

*28th Annual
Joseph F. Gagliardi
Award for
Excellence*

Thursday, November 17, 2022 | 3 PM

**Westchester County Courthouse
Gagliardi Courtroom
Courtroom 200
White Plains, NY 10601**

Program

Call the Special Session to Order

Seating of Judiciary and Guests

Presentation of Colors & Pledge of Allegiance

New York State Courts Ceremonial Unit

Special Presentation

New York State Court Pipes and Drum

Welcoming Remarks

Honorable Anne E. Minihan

Administrative Judge, Ninth Judicial District

Remarks by

Mary Ellen Manley, Esq.

President, Westchester County Bar Foundation

Presentation of Awards by

Katherine Lynch, Esq.

WCBF Treasurer

Honorable Adam Seiden

WCBF Vice President

Lucille Fontana, Esq.

Chair, WCBF Joseph F. Gagliardi Award Committee

Recipients' Acceptances

Adjournment

Reception to Follow

Gagliardi Award for Excellence Recipients

2020

Sara Beaty, Esq.

*Principal Law Clerk
to Honorable Thomas P. Zugibe, J.S.C.*

Valerie Buzzell

*Principal LAN Administrator
Ninth Judicial District*

2021

Melissa Benjamin, Esq.

*Principal Law Clerk
to Honorable James A. McCarty, A.J.S.C.*

Lynn McKelvey

*Chief Clerk
Orange Supreme and County Courts*

2022

Anna Kosovych

*Chief Clerk
Rockland County Family Court*

Sheronica McClamb

*Court Assistant
Yonkers City Court*



SARA BEATY, ESQ.

*Principal Law Clerk
to Honorable Thomas P. Zugibe, J.S.C.*

We can all agree on this: 2020 was a year unlike any other. Everyone was impacted by COVID. We all deserve an award for our perseverance.

At the time of the shutdown, I was literally caught between two Judges' chambers, in two different counties. My former Judge, James Rooney, a multi-hat Judge in Putnam, was getting ready to retire at the end of 2020. In March 2020, Judge Thomas Zugibe nominated me to serve as his principal law clerk in Rockland. Judge Rooney nominated someone to serve as his principal law clerk for his remaining months. During this process, Courts closed, and a hiring freeze was imposed. Life as we knew it ceased to exist. It was after the Courts reopened that reality hit—with the hiring freeze still intact, one Judge would have to operate without a principal law clerk.

“Notice that the stiffest tree is most easily cracked, while the bamboo or willow survives by bending with the wind.” —Bruce Lee.

These times truly emphasized the importance of being able to bend when the wind blows.

Judge Rooney and Judge Zugibe demonstrated flexibility and grace as we navigated this truly unique situation, as each was determined to work together so that neither part had to slow their operations. They went above and beyond to be accommodating to me as I tried to help in both chambers, and to each other.

Tom McShane worked overtime in Rockland to keep cases moving along. Teresa Murphy did the same in Putnam juggling six Courts in an environment where COVID protocols changed weekly, despite the fact her job was slated to be cut at the end of 2020. I would genuinely like to thank everyone in these Courts who made it possible for two chambers to operate so well despite these challenges.

Last but not least I want to thank my loving family and friends. During my years in the Courts, having clerked for three talented Judges, starting with the Hon. J. Emmett Murphy, I have been blessed to have made the best friends and colleagues anyone could ask for.

VALERIE BUZZELL

*Principal LAN Administrator
Ninth Judicial District*



I am honored to receive the Joseph F. Gagliardi Award for Excellence for 2020. This year was an extraordinary and challenging one for everyone. As you may recall in March 2020 all non-essential Court functions were postponed and essential matters were consolidated. The race was on to get Judges and Court parts up and running virtually and in consolidated locations. Every phase was a new challenge. The technology staff spent countless hours assisting Judges, staff and partner agencies with the transition to remote and virtual operations.

I feel very fortunate to have a great team of dedicated staff in the 9th JD Technology Department to work with to meet the challenges we face. The technology staff are the wizards behind the curtains that make the day-to-day operations of the Courts run smoothly and efficiently.

I would like to give special thanks to Mary Lonergan and Wayne Remsen for their current efforts and their many years of service and dedication to the users in the Ninth District. They were especially challenged in 2020 when my family and I became sick with COVID and I lost my mom at the start of the pandemic. They made sure everything continued to run smoothly.

With the aphorism in mind— “The whole is greater than the sum of its Parts”, I would like to share this award and recognize the team members of the 9th JD Technology Department: Jeffrey Bleck, Ernie DeRosa, Anna Farrell, Eric Glassman, Claire Jean-Baptiste, Mary Lonergan, Lissette Lopez, Cecile Paul, Louisa Paul, Wayne Remsen, Jay Remsen, Sal Saponara, Steven Westerville and Aiping Wohlers.

Thank you for this distinguished award and congratulations to my fellow award recipients. It’s an honor to be presented with this award.



MELISSA BENJAMIN, ESQ.

Principal Law Clerk

to Honorable James A. McCarty, A.J.S.C.

I am appreciative beyond measure to the Westchester County Bar Foundation for honoring me with the Joseph F. Gagliardi Award for Excellence for 2021. I am delighted to be recognized with Valerie Buzzell, Sara Beaty, Lynn McKelvey, Sheronica McClamb, and Anna Kosovych and congratulate each.

Since 2010, other than for a few months, I have served as a Principal Law Clerk. For the past approximately 8 years, working for a supervising judge of the felony criminal parts, I have interacted regularly with staff across the district. I know first-hand that the 9th JD is brimming with talented and dedicated employees, and am, therefore, tremendously humbled to be recognized for my service. Without question, my success is inextricably intertwined with my distinct good fortune to work for two of the finest members of the New York State Judiciary, Hon. Barry E. Warhit and Hon. James A. McCarty. Each possesses uncommon intelligence, admirable managerial skill, and lucky for me, keen wit, and good humor. In addition, I am surrounded by colleagues whose competence is unparalleled and friendship is invaluable. I am particularly grateful to my fellow court attorneys, who willingly share their wisdom and work product, for wonderful secretaries, Nelly Tsuji and Kathleen Kilkenny, to court clerk extraordinaire, Lesley McCrory, and for long-term collaborative relationships with court partners.

Finally, working in the court system, particularly in the criminal and family courts, I am keenly aware that every child is not promised a lifetime of unconditional love and encouragement. I am one of the lucky ones and am thankful to the Westchester County Bar Foundation for the opportunity to publicly acknowledge my wonderful parents, Joan and Mel Benjamin, and my sisters, Ronda Scharlat and Wendie Horowitz. They inspire me and have been my continuous supports, including through unimaginable, life-altering loss. Last, but never least, I am grateful for the chance to acknowledge my amazing children, Jacob and Alexandra, who give me purpose and who are, and always will be, my first priority and greatest sources of joy.

LYNN McKELVEY

Chief Clerk

Orange Supreme and County Courts



I want to thank everyone who nominated and supported me for this award. I am truly honored and deeply humbled.

If I am being recognized for anything I have done in my career it is in great part due to the incredible people I have had the pleasure of working with: my spectacular staff and team in the Supreme and County Court; my former staff in the Family Court; and the incredible Judges, Support Magistrates and host of other players who give it their all everyday to make it work regardless of the variety of challenges they face.

Special recognition to my incredible Deputy, Chris Beck, who is a gift beyond words!

As many of you know, my Mom has been in the dementia unit of a nursing home since October of 2021. Mom was a nurse who loved her chosen career with all her heart. My Mom's nurse, Travis, called me in Jan. and told me he held his arm out to my Mom and asked her to find a specific vein. Mom found the vein! Apparently, there is a number that goes along with that, which my Mom also correctly stated, much to the shock of her nurse. Mom pretty much is like a 5-year-old now but out of nowhere, she will still occasionally describe a surgical procedure and instruments in detail, which her nurse notes is dead on. Mom no longer knows who I am but when she sees me she will say three words each and every time, "I love you."

This is what I know, if you love what you do in your career and life, that love stays in your heart and soul forever, no matter what.

I have and continue to love what I do and I know this too will stay in my heart forever!

Good life and happiness to all!



ANNA KOSOVYCH

*Chief Clerk
Rockland County Family Court*

Congratulations to my fellow awardees!

I am deeply honored to receive the 2022 Joseph F. Gagliardi Award for Excellence.

Throughout my thirty-three years working for the New York State Unified Court System, I was fortunate to receive excellent training, mentorship, and build long-lasting friendships.

Working with tremendously talented jurists and court employees of the New York County Family Court, White Plains City Court, and the Westchester, Dutchess, and Rockland Family Courts provided me with knowledge and experience essential to my current duties.

Thank you to the Hon. Anne E. Minihan, A.J.S.C, District Administrative Judge of the Ninth Judicial District, the Gagliardi family, the Westchester County Bar Foundation, and the Committee for the Joseph F. Gagliardi Award for Excellence.

I appreciate the collegiality of working in the Ninth JD, with support from the District Administrative Judge's Office, and the cooperation and feedback between all the Family Courts and court managers, and particularly the Rockland Courthouse.

Thank you to my dear husband, Robert Gordon, who always supported and encouraged me in my career. I wish you were here with us. To our wonderful Mari, thanks for your understanding and patience with my work hours. I love you deeply. Thanks to my extended family for your love and support.

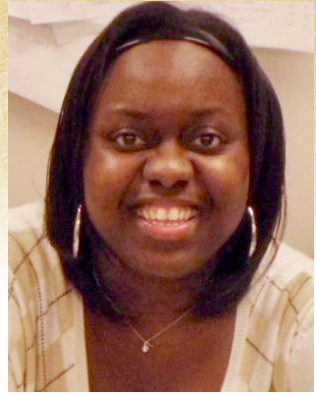
My heartfelt gratitude for the nominations and letters of support to:

Rockland County Women's Bar Association and Siobhan O'Grady, Esq., President; Hon. Sherri L. Eisenpress, Rockland Family Court Judge, A.J.S.C; Hon. Rachel E. Tanguay, Rockland Family Court Judge; Hon. Keith J. Cornell, Rockland Surrogate, A.F.C.J; Rockland County Bar Association and Robert L. Fellows, Esq., President; Diane Gould, Middletown City Court Chief Clerk; Peter Palladino, Dutchess Family Court Chief Clerk; Gladys Guerrero-Aquino, Rockland Family Court Deputy Chief Clerk; Associate Court Attorneys Andrea Composto and Aimee Pollak; Rockland Family Court Support Magistrates, Court Attorney Referee, and Chambers staff.

Rockland Family Court non-judicial employees, our team! Each of you diligently carries out your duties serving the Rockland County community and the Ninth Judicial District under often challenging circumstances. It is inspiring working side by side with you every day.

SHERONICA McCLAMB

*Court Assistant
Yonkers City Court*



I began working in Yonkers City Court 15 years ago. Even though I've never worked in another courthouse, I honestly, can say that Yonkers is one of a kind. It didn't take long for me to realize that I could have written bestsellers about the experiences I've had while working there. Nonetheless, it has become the perfect place for me.

It did not take long for the people there to turn from mere co-workers into my extended family. It is the people that I work with—day in and day out—that I truly want to thank: My now retired Chief Clerk Marisa Garcia who started this whole process and took the necessary steps to make this happen for me; past and current Judges, court officers, court staff, and attorneys; and most importantly, the great team of 12s, 14s, 18s, 21s, and 16s like myself who always back me up.

Being a single mom is not easy. Yes, it is true, my son Elijah is the greatest little boy in the world and number one in my life. Having the ability to work in an environment where I am appreciated and loved only makes life easier. In return, I try to do my best to return the favor. For those who do know me, you know about my “Sheronicaisms.” On that note, how could I not end this speech without one. At this point I'm about half way through my career. So for the remaining half—“I'm here for you.”

PAST AWARD RECIPIENTS

Fred L. Shapiro, Esq.

Virginia Athens

Nancy Mangold

Virginia M. Dachenhausen

Richard Farina, Esq.

Sandra DelValle

Mary D'Alessio

Charles F. Devlin, Esq.

Peter Nero

Karen O'Connor

James G. Fine, Esq.

Lawrence Darden, Jr.

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Irene Ratner, Esq.

Jack E. Schachner, Esq.

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Joseph M. Accetta, Esq.

Paula Papastrat

Susan Pollet, Esq.

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Joan S. Posner, Esq.

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Edward J. Edmead

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Josephine Trovini, Esq.

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Yvette M. Cumberbatch

Susan Newman Loehr

Albert J. Degatano, Esq.

Denise Helms

Renee McAllister

Ray Mechmann, Esq.

Carol Swidler, Esq.

Renee S. Motola, Esq.

Sgt. Joseph Beck

THE JOSEPH F. GAGLIARDI AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

The Westchester County Bar Foundation (“WCBF”), established in 1984, is the charitable arm of the Westchester County Bar Association. Its goal is to contribute to the improvement of the administration of justice and encourage a better public understanding of the law.

Since 1994, the Foundation has recognized the outstanding service of non-judicial employees of the Ninth Judicial District with the Joseph F. Gagliardi Award for Excellence.

The Award was established in memory of Justice Joseph F. Gagliardi to recognize distinguished service by non-judicial employees of the Unified Court System in the Ninth Judicial District who, in carrying out their duties, have shown outstanding devotion to the administration of justice, and service to the public.

In addition, the WCBF holds a Benefit for its Public Interest Fellowship to defray the cost of a salary of a pro bono attorney at one of Westchester County’s non-profit legal agencies.

All donations to the WCBF are deductible for Federal and New York State income, estate, and gift tax purposes. The majority of the funds for the Foundation’s projects are provided by members of the Westchester County Bar Association.

For information about making a donation, please contact WCBF President Mary Ellen Manley at mmanley@bpslaw.com.



The Westchester County Bar Foundation is a charitable non-profit corporation. The WCBF's mission is:

- To improve the administration of justice;
 - To promote professional ethics and responsibility;
 - To encourage a better public understanding of the law;
 - To advance legal research and scholarship; and
 - To improve legal services to the public.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the WCBF Board of Directors
who were charged with selecting
the Award Recipients:

Mary Ellen Manley, Esq., President

Honorable Adam Seiden, Vice President

Dawn Kirby, Esq., Secretary

Katherine Lynch, Esq., Treasurer

Anthony J. Enea, Esq., Immediate Past President

Christopher Cabanillas, Esq.

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Joseph Ruhl, Esq.

Judson Siebert, Esq.

Russell Yankwitt, Esq.

Peter Zeltner, Esq. and

Anthony R. Tirone, Esq., Committee Member