

January/February 1992

Council of New York Law Associates Becomes Lawyers Alliance for New York

On November 4, 1991, the Council of New York Law Associates officially changed its name to Lawyers Alliance for New York at a reception hosted at Gracie Mansion by Mayor Dinkins, his wife Joyce, and former City Council President Carol Bellamy, where the Mayor proclaimed it to be "Lawyers Alliance for New York" day.

Lawyers Alliance for New York's alumni, members, coordinators, volunteers, clients and supporters celebrated the launching of a new era of professional commitment and social responsibility and a renewed determination to provide non-litigation pro bono legal services to New York's nonprofit community.

The name change represents the coming of age of the 23-year-old organization, which operates one of the most respected pro bono legal programs in the city. Lawyers Alliance for New York's unique volunteer clearinghouse matches the legal needs of nonprofit organizations with the interests and skills of volunteer attorneys in corporate, tax and real estate legal departments. Volunteer and staff attorneys provide their knowledge and talents to the nonprofit sector and to the hundreds of community organizations working to create affordable housing, economic opportunity, and services to children, youth, the elderly and the homeless. This work has a direct effect on the quality of life in New York City.



New York City Mayor David Dinkins presents Lawyers Alliance for New York Executive Director Allen R. Bromberger with a proclamation in honor of the 23-year-old organization.

In 1991, attorneys from 68 of New York's leading law firms contributed over 32,000 hours of pro bono services valued at \$5.7 million to nonprofit housing developers, social service agencies, soup kitchens, day care centers, programs for youth, seniors, the disabled, those with AIDS and many other nonprofit organizations.

"Every day, New Yorkers are confronted by new obstacles and problems in day to day survival," said Allen Bromberger, Executive Director of Lawyers Alliance for New York. "Lawyers have the professional skills to help groups working on seemingly impossible social problems. Our job is to activate and broker the legal community's experience, expertise, and good will with organizations and community groups to insure a future for all the people of New York."

In addition to the recruitment and management of volunteer lawyers, Lawyers Alliance for New York has a staff of six attorneys who provide direct assistance as well as training, back up and consultation for pro bono counsel. ■

It's Time to End the Debate Over Mandatory Pro Bono

by Allen R. Bromberger

For almost two years now, the profession has been arguing about whether or not mandatory pro bono should be imposed on New York lawyers. The Chief Judge's two-year grace period expires in May, and both sides are preparing

for another fight. Its time to end this debate – it misses the point completely.

New York lawyers have long been required by the canons of ethics to donate their services to the poor. "Mandatory" pro bono already exists; no edict of the Chief Judge is required. What is needed is a recognition by lawyers that pro bono is part of the obligation we assumed when we took the oath as attorneys.

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Alliance News

Lawyers Alliance Welcomes New Project Directors

We are pleased to announce that *Livia Thompson* has joined Lawyers Alliance for New York as the new director of its Nonprofit Law Program, and that Lawyers Alliance staff attorney *Karen Sherman* was appointed Director of the Community Development Legal Assistance Center (CDLAC).

Livia Thompson, left, new Nonprofit Law Program director, and Karen Sherman, right, new CDLAC director.



A 1984 graduate of Columbia University Law School, Ms. Thompson was legal counsel at the Anti-Defamation League in New York City prior to joining Lawyers Alliance for New York. She also has worked as a litigation associate for the law firm of Weiss Dawid Fross Zelnick & Lehrman and as a trade regulation associate for Weil Gotshal & Manges.

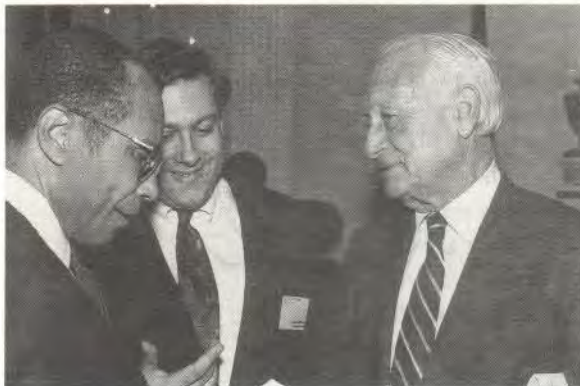
The Nonprofit Law Program is the primary source of non-litigation pro bono projects for attorneys and the leading source of free legal assistance for nonprofit organizations in New York City.

Ms. Thompson replaces Catherine Woodman, who directed the program since 1990.

Ms. Sherman has been an attorney with CDLAC since 1989. Her extensive experience includes service in community development law at Florida Rural Legal Services, and Colorado Rural Legal Services. She was a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, Southern District, New York, and an associate at Brown & Wood prior to joining CDLAC. Karen received her J.D. at Georgetown University School of Law, 1973 and her LLM in Tax from New York University of Law in 1979.

CDLAC assists nonprofit groups which provide housing for the homeless, disabled and other low income people. CDLAC represents mutual housing associations, tax credit syndications, community loan funds, job training programs, and other economic development projects that create opportunities in low income neighborhoods.

Karen replaces Kerwin Tesdell, who directed the program since 1988. ■



Far left, Allen R. Bromberger talks with Archibald Murray, Executive Director of Legal Aid Society (left) and Deputy Mayor Milt Mollen (right), and left, Lawyers Alliance founding members Carol Bellamy and Neal Johnston at the Gracie Mansion name change reception.



Robert M. Hayes Chairs Annual Membership Drive.

Lawyers Alliance for New York Coordinators from law firms across the city kicked off the 1992 Membership Drive at a breakfast hosted by Robert M. Hayes, partner at O'Melveny & Myers and founder of the Coalition for the Homeless.

As chairman of this year's membership drive, Mr. Hayes has appealed to thousands of New York City attorneys to make a difference in the city by supporting the important work of Lawyers Alliance for New York.

Bankruptcy Task Force Announced

A Nonprofit Bankruptcy Task Force has been convened by Lawyers Alliance for New York to explore the impact of the changing economic realities of the 1990's and reduced government support on nonprofit organizations. The Alliance has already received many calls from groups that are afraid they may not survive the financial crunch.

Task Force members were recruited at a meeting hosted by *Weil, Gotshal & Manges* last fall which was attended by over 50 interested bankruptcy, tax and real estate lawyers, pro bono coordinators, funders, government officers, nonprofit technical assistance providers and accountants.

The Task Force will assist organizations which need advice on ways to meet the challenge of more limited financial resources. Lawyers are needed to advise nonprofit organizations as they go through the process of negotiating with creditors, restructuring, merging with other organizations, downsizing, dissolving, and taking whatever other steps are necessary to recover their financial stability. In addition, the Task Force will work on identifying key policy issues, developing printed materials, and coordinating a workshop for nonprofits, scheduled for early May 1992. ■

Child Care Task Force in Formation.

In response to a dramatic increase in requests for legal assistance and training from the child care community, Lawyers Alliance for New York is creating a Child Care Law Project to address this critical need. Currently, there is no other legal services organization in the City or State which serves the legal needs of the rapidly growing numbers of child care providers.

The Lawyers Alliance Child Care Law Project has developed a body of knowledge and expertise on the legal issues affecting child care providers, whether the issues arise in publicly-funded child care centers, private establishments or with individuals providing child care in their homes. New federal and state legislation, and new regulations, means that even more child care providers will need legal assistance with formation and other issues that arise in day-to-day operations.

Nonprofit child care providers, and individuals or organizations that want to provide child care, will face a host of legal issues as they seek to meet the requirements of the regulators, as they work to organize a Board of Directors, and as they confront structural and contractual obligations, personal liability and insurance risk issues.

Rochelle Korman, partner at *Baer, Marks & Upham*, formerly Executive Director of the Ms. Foundation, has agreed to chair the Advisory Committee of the Project, and *Analisa Torres of Patterson, Belknap, Webb and Tyler* is chairing the Child Care Task Force. ■

Pro Bono Update

The following is a sample of pro bono projects which have been placed with volunteer attorneys through the Lawyers Alliance for New York Clearinghouse in the past few months. For information about available projects, please call James Waters at 219-1800.

BRC Human Services Corporation - Harlem House

Harlem House is an adult community residence which will be financed with the proceeds of New York State Medical Care Facilities Finance Agency's tax-exempt bonds. Partner *Chris Waterman* and associates *Steven Berkowitz* and *Jim Lane* of *Mudge, Rose, Guthrie, Alexander & Ferdon* are representing BRC in obtaining this financing.

St. Stephen Outreach

This seven-year-old organization provides social services to more than 10,000 low-income individuals in Brooklyn and operates a food pantry which serves over 1,500 meals a week. *Tom Gawan* of *Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom* is assisting St. Stephen with its incorporation process and helping it secure tax-exempt status.

Al-Karim School

Al-Karim School is an 18-year-old school in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn that offers programs designed specifically for inner-city elementary school children. The school seeks to increase the range of programs it offers and the number of scholarships it can provide, and plans to purchase and renovate a building in which it will house its expanded facilities. *Jack Abuhoff* of *White & Case* is advising the school in the acquisition, financing and development of the site.

Harlem Agencies for Neighborhood (HAND)

HAND is a coalition of a dozen human service agencies that serve the Central Harlem community by focusing on consolidating current information on community services and resources, publishing a newsletter and streamlining the provision of services to Harlem residents by coordinating the activities of member agencies. *Yolande Nicholson* of *Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton* is serving as Volunteer General Counsel to the group, advising in contract matters, profit-making activities and affiliations with other service agencies. ■

Public Interest Jobs

The following is a listing of public interest job announcements made available to Lawyers Alliance for New York. For more information, call Anne Hoyt at 219-1800.

Staff Attorneys

Lawyers Alliance for New York. Two full time positions with Community Development Legal Assistance Center (CDLAC) and the Nonprofit Law Program. Also one part time position available for new Child Care Law Project. Contact: *Livia Thompson* or *Karen Sherman*, 99 Hudson Street, NY, NY 10013.

PRI Program Investment Officer

The Ford Foundation. Contact: *Judith Samuelson*, 320 East 43rd Street, NY, NY 10017.

Staff Attorney

ACLU, Children's Rights Project. Contact: *Marcia Robinson Lowry*, 132 West 43rd Street, NY, NY 10036.

Executive Director

International Human Rights Law Group. Contact: *Tom Farer*, 1601 Connecticut Ave., NW Suite 700, Washington DC 20009.

Legal Writing Instructors

Brooklyn Law School. Contact: *Professor Marilyn R. Walter*, 250 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

Staff Attorney

Center on Social Welfare Policy and Law. Contact: *Henry Freedman*, 275 Seventh Avenue, NY, NY 10001.

Staff Attorney

National Center on Women & Family Law, Inc. Contact: *Laurie Woods*, 799 Broadway, Room 402, NY, NY 10003.

Lawyers Alliance for New York Wishes a Happy New Year to All Those Who Helped Make our Work Possible in 1991.

To the law firms, corporations and financial institutions who supported us:

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Rosenman & Colin
Satterlee, Stephens, Burke & Burke
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To all of our Law Firm Coordinators, Volunteer Attorneys, Members, and other generous supporters.

To the New York Law Journal, The American Lawyer, and to Lenz & Riecker, Inc. for their valuable contributions.

And a special thank you to Ira M. Millstein, leader of our law firm campaign, Albert W. Driver, Jr., leader of our corporate appeal, and Robert M. Hayes, Chairman of our membership drive.

To the following individual donors who have contributed to our Silver Anniversary Reserve Fund, which will enable us to continue to provide legal services into the next century:

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We Couldn't Have Done it Without You!

End the Debate Over Mandatory Pro Bono

Continued from front page

We should also recognize that the obligation contained in the canons is much broader than the narrow service proposed by the committee which recommended mandatory pro bono to the Chief Judge. Lawyers should be encouraged not only to serve poor individuals, but to do work that addresses the conditions which underly poverty and affects the quality of life in poor communities as well.

The time has come to recognize that the legal needs of the poor, and of society in general are broad indeed, and the responsibility of lawyers is broad enough to cover them all. By law and tradition, we are each bound to seek opportunities to use our skills in service of those less fortunate, to ensure access to the legal system for all, to defend those in need, to advocate for justice and equal rights, and to empower the disenfranchised among us.

No checklist of approved matters, no arbitrary number of hours can properly describe our obligation. The growth of pro bono programs in the past two years, aided by the energies of bar leaders and supported by bar associations and the IOLA Fund, testify to the willingness of lawyers to do this work. Across New York, lawyers are right now engaged in work which will change their communities and change the lives of their clients. These efforts need to be recognized and expanded, not constrained or frustrated by pointless hickering. It is time for a call to arms, not for choosing sides.

My own view is that those who refuse to do pro bono should be subject to disciplinary action; they are malfeasors. Those who do their share should expect no special reward. Pro bono is our responsibility as lawyers and as citizens, and we should be honored to have the opportunity to serve. ■

Chair

M. Rose Gasner

Executive Director

Allen R. Bromberger

Director, Nonprofit Law Program

Livia Thompson, Esq.

Director, Community Development Legal Assistance Center (CDLAC)

Karen Sherman, Esq.

Assistant Director for Pro Bono Programs

James Waters

Editor/Assistant Director, Program Development

Anne R. Hoyt

Lawyers Alliance for New York is a member of the Public Interest Law Center

Tel 212 219-1800

Fax 212 941-7458

99 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10013

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