at other Bar Associations Bench/Bar Committees to discuss current technology trends affecting the legal profession and the CMS and E-Filing System.

The Committee has provided reports of our progress to the Bar Association President Richard P. D'Addario, who has passed along the information to the membership through the President's Messages in the *Rhode Island Bar Journal*, as well as through Bar Committee updates, all-member emails, and news postings on the Bar's website and social media accounts.

### **Workers' Compensation Bench/Bar**

**William Gardner, Chair**

The Committee met via remote conferencing periodically throughout the past year, but the change in medium brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic seems to have increased attendance and access to these meetings. The Committee commends the attorneys and judiciary for promptly addressing the changes to the practice brought on by the pandemic and for meeting these new challenges head on. Throughout these tough times, the Court has been able to assign and hear new claims with the same expediency as it always has, with the majority of the Pre-trial Conferences and Initial Hearings being held via remote access. The justices of the Workers' Compensation Court have continued to litigate matters expeditiously by packing their calendars and conducting live trial testimony under challenging circumstances, which has allowed employees, employers, and insurers to continue to litigate their claims without delay. Prompt access to, and receipt of, relief made the Rhode Island Workers' Compensation Court a model for other jurisdictions and that has continued unabated this year as well. The Court's mediation program also continued to operate remotely as well and while this presented new challenges for the mediators, the program continued to be a huge success. The Workers' Compensation Court was also able to welcome Associate Justice Kevin B. Reall to the bench during the pandemic. As we look forward to a return to normalcy, it is with great pride that the Workers' Compensation Court Bench/Bar Committee can report that for all important metrics the Workers' Compensation Court has managed to maintain a standard of excellence despite the difficulties it has faced this past year.

## Rhode Island Bar Foundation 2021 Annual Meeting



Michael R. McElroy, Esq.  
Rhode Island Bar Foundation  
President



Victoria M. Almeida, Esq.  
Rhode Island Bar Foundation  
Vice President



James A. Jackson, Esq.  
Rhode Island Bar Foundation  
Treasurer



Armando E. Batastini, Esq.  
Rhode Island Bar Foundation  
Secretary

The Rhode Island Bar Foundation held its Annual Meeting remotely on Thursday, June 17, 2021 at 12:30 pm. All Foundation Fellows were invited to attend. Foundation President Michael R. McElroy and the Board of Directors thanked the Foundation Fellows who, through their professional, public and private careers, have demonstrated outstanding dedication to the welfare of the community and objectives of the Foundation. President McElroy expressed gratitude to the members of the Board and the hard-working Foundation Committees.

During the Meeting, conducted through Zoom, the newest Foundation Fellows, as well as representatives from organizations receiving 2021 Interest on Lawyers Trust Account (IOLTA) grants, were recognized. This year, \$393,109 was granted for the provision of Rhode Island legal services and the administration of justice. Attorney participation in the IOLTA program accounts for the most significant source of grant revenue. The Foundation also recognized and honored the recipients of both the 2021 Thomas F. Black, Jr., Memorial Scholarship and the new Papitto Opportunity Connection Scholarship, as well as the recipients of the Honorable Thomas J. Caldarone, Jr., law student summer Fellowship Program.

### The Honorable Thomas J. Caldarone, Jr. Fellowship Program

The RI Bar Foundation received a generous donation from the late Hon. Thomas J. Caldarone Jr. which has been used to establish an endowment for summer fellowships. Annually, two students entering their second year at Roger Williams University School of Law will receive a stipend for an internship in Rhode Island at a non-profit organization engaged in providing legal services to persons of limited means. As Caldarone Fellows, second-year law school students have the opportunity to assist in providing crucial legal services to the public and in so doing may encourage those students to pursue public service careers. The Rhode Island Bar Foundation is very pleased to be able to award two fellowships this year. Both Elsa Laskorski and Ivania Zepeda will be interning at the Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island this summer.

### Thomas F. Black, Jr., Memorial Scholarship Program

The Rhode Island Bar Foundation's Thomas F. Black, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 1989 to support and foster high legal practice standards by assisting Rhode Island residents who show promise that they will become outstanding lawyers and who need financial assistance to study law. The Scholarship is in honor of the late Thomas F. Black, Jr., a person known for his impressive ability as a lawyer and banker, his deeply rooted legal scholarship, and his notable participation in civic and charitable causes. This year, the Foundation granted two, \$25,000 scholarships to first-year law students: McKenzie Moore and Ana Brasil.

**The Bar Foundation Welcomed  
6 New Fellows at the Annual Meeting**

The Bar Foundation receives support by annual contributions through our Fellows program. Membership in the Foundation as a Fellow is a professional honor. Fellows are selected from Rhode Island Bar Association members whose professional, public and private careers demonstrate their outstanding dedication to the welfare of the community and maintenance of the Rhode Island Bar Foundation's objectives.

- Sean M. Fontes
- Jessica S. Jewell
- Justin T. Shay
- Ronald C. Markoff
- Katherine A. Merolla
- David E. Revens

**Papitto Opportunity Connection Scholarship**

The Foundation is pleased to announce one additional scholarship this year, and to be awarded annually, due to the generosity of The Ralph R. Papitto and Barbara A. Papitto Private Family Foundation. The Foundation granted a \$25,000 scholarship through its newly established Papitto Opportunity Connection Scholarship Fund to first-year law student Jessica Andrade. Along with her strong academic achievements, she also has a strong connection to Rhode Island, a history of community service, and has worked diligently to contribute to her education. This award is also designated for a student who falls within the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Person of Color) category.

**Special Thank You to Scholarship Program Contributors**

- The Horace A. Kimball and S. Ella Kimball Foundation
- The Champlin Foundation
- The Nicholas J. Caldarone Foundation
- The Ralph R. Papitto and Barbara A. Papitto Private Family Foundation
- The Rhode Island Bar Foundation Fellows

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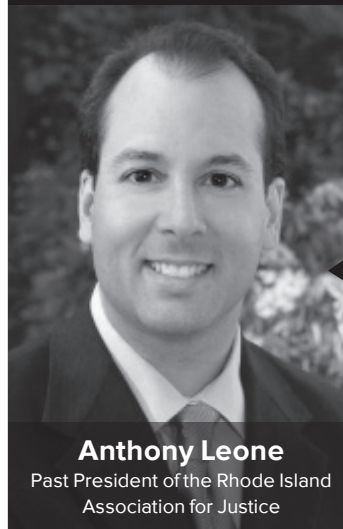
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## Rhode Island Bar Association 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting

While this year’s hard-working Annual Meeting Planning Committee, ably chaired by Nicole J. Benjamin, had initially hoped to produce an in-person meeting, it was forced to change gears late last year due to the uncertainty of the pandemic. The Planning Committee turned the challenge into a strength, and members were presented with an incredible program featuring a diverse schedule of workshops that had something for all practitioners. While everyone in attendance experienced the Annual Meeting in a new virtual format on the interactive Eventmobi platform, the Committee focused on not straying too far from what attendees appreciated and looked forward to during past in-person conferences.

The two-day virtual event included some of the usual favorites, including the always popular state and federal court updates, and the plenary presentation, featuring the Honorable O. Rogeriee Thompson of the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and the Honorable John J. McConnell, Jr., Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island, was an enlightening discussion for all in attendance. All programs were recorded and will be available in the Bar’s On Demand catalog later this summer.



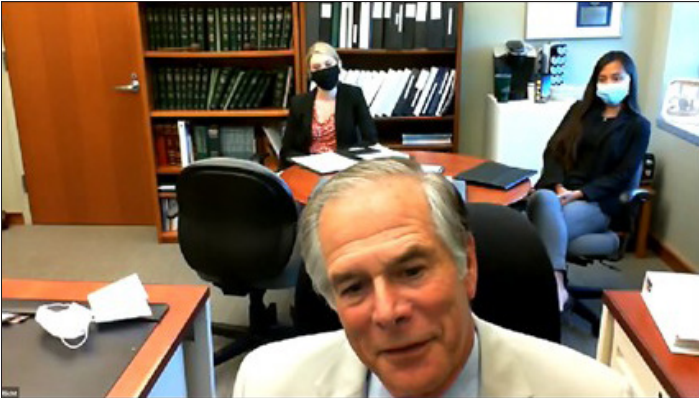
At the **Civil and Criminal Case Law Updates**, panelists Hon. Francis X. Flaherty (left), Supreme Court of RI (ret.); Hon. Francis J. Darigan Jr., RI Superior Court (ret.); Hon. Sarah Taft-Carter, RI Superior Court; Hon. Sandra A. Lanni, RI Family Court; Lauren E. Jones, Esq. (right), Jones Associates; Thomas M. Dickinson, Esq., Law Offices of Thomas Dickinson; Professor Jared Goldstein, RWU School of Law; and Lara E. Montecalvo, Esq., Office of the Public Defender provided an informative and insightful overview of recent noteworthy civil and criminal decisions issued by the United States Supreme Court and the Rhode Island Supreme Court.



**Coming Together: An Open Conversation** was a candid and insightful discussion with O. Rogeriee Thompson (left), Circuit Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals and John J. McConnell, Jr. (right), Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island.

Speaker Stacie Collier, Esq., Cassandra Feeney, Esq., and Charlene Pratt, Esq. presented the progress made and continuing challenges in Rhode Island and the national effort to improve lawyer well-being in the program **A Progress Report on Lawyer Well-Being**.

At the two-part **Commercial Law Update**, presenters Steven O. Weise, Esq., Edwin Smith, Esq., Patrick A. Guida, Esq., Lisa Kresge, Esq., and Thomas S. Hemmendinger, Esq. reviewed various state and federal commercial law-related court decisions.



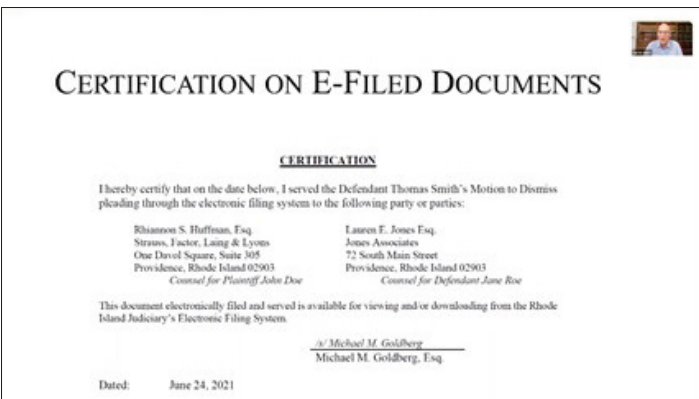
Panelists Kerry Reilley Travers, Esq., Richard P. D'Addario, Esq., Hon. Richard A. Licht, and Hon. Edward H. Newman, shared their experiences, challenges, and war stories, as well as a perspective of the changes they have seen in professionalism, collegiality, and technology at the always popular **Golden Nuggets**. Discussion focused on the Rules of Professional Conduct, which did not formally exist when these attorneys passed the bar.



Hon. Paul T. Jones, Jr. and Hon. Jeanne L. Shepard (pictured) of the RI Family Court discussed the link between animal cruelty and domestic violence at their program, **View from the Bench: Link Between Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence**.



At **Don't Take It Personal: Constitutional Limits on the Courts' Power to Exercise Personal Jurisdiction Over Defendants**, panelists Hon. Brian P. Stern and Zachary Mandell, Esq. (pictured) discussed the limits of personal jurisdiction in a pair of consolidated cases involving Ford Motor Company.



Representatives from the Rhode Island State Judiciary and attorneys discussed the current developments and future plans of the Rhode Island Odyssey File & Serve System and the Rhode Island Judiciary Public Portal during their program, **Rhode Island State Court E-Filing: Current Developments and Future Plans**.

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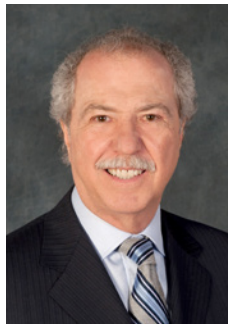
## 2021 ANNUAL MEETING LUNCHEON

The Bar Association welcomed over 200 attendees at our Annual Meeting Luncheon held in the tent at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick on the Friday following the virtual Annual Meeting. Everyone was excited for the first social event that the Bar has hosted since the start of the pandemic. RIBA was finally able to give our 2020 award winners and honorary members the recognition they deserve and also celebrated the 2021 honorees. We heard a report on the state of the Judiciary from Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell and Bar President Lynda L. Laing was sworn in for the 2021-22 year.





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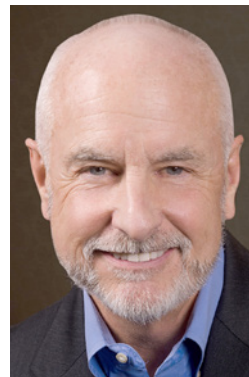
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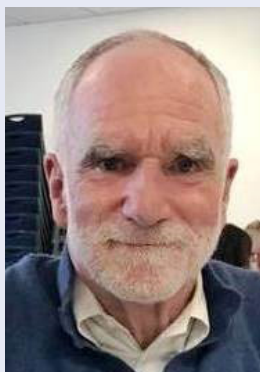
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# Thank You 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting Speakers!

While this year's hard-working Annual Meeting Planning Committee, ably chaired by Nicole J. Benjamin, had initially hoped to produce an in-person meeting this year, it was forced to change gears late last year due to the uncertainty of the pandemic. We would like to express our gratitude to the panelists who agreed to move forward with their programs in a virtual format. We were able to produce an extremely successful two-day virtual program on the Eventmobi platform, despite the pandemic, thanks to your hard work, flexibility, and collaboration.

**Joanna M. Achille, Esq.**  
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*RI Workers' Compensation Court*

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## Ada L. Sawyer: A Family Woman



Denise C. Aiken, Esq.  
Providence

On a warm June evening, a very tall, slim man entered my little cottage in an improbable green jacket. (More on the jacket later) The gentleman was Robert Bateman, the grand nephew of our Ada L. Sawyer.

For the next two hours, I was allowed a window into the family life of Ada Sawyer, RI's first female attorney, that most of us never had the privilege to share.

For 20 years I have written about the plucky young woman who had to be declared a "person" in order to sit for the RI bar exam in 1920 and passed that exam just 3 months after winning the right to vote. I ask myself, who was Ada Sawyer when she was not at her office in the Turk's Head Building.

Bob Bateman painted for me a picture of a woman of "selfless generosity" (his words). Here was a woman who was generous to charity, but wanting no fanfare.

Case in point: She and her sister Bertha Sawyer had a house in Bonnet Shores. It was open to the children and grandchildren of their youngest sister, Clara. But when the house was crowded, Ada bought a smaller house nearby, so that she and Bertha could leave the bigger house for the extended family. Years later, when Ada sold that larger house, she donated the little house to St. Andrew's School – anonymously. She thought it was "fun" to do nice things for other people.

Back in the 1970's, Bob Bateman was a student at Brown University. ( Here is where the green jacket comes in). Bob lived on South Angell St. with his great aunts, Ada and Bertha. Each Tuesday he had lunch with Ada at the Turk's Head Club. At that time, and for many years later, gentlemen were required to wear a jacket (suit or sport) to be seated. Ada Sawyer bought her young grand-nephew a sport coat, but kept it in her Turk's Head office to ensure said nephew would always be admitted. To this day, Bob loves that jacket.

And most telling of all: Clara's grandchildren, Bob and his sisters, Pam, Alison, and Carol, thought of Aunt Ada as a second grandmother.

While she may never have married, she left a legacy of family love and she was cherished.



Ada Sawyer, Esq.



Robert Bateman, grand nephew of Ada L. Sawyer, in his sport coat given to him by his great-aunt.

Tickets for our Ada Sawyer Centennial Celebration will be available for purchase later this summer. Mark your calendars for Thursday, October 14, 2021 for an evening to remember!

## Seeking Law Related Education Program Attorney Volunteers!

Your Bar Association supports law related education (LRE) for Rhode Island children and adults through three, longstanding programs: *Lawyers in the Classroom* and *Rhode Island Law Day* for upper and middle school teachers and students, and the *Speakers Bureau* for adult organizations. Responding to LRE requests, Bar volunteers are contacted – based on their geographic location and noted areas of legal interest – to determine their interest and availability.

If you are interested in serving as an LRE volunteer, please go to the Bar's website at [ribar.com](http://ribar.com), click on **FOR ATTORNEYS**, click on **LAW RELATED EDUCATION**, click on **ATTORNEY ONLY LRE APPLICATION**. All Bar members interested in serving as LRE volunteers, now and in the future, *must* sign-up this year, as we are refreshing our database.

Questions? Please contact Director of Communications Erin Cute at [ecute@ribar.com](mailto:ecute@ribar.com) or (401) 421-5740.

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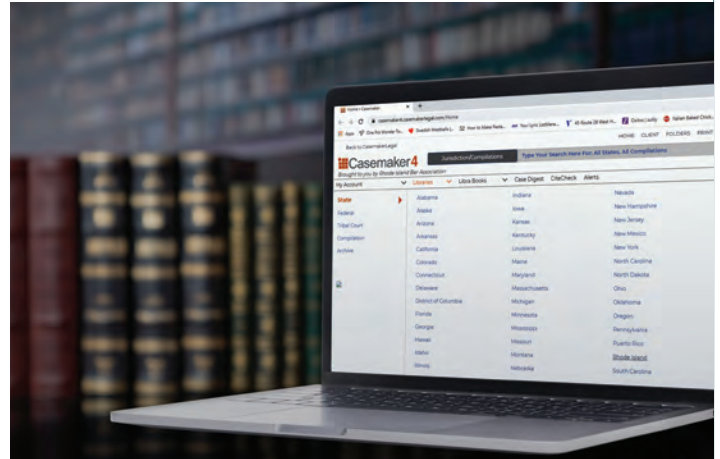
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Also available in the upper right is the **Help** link. Clicking this link will place you in the **Casemaker Learning Center**. Here you are provided with a link to **Quick Start Guide**, an additional link for our videos and a link to our weekly search tips archive.

The **Help** page includes our **Contact Us** link. This provides our **Customer Support Information**. Casemaker's live **Customer Support** is available Monday – Friday from 8 AM till 8 PM Eastern. Here we provide our toll-free telephone number as well as our email address, and a link to live chat with us, both on the **Help** page and in the **Features Toolbar**.

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## Rhode Island Probate Court Listing and Judicial Communications Survey on Bar's Website

The Rhode Island Bar Association regularly updates the Rhode Island Probate Court Listing to ensure posted information is correct. [The Probate Court Listing](#) is available on the Bar's website at [ribar.com](http://ribar.com) by clicking on **FOR ATTORNEYS** on the home page menu and then clicking on **PROBATE COURT INFORMATION** on the dropdown menu. The Listing is provided in a downloadable pdf format. Bar members may also increase the type size of the words on the Listing by using the percentage feature at the top of the page. The Bar Association also posts a chart summarizing the preferences of Superior Court justices relating to direct communications from attorneys, and between attorneys and the justices' clerks which is updated yearly. The [chart](#) is available by clicking **MEMBERS ONLY** on the home page menu and then clicking **JUDICIAL COMMUNICATIONS**.

## Bar Association Mentor Programs

Our Bar Association is proud to offer mentorship opportunities to our members, promoting professional development and collegiality, and assistance and guidance in the practice of law. Experienced practitioners can share their wealth of knowledge and experience with mentees, and mentees receive a helping hand as they begin, or revitalize, their legal careers. Over the years, the Bar Association has matched numerous new members with seasoned attorneys, and we would like to refresh our directory.

For traditional mentoring, our program matches new lawyers, one-on-one with experienced mentors, in order to assist with law practice management, effective client representation, and career development. If you would like to volunteer and serve as a mentor, please visit [ribar.com](http://ribar.com), select the **MEMBERS ONLY** area, and complete the **Mentor Application** form and return it to the listed contact.

As an alternative, the Bar Association also offers the Online Attorney Information Resource Center (OAR), available to Bar members through the **MEMBERS ONLY** section of the Bar's website, to help members receive timely and direct volunteer assistance with practice-related questions.

If you have any questions about either form of mentoring, or if you would like to be paired with a mentor through our traditional program, please contact Communications Director Erin Cute by email: [ecute@ribar.com](mailto:ecute@ribar.com), or telephone: 401-421-5740.

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The Rhode Island Bar Association's Career Center is operated by [YourMembership.com](http://YourMembership.com). At no charge, Bar members may: search and quickly apply for relevant jobs; set up personalized Job Alerts for immediate notification any time a job is posted matching your skills and/or interests; create an anonymous job seeker profile or upload your anonymous resume allowing employers to find you; and access job-searching tools and tips. For a fee, employers may place job openings; search our resume database of qualified candidates; manage jobs and applicant activity right on our site; limit applicants to those who meet your requirements, and fill openings more quickly with talented legal professionals. For more information, visit the Bar's website at [ribar.com](http://ribar.com) and click Career Center under the list of Quick Links.



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## In Memoriam

### **Robert H. Breslin Jr., Esq.**

Robert (Bob) H. Breslin, Jr. died on January 11, 2021. Born in Providence to Dr. Robert Henry Breslin and Dr. Kate Elizabeth Breslin, Bob grew up in Warwick with his younger brother, Dr. Thomas Breslin (deceased March, 2020). Bob attended Moses Brown '46, Brown University '50, and then studied law at Boston College '54. He worked for the City of Warwick and the citizens of Warwick until the age of 90, beginning as Warwick's Assistant City Solicitor in 1957. Until the age of 90, he was devoted to his clients, most recently Of Counsel at Sullivan & Sullivan. Bob served in the Rhode Island State Legislature from 1961 until 1970. He was an elected Member of the Rhode Island Constitutional Convention in 1973. He was a founding partner at Saxon, Butler and Breslin from 1959-1970, and then at Breslin, Sweeney and Earle from 1970-2007. He was President of the Warwick Rotary Club, Trustee of Rocky Hill School, Trustee of the Gilbert Stuart Birthplace, Trustee of the Willett Free Library in Saunderstown, Commissioner on Judicial Tenure and Discipline, and Board member of the Quonset Development Corporation (appointed by Governors Carcieri and Chafee). He leaves his wife Carol Ann (Hathaway) and children: Pamela (Byrne) Murphy of Washington, D.C.; Melissa (Quentin) Chafee of Saunderstown; and Robert (Jennifer) Henry Breslin III of Saunderstown; and ten grandchildren.

### **Christopher P. Corbett, Esq.**

Christopher P. Corbett, died on June 3, 2021. He was born to Joanne (Wilson) Corbett and Carl Frederick Corbett III. Graduating Pilgrim High School in 1981, Chris went on to attend Trinity College ('85) and later the NE School of Law ('97). Chris practiced law for many years in Rhode Island before changing course, eventually becoming the Spec Fiduciary Officer II – Assistant VP at Bank of America. Predeceased by his father, Chris is survived by his mother, Joanne Corbett, brother Carl Frederick Corbett (Rebecca), and sisters Deborah Bryan (Martin) and Kerrin Martini (Steven, dec.).

### **John W. Dineen, Esq.**

John W. Dineen, died on June 11, 2021. He leaves behind his wife Gail Broadbent. Born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, John was the son of the late John F. and Mary (McGrath) Dineen. After his graduation from law school, John worked for many years as a Legal Services attorney, first in Pittsburgh, PA, and later at Rhode Island Legal Services. After going into private practice in the late 1980s, John often served as a volunteer lawyer for the ACLU, focusing on First Amendment rights of free expression. He was the father of Vanessa, Timothy, and Olivia Dineen. He leaves three sisters: Sheila Queenan, Katherine Gatley and Frances Gagnon.

### **Edmund A. DiSandro, Esq.**

Edmund A. DiSandro, 88, formally of Providence, died on Saturday, April 30, 2021. Mr. DiSandro was born on August 9, 1932 in Providence, RI to the late Nicandro and Adelina (Mascio) DiSandro. He attended LaSalle Academy before receiving his BA from Providence College. He received his law degree from Boston College and began a law firm in Providence, in the early 60s. Edmond practiced criminal law for approximately 11 years. He then pursued his passion as a trial attorney which he did until his retirement in the late 90s. He was given honorable mentions in Who's Who in United States Law for several notable cases. Edmond was a member of the Smithfield Lion's Club, The Smithfield Jaycees, and the Smithfield Sportsman's Club. He was also a long-time member of the Aurora Civic Association in Providence, and attended St. Philips Church in Greenville, RI.

### **Joseph F. Dugan, Esq.**

Joseph F. Dugan, 86, died on Wednesday, May 12, 2021. Born in Camden, NJ, Joe was the son of the late Joseph and Nellie Dugan. Joe was a

graduate of Penn State University and George Washington University Law School. He was a trial lawyer with offices in Woonsocket and Providence. He had been an attorney with Neighborhood Legal Services in Washington, DC from 1965 to 1969 and Deputy Director and Director of RI Legal Services from 1970 to 1977. Joe had been an attorney in the Civil Division of the RI Attorney General's office under AGs Michaelson, Roberts and Violet. He also served on the Boards of RI Mental Health, Marathon House and RI Legal Services. He was a member of RI, MA and DC Bars. Except for the years 1984 and 1985, when he practiced in Boston, from 1977 to the present Joe was actively engaged in civil trial practice in RI and MA Superior and Federal Courts, RI Supreme Court and the First Circuit Court of Appeals and had cases in the US Supreme Court. He was the husband of Beryl A. Sutton. He was the father of Gregory J. Dugan and former husband of Geraldine.

### **James Carver Farrington Jr., Esq.**

James C. "Jim" Farrington, 95, died on Tuesday, January 5, 2021. He was the son of James Carver and Catherine (Fenton) Farrington. Jim attended St. Mary School in NH and graduated early from Dover High School to join the war effort. He enlisted with the U.S. Army Air Corps in October 1943, flew on Army C-47s as a radio operator, and was honorably discharged in April 1946. He earned a B.A. from the University of New Hampshire, and then an LL.B. from Boston College School of Law in 1952. He worked for General Electric for five years in the legal department. Jim joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation in June 1957 as a Special Agent in the Newark, NJ, and then Washington, DC, field offices. Assigned to the Crime Records Division at headquarters in 1961, he later was chief of the Freedom of Information Unit and then Inspector-Deputy Assistant Director in the Legal Counsel Division until his retirement in February 1980. Jim was a member of the District of Columbia Bar, admitted to practice before the Court of Appeals and U.S. Supreme Court. In September 1980 he was an associate professor in the Criminal Justice program (later the Administration of Justice Department) at Salve Regina College in Newport. In 1993 he received a student-nominated Teacher Excellence award. Jim volunteered in the soup kitchen and emergency food pantry at St. Joseph's Conference of the St. Vincent DePaul Society in Newport. He was a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in Newport. In 2008 he was one of the recipients of the Newport Daily News Community Service Award, and also received a Humanitarian Service Award from the Former Agents of the FBI Foundation. He was inducted into the Rhode Island Criminal Justice Hall of Fame in 2011. Jim received an Ozanam Award in 2017 from St. Vincent de Paul RI, which he accepted on behalf of the volunteers at St. Joseph's soup kitchen. He was predeceased by his wife Betty Farrington. He leaves five daughters: Anne E. Farrington and husband Donald L. Carter of Auburn, ME; Mary Farrington of Newport; Kathryn E. Farrington of Portsmouth, RI; Margaret E. (Farrington) and husband Michael Ferreira of Westport, MA; and Martha E. (Farrington) and husband Fred Costa of Portsmouth, RI; and many grandchildren.

### **David Francazio, Esq.**

David Francazio, 30, died on September 5th, 2019. David graduated from the Wheeler School in Providence, RI before attending the honors program at Boston College. He went on to attend Duke Law school in Durham, NC. David is survived by his parents Steven and Loreen Francazio of Smithfield and grandparents Robert and Irene Gianfrocco of Cranston, as well as sister and brother-in-law Lisa and Gregory English of Erie, PA and nephews William and Sam. He was the grandson of the late Louis and Anna Francazio of North Scituate, RI.

*continued on page 41*



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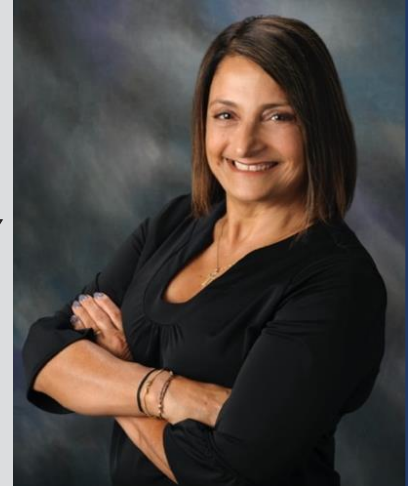
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## In Memoriam *(continued from page 39)*

### Amy Page Oberg, Esq.

Amy Page Oberg, 62, died on May 14, 2021. She was the daughter of the late George C. "Topsy" and Mildred C. "Pinky" Page. She was a graduate of East Providence High School, Colby College and New England School of Law. She resided in Barrington and practiced law as an attorney in the Providence area for 15 years before her retirement. She was a member of the Riverside Covenant Church, where she previously served as chair of the church council. She was a former member of the Barrington School Committee and a former chair of the board of directors of the Bayside YMCA. In addition to those roles, Amy devoted time to pro bono law work and volunteerism, including volunteering for the Greater Providence YMCA Association, local PTOs and for TAP-IN. Besides her husband David E. Oberg, she is survived by her step-mother, Rosemary (Harrington) Heffernan-Page of Riverside, dedicated caregiver, Gladys Santana of North Smithfield, five children; David E. Oberg, Jr., and his wife Katarina of Barrington, Kristin I. Stirling and her husband Will, of Watertown, MA, Charles A. Oberg and his partner Amanda, of Barrington, Sarah E. McPeake and her husband Ryan, of North Kingstown and George M. Oberg of Dover, NH, two sisters; Elizabeth A. Page of Attleboro, MA and Rachael B. Page of Palm Harbor, FL and eleven grandchildren. She is predeceased by her son Joshua R. Oberg and her grandson Chandler A. Oberg.

### Mia D. Rowland, Esq.

Mia D. Rowland died on Friday, March 20, 2020. Born in Providence, she was the mother of Aila, daughter of the late Helen Marie (Clouatre) Ruschetta and granddaughter of the late Armand and Frances Clouatre. Mia was a professor at UMASS Dartmouth and Bristol Community College, and an attorney. Besides her daughter, she is survived by her sister, Tonya Campagnone of Johnston and many other family members.

### Joseph J. Solomon Sr., Esq.

Joseph J. Solomon, Sr. died on May 20, 2021. Over the years, he worked as a Municipal Judge, City Councilperson, City Council President, and Mayor for the City of Warwick. Joe was born in Providence, RI to Rose (Melan) Solomon and his late father Samuel Solomon. Joe was a graduate of St. Pius school, Classical High School, Providence College, and the New England School of Law. As an accountant, business owner, and lawyer, Joe brought a unique skill set to the business world and ultimately to his service to the City of Warwick. Joe leaves behind his wife Cynthia, his son State Representative Joseph J. Solomon, Jr., his mother Rose Solomon of Providence, and five sisters: Rosemarie (Russell) Fontaine, Nancy (Robert) Armoush, Carol Paiva, Linda (Kenneth) Maroun, and Marilyn (Raymond) Solomon Bruzzese, all of RI.

### Edwin A. Stapans, Esq.

Edwin A. Stapans, 62, died Thursday, June 17, 2021. He was the husband of Brenda L. (Thulier) Stapans. Born in Woonsocket, a son of the late Oscar E. and Joyce E. (Allen) Stapans, he had lived in Wakefield and Englewood, FL for many years. Ed was a Rhode Island State Trooper for 12 years from 1979-1991, retiring as a Detective Sergeant. He was a graduate of Roger Williams University where he received his undergraduate degree and then earned his Juris Doctorate Degree also from Roger Williams University. He was a member of the Rhode Island Bar Association and the United States Bar Association. Besides his wife, he is survived by two sons, Glenn A. Stapans and his wife Julia, and Erik W. Stapans and his wife Vanessa, all of Wakefield; one daughter, Kelsey L. Silkes and her husband Mason of Richmond; and his six grandchildren.

## MEMORIAM 2020-2021

David Abbott, Esq.  
Thomas W. Barry, Esq.  
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Bernard P. Campbell, Esq.  
Christopher Corbett, Esq.  
William Corcoran, Esq.  
David J. Correia, Esq.  
Valerie E. DeMarco, Esq.  
John W. Dineen, Esq.  
Edmond DiSandro, Esq.  
Robert G. Driscoll, Esq.  
Joseph F. Dugan, Esq.  
James C. Farrington, Esq.  
Robert M. Ferreira, Esq.  
G. John Gazerro, Esq.  
Edward von Gerichten, Esq.  
Robert K. Harrington, Esq.  
Marvin Hodosh, Esq.  
John W. Kershaw, Esq.  
Hon. Howard I. Lipsey

Kenneth Macksoud, Esq.  
Joseph G. Miller, Esq.  
Anthony Montalbano, Esq.  
Kenneth Neal, Esq.  
Gerald Norigian, Esq.  
Amy Page Oberg, Esq.  
J. Renn Olenn, Esq.  
George Patton, Esq.  
John Ranucci, Esq.  
Mia Rowland, Esq.  
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**How It Works:** Readers are asked to consider what's happening in the cartoon above and submit clever, original captions. Editorial Board staff will review entries, and will post their top choices in the following issue of the *Journal*, along with a new cartoon to be captioned.

**How to Enter:** Submit the caption you think best fits the scene depicted in the cartoon above by sending an email to [ecute@ribar.com](mailto:ecute@ribar.com) with "Caption Contest for July/August" in the subject line.

**Deadline for entry:** Contest entries must be submitted by July 31st, 2021.

*By submitting a caption for consideration in the contest, the author grants the Rhode Island Bar Association the non-exclusive and perpetual right to license the caption to others and to publish the caption in its Journal, whether print or digital.*

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# 5 Tips to Help Reduce **RETURN TO WORK ANXIETY**



If you're anxious about returning to the office after more than a year of working remotely, consider using these 5 tips to help ease the transition to in-person work.

## **EASE INTO THE TRANSITION**

Whether you are returning to the office full time or just a few days per week, the disruption to your daily routine can feel daunting. Start by focusing on the positives that can come with going back to the office. Before your official return date, take a trip into the office to reacquaint yourself with your workspace.

## **TIDY UP**

While you're visiting the office, you might as well spruce up your workspace! If your office has been vacant for a year, it may need some refreshing or cleaning. Add some new pictures, give your desk a wipe down, and add a new plant. A pleasing, clean, and organized environment is good for your mental health.

## **GIVE YOUR WARDROBE A MAKEOVER**

When you look good, you feel good. The right wardrobe can help you transition back into your role. Ditch the leggings and pajama pants and consider buying a new outfit or refreshing your wardrobe by adding pieces that make you feel comfortable and confident.

## **MAKE TIME FOR SLEEP**

Not having a commute made it easier for you to hit the snooze button until a few minutes before you were scheduled to start your workday. On the other hand, managing family life might have pushed your workdays late into the night. Start adjusting your sleep schedule to allow plenty of rest before you return to the office.

## **PRACTICE SELF-CARE**

Even as you work to make the transition easier, returning to the office may feel overwhelming at times. Practicing self-care can help you cope with the stress of change. Prioritize your mental health by making time for activities that allow you to unwind, like journaling or meditation.

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