

**New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice  
Law School Virtual Conference  
March 8, 2023 | 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm via Zoom**

**Work Group Panelists Biographies**

**A. *How Law Schools Can Cultivate the Housing Justice Leaders of Tomorrow, Who Will Help Build Tenant Power and Attack Structural Challenges***

**Grace Andriette, Coordinator  
Senior Supervising Attorney, Housing Unit, Neighborhood Legal Services, Inc.**

Grace Andriette is a Senior Supervising Attorney at Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS) which provides free civil legal services to individuals impacted by poverty and/or disability in a five-county area in Western New York. Previously, Grace served as NLS's Interim Executive Director and as Deputy Director. Grace has extensive experience in representing tenants confronting eviction, public and subsidized housing issues, unsafe housing conditions, and housing discrimination. As an adjunct professor at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo Law School, Grace co-taught the Healthy Homes Legal Practicum. Grace received a B.S. from Cornell University, and a J.D. *cum laude* from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

**William J. Niebel, Coordinator  
Tenants Advocacy Attorney; Adjunct Professor of Law, Director, [Tenants Advocacy Practicum](#), Cornell Law School**

William J. Niebel is the Tenants Advocacy Attorney at Cornell Law School and teaches its Tenants Advocacy Practicum as an Adjunct Professor of Law. He graduated from the University of South Dakota School of Law in 2005. After law school, Bill was admitted to the Iowa bar and began focusing on landlord-tenant law as a Staff Attorney at Iowa Legal Aid. In 2009, he prevailed in the Iowa Supreme Court, in the landmark case of *War Eagle v. Plummer*, 775 N.W.2d 714 (2009). That decision invalidated the Iowa statute that allowed certified mail notice of an eviction hearing, as a violation of due process. Bill moved to New York and worked at the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York for three years, in Albany and Saratoga Springs, defending many evictions in city, town, and village courts. He was then a Staff Attorney at Legal Services of Central New York, where he practiced housing law from 2015-2022. Bill is the author of *The Process Due When Rent is Due: Residential Nonpayment Evictions After COVID-19*, which was published in the N.Y. Real Property Law Journal in December 2021.

**Malcolm Drenttel  
Cornell Law School, Class of 2025**

Malcolm Drenttel is a 1L at Cornell Law School. Between undergrad and law school he spent a few years working on small, organic farms around the Northeast. This summer he will be interning in the chambers of Judge Nicholas G. Garaufis in the Eastern District of New York.

**Alan Eiland**  
**Fordham University School of Law, Stein Scholar, REAL Scholar, Class of 2024**

Alan Eiland is a second-year student at Fordham Law School. He has previously interned with the Housing Unit at Brooklyn Legal Services and is also the president of the Fordham chapter of the People's Parity Project and Worker's Rights Advocates. He is passionate about public interest law and invested in the legal issues impacting working class New Yorkers, including housing.

**Carolyn Headlam**  
**Founding Member, Ithaca Housing Collective**

**Yusong Jin**  
**Tenants Advocacy Fellow, Cornell Law School**

When he was in China, Yusong visited some of the poorest mountain villages to provide legal counseling, advocate for government compensation for demolitions of local people's houses, and facilitate the settlement of a series of economic disputes. After arriving at Cornell, he was a student attorney in the Tenants Advocacy Practicum, handling housing justice cases. Now, as the Tenants Advocacy Fellow, he provides legal assistance for low-income individuals facing serious landlord-tenant issues.

**Jennifer Seidman**  
**Cornell Law School, Class of 2023**

Jennifer Seidman is a third-year student at Cornell Law School. As a legal intern with the Tenants Advocacy Practicum and the Legal Aid Society and as a volunteer with the Tenants Legal Hotline, she has represented tenants in eviction cases, in security-deposit cases against former landlords, and has provided advice to many tenants in Ithaca. In her position as the Tenants Rights Committee for Cornell's chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, Jennifer has been a part of creating a Tenants Rights Guide and the Ithaca Eviction Court Monitoring Program. After graduating, Jennifer will work at the Legal Aid Society in their Housing Practice in Brooklyn, NY.

**B. *Legal Knowledge, Cultural Competency and Life Experience through Sustained Community Pro Bono Engagement***

**Elyse Diamond, Coordinator**  
**Director, Public Interest Law Center and Adjunct Professor of Law, Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University**

Elyse Diamond is the Director of the Public Interest Law Center (PILC) and an Adjunct Professor at Pace University's Elisabeth Haub School of Law. As PILC's Director, Elyse leads the law school's Access to Justice Project (Pace A2J), which includes a range of initiatives including coordinating the launch of the Legal Hand Call-In Center serving Westchester operated at Haub Law, and she also manages the public service career programming and career counseling strategy and efforts for the law school. Along with the now-added guided externship for Legal Hand law student Volunteers, Elyse currently teaches Legal Skills I and II, the Haub Law's Access to Justice (A2J) Writing Seminar, and co-teaches the interdisciplinary A2J Lab, which guides law and University design and computer science students to apply a human-centered process to design in building the prototype for a technology tool to address a

local access to justice issue. Elyse is currently a member (2021-23) of Equal Justice Works National Advisory Board among other boards, organizations, and committees related to social and legal justice.

**Patricia Malone, Coordinator  
Legal Director for New York Justice Initiatives, Pro Bono Net (PBN)**

Pat joined Pro Bono Net's New York Justice Initiatives in November 2022. She leads legal and content strategy for LawHelpNY and the New York programs. Most recently Pat worked at PBN's Immigration Advocates Network where she focused on partnerships and content creation for community legal education tools such as immi.org and keepyourbenefits.org.

**Bethany Cereo  
Center Attorney, Legal Hand Call-In Center, Schenectady and Albany Counties, Center for Community Justice**

Bethany Cereo is a graduate of the University at Buffalo School of Law where she was a 2018 Pro Bono Scholar. She began her career representing individuals affected by mental health issues with the Mental Health Association of Erie County. In 2020, Bethany relocated to Albany where she worked as an OVS attorney for the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York until she accepted her current position with the Legal Hand Call-in Center serving Schenectady and Albany Counties.

**Stephanie Costa  
Center Attorney, Legal Hand Call-In Center, Westchester County, Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University**

Stephanie Costa is the Center Attorney for the Legal Hand Call-In Center serving Westchester County operated by the Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University. Before joining Legal Hand, Stephanie litigated affirmative tenants' rights and fair housing cases on behalf of individuals and tenant associations at Legal Services NYC. Prior to that, she represented tenants in eviction cases as a Poverty Justice Solutions Fellow through the Center for Court Innovation. She received her J.D. at Fordham University School of Law and undergraduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Hon. Fern A. Fisher  
Center Attorney, Legal Hand Call-In Center, Nassau-Suffolk Counties; Sassower Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law, Visiting Associate Professor of Law and Special Assistant for Social Justice Initiatives to the Dean, Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University; Member, New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice**

Professor Fisher is the Special Assistant for Social Justice Initiatives to the Dean of the Maurice A. Deane School of Law. Until July of 2017, she was Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for New York City Courts and also served as the Director of the New York State Courts Access to Justice Program. Judge Fisher's career started in the Civil Court as a Legal Services attorney practicing in Manhattan Housing Court. She served as Deputy Director of Harlem Legal Services, Inc. and as an Assistant Attorney General of the New York State Department of Law. For four years, she provided pro bono legal services to Harlem-based community organizations as a project director of the National Conference of Black Lawyers. In 1989, she was appointed

Judge of the Housing Part of the Civil Court, and later, in 1990, was elected to the Civil Court where she served as Deputy Supervising Judge. Judge Fisher was elected in 1993 to the Supreme Court of the State of New York. After serving in both the City and the Matrimonial Parts of Supreme Court, in December 1996 she was appointed Administrative Judge of the Civil Court where she served until March 2009 when she was appointed to her current position. Judge Fisher received her B.A. summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa in 1975 from Howard University and received her J.D. in 1978 from Harvard Law School.

**Wantee Ramkaran**  
**Program Manager for New York Justice Initiatives, Pro Bono Net (PBN)**

Wantee joined Pro Bono Net in May 2020 as a LiveHelp Program Associate. Currently, she is the Supervising Attorney for LiveHelp and oversees various NYJI programs. She received her J.D. from Touro College, Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center in 2020. She was a 2020 Pro Bono Scholar. As a LiveHelp volunteer during law school, Wantee found her passion for using her law degree to assist disadvantaged individuals in our community and expanding legal access to justice.

**Nicole Wong**  
**2022 J.D. and Pro Bono Scholar, Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University;**  
**Member/ Lived Expert, National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC); Tax**  
**Associate, Paul Hastings LLP**

Nicole is a 2022 Pro Bono Scholar who grew up in the NYC foster care system. She holds a BA in Political Science from Queens College, a Master of Science in Teaching from Fordham University, and a Juris Doctorate from the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University. During law school, Nicole represented indigent clients in a Criminal Justice Clinic, was on the Hofstra Law Review, interned with Goldman, Sachs & Co., and was selected as a Pro Bono Scholar, allowing her to dedicate her final semester tackling national prisoners' rights advocacy with the Prisoners Legal Advocacy Network. Upon graduation, Nicole was selected as the Christopher G. Gegwich Outstanding Law Student Award recipient.

Prior to law school, Nicole served as an educator with Teach for America and as the Tutor Manager for the Dorm Project, where she oversaw tutoring for NYC college students with experience in foster care. Nicole's current volunteer work includes serving on the Executive Board for At the Table (a NYC-based academic support program for those with lived-experience in foster care), on the Steering Committee for the American Bar Association's October 2023 Youth at Risk convening, and on the Selection Committee for Project Fairness. Nicole currently works full-time at Paul Hastings LLP. as a Tax Associate and uses her personal experience in foster care to provide guidance and feedback on child welfare policies part-time as a Lived Expert on the National Association of Counsel for Children's Advisory Council and as a Lived Experience Ambassador to the federal Administration for Children & Families in partnership with Think of Us.

**C. *Strengthening and Sustaining Pathways for Public Service and Public Interest Lawyers: Law School Support for Students and for the Pipeline to the Legal Profession***

**Adrian Neil, Coordinator**

**General Counsel, Rochester City School District, Department of Law; Member, New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice**

Mr. Neil was born in Kingston, Jamaica, and immigrated to Brooklyn, New York, as a teenager. After high school, he attended the University of Rochester, where he majored in Political Science and English. While in Rochester, he became interested in law and interned at the Public Defender's Office and the New York State Division of Human Rights. After college, he attended Brooklyn Law School, during which he interned with the NY State Courts, EEOC, NYCHA and participated in the Moot Court Honor Society. After law school, he worked in private practice at the Law Offices of Brown & Hutchinson, before joining the Rochester City School District Department of Law as an associate counsel several years ago.

He currently serves on the Monroe County Bar Association Board of Trustees and is a past co-chair of their Diversity Committee. In addition, Mr. Neil led the MCBA Diversity Clerkship Program for the MCBA. He is also a member of the Rochester Black Bar Association, a past member of their Executive Committee, a member of the Just Law program committee, and an appointed member of the New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice.

**Katie Blum**

**Staff Attorney, Civil Rights Unit, Empire Justice Center**

Katie is a Staff Attorney with the Civil Rights Unit at Empire Justice Center. Prior to joining the Empire Justice Center in 2022, Katie served as an Excelsior Fellow at the New York State Division of Human Rights headquarters in the Bronx, New York. In this position, she investigated and filed complaints of systemic discrimination throughout New York State as well as negotiated settlements between parties on individual complaints of discrimination. Katie also has experience working as a Labor and Employment Associate at a law firm in the Greater Boston Area, in which she negotiated collective bargaining agreements on behalf of transportation companies and represented employers in a variety of employment matters. Katie graduated from Cornell University in 2015 and graduated from the University at Buffalo School of Law in 2019. While in law school, Katie worked as a student attorney in several law school clinics. She was also an Editor of *The Buffalo Law Review* and was a teaching fellow for first year writing classes.

**Hon. Craig D. Hannah**

**New York State Supreme Court Justice, Eighth Judicial District**

Upon graduating from UB School of Law in 1995, Judge Craig D. Hannah practiced in a variety of positions, including as an assistant district attorney for the County of Erie, assistant corporation counsel for the City of Buffalo Department of Law, and legal counsel for the New York State Senate. Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown appointed Judge Hannah to the Buffalo City Court in January 2006. Later that year, he was elected to a 10-year term and in 2016, Judge Hannah was re-elected to a second 10-year term. On May 1, 2019, he was appointed Chief Judge of the Buffalo City Court and Supervising Judge for the 11 City Courts within the Eight Judicial District.

On June 3, 2022, Craig was appointed Justice of the New York State Supreme Court by Governor Kathy Hochul.

Judge Hannah has risen to nation fame as the presiding judge of the first opioid intervention court in the United States, established in May 2017. He has been featured by such major publications as the *New York Times*, *NBC News*, the *Denver Post* and *HBO Vice News*. Judge Hannah prides himself on working with participants at a one-on-one level and “meeting them where they are” with their recovery. As of February 2019, approximately 450 people have come before Judge Hannah, with approximately 120 currently enrolled in the intervention program. Those who have completed the program credit Judge Hannah with saving their lives while he humbly defers and states that all the praise and credit is due to the participant!

Judge Hannah is a native of Western New York, a graduate of Canisius College, and a member of the UB School of Law Dean’s Advisory Council.

**Tina Monshipour Foster**  
**Executive Director, JustCause**

Tina Monshipour Foster is the Executive Director of JustCause (formerly known as Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County), a not-for-profit civil legal services organization based in Rochester, NY. JustCause staff and pro bono attorneys provide legal assistance to low-income clients facing serious civil legal problems in the areas of immigration, housing, family, bankruptcy, and other matters. Prior to joining JustCause in 2017, Foster was the Executive Director of the International Justice Network in New York, NY for over a decade. Foster previously worked as an attorney in New York City at the Center for Constitutional Rights, and in private practice at the law firm of Clifford Chance US LLP. She is a graduate of Cornell Law School and served as law clerk at the United States Court of International Trade.

**Langston McFadden**  
**Partner, Law Offices of Pullano & Farrow**

A business attorney representing local, regional, and national clients, Langston McFadden focuses his practice on the quality representation of individuals, organizations, and corporations (for-profit and non-profit). Langston’s practice is primarily focused on commercial/business representation in areas which include, but are not limited to, health care litigation including defending medical malpractice and liability claims, personal injury defense, civil rights violations defense, Breach of Contract actions, property claims, contractual disputes and negotiations, design professional representation, premises liability defense, governmental regulatory disputes, and employment litigation.

[Langston McFadden | Pullano & Farrow \(lawpf.com\)](http://lawpf.com)

**Analiene Vasciannie**  
**University of Buffalo School of Law, State University of New York, Class of 2024**

Analiene grew up in Le Roy, NY, a small rural town outside of Rochester, New York. Analiene always knew she wanted to help people, and law seemed like the best option for the type of work she hopes to do one day. Her passions surround issues of prisoners’ rights and reentry services and food insecurity. She hopes to show others that there is a way to be successful in law school and forge your own path when tradition may say otherwise.

[https://buffalonews.com/opinion/my-view-when-two-definitions-of-upstate-collide/article\\_5cecf740-a666-11ed-a5fa-17827e611bf1.html](https://buffalonews.com/opinion/my-view-when-two-definitions-of-upstate-collide/article_5cecf740-a666-11ed-a5fa-17827e611bf1.html)

**D. *Becoming the Next Generation of Family Justice Leaders and Advocates***

**Judith G. Olin, Coordinator**

**Clinical Professor; Director, Family Violence and Women's Rights Clinic (FVWRC),  
University at Buffalo School of Law, State University of New York**

Clinical Professor of Law, Judith Olin joined the faculty at the University at Buffalo School of Law in 2016 to direct the Family Violence and Women's Rights Law Clinic. Her legal career has been dedicated to advocacy on behalf of victims of family violence. In her years as a legal services attorney, she focused on the representation of victims of domestic violence in divorce and child custody cases. She initiated impact litigation which led to reform in the Buffalo Police Department's policies in domestic violence cases, as well as enhanced training. Olin went on to become a local prosecutor where she specialized in domestic violence and child abuse cases. She was the first prosecutor who staffed the specialized domestic violence court in Buffalo. As Director of Erie County's Lee Gross Anthonie Child Advocacy Center, she led a multidisciplinary team that coordinates child abuse investigations for Erie County. Olin designed and taught a course on child abuse at the law school as an Adjunct Instructor for many years. She now teaches a seminar in child abuse and neglect law to upper-level law students. She is a frequent speaker and trainer on family violence issues for professional and lay groups. She is a member of the Bar Association of Erie County's Family Court Practice and Procedure Committee, and she is the Co-Chairperson of the Domestic Violence Committee of the Women's Bar Association of Western New York. She serves on the Advisory Board of the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women. She is active in community-based groups such as The Erie County Coalition Against Family Violence.

Olin received her B.A. from New York University, and her juris doctor from The University At Buffalo School of Law. She is from New York City and has made Buffalo her home for many years.

**Elizabeth "Lizzy" Vinal**

**Staff Attorney, Family Law Unit, Neighborhood Legal Services, Inc.; 2022 J.D. University  
at Buffalo School of Law, alumnae of FVWRC**

Lizzy is a recently admitted attorney working in the Family Law Unit of Neighborhood Legal Services, representing low-income clients in Family and Matrimonial cases. In law school, Lizzy was a student attorney in the Family Violence and Women's Rights Clinic, Chair of Fundraising for the Buffalo Public Interest Law Program, and president of the Domestic Violence Task Force.

**Shamira Nawz**

**University at Buffalo School of Law, Class of 2023, Student Attorney FVWRC, Family Help  
Desk**

Shamira is a third-year law student at the University at Buffalo School of Law. She has previously interned at public interest firms such as the Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, Legal Aid Bureau, and the Center for Elder Law & Justice. She is currently a

student attorney under UB Law's Family Violence and Women's Rights Clinic. She is interested in pursuing a career in family law post-graduation.

**Chanel Powell**

**University at Buffalo School of Law, Class of 2023, Student Attorney FVWRC, Healing Station Agency**

Chanel is a third-year law student. She is also an Army Veteran who has interned at the Erie County DA's office. She will be working at Nixon Peabody next fall as an associate in their privacy and cyber security program.