

Alumni Profile: Cynthia R. Shoss

Before Cynthia was a Lawyers Alliance Board member, she was one of our pro bono volunteers. With a team of attorneys from her firm, she advised Child Care, Inc. on a proposal with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation and the New York City Human Resources Administration to create new child care centers as part of a citywide economic development plan.

In 1993, Cynthia was recruited to the Lawyers Alliance Board by Steve Cooke, who was then General Counsel of AMBAC Assurance Corporation and a client of LeBoeuf. Cynthia had recently become the partner in charge of pro bono at LeBoeuf. “My focus in that role at the firm was to increase pro bono opportunities for transactional lawyers,” she said, “and working closely with Lawyers Alliance was a key part of that strategy.”

Cynthia went on to serve as Lawyers Alliance Board Chair from 1995-97. As she said of her tenure, “We continued our outreach to corporate law departments, including by pairing them with law firms for pro bono projects. We launched the first client satisfaction survey, which surveyed both pro bono clients and law firm lawyers. We also held the first gala, at the United Nations, honoring Dick Jenrette of The Equitable, Carol Bellamy of UNICEF (a founder of Lawyers Alliance), and Ralph Dickerson of The United Way. Sam Waterston was Master of Ceremonies.”

When Cynthia rotated off the Board in 1997, she and Steve Cooke served as founding Board members of Power of Attorney (POA). POA was created by former Lawyers Alliance Executive Director Allen Bromberger and funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies. Its mission was to develop and fund promising organizations engaged in transactional pro bono services across the country, based on the Lawyers Alliance model.

Ten years later, in Spring 2007, Cynthia developed a Lawyers Alliance externship for her firm. Now Dewey & LeBoeuf associates work at Lawyers Alliance full-time in four-month rotations. “Externships provide an excellent way for associates to give back to those in need while developing critical legal and client relationship skills. While my firm had long offered litigation externships, this was the first time our transactional attorneys could also take advantage of such a fantastic opportunity.”

The current Dewey & LeBoeuf extern is Ciarra Chavarria, a corporate associate, who in May succeeded André Warner, one of the firm’s real estate associates. Dewey & LeBoeuf is also sponsoring a full-time community service fellow at Lawyers Alliance, Timothy Knox, before he joins Dewey & LeBoeuf as an associate later this year.

A year later, in Fall 2008, Dewey & LeBoeuf received our Cornerstone Award for outstanding pro bono legal service, having partnered with Lawyers Alliance on 37 legal matters in the prior year. Cynthia accepted the award on behalf of the firm.

Lawyers Alliance has greatly benefited from Cynthia’s personal generosity and visionary leadership, and we continue the important work of expanding the New York and national field of transactional pro bono services for nonprofit organizations serving low-income communities.



Cynthia R. Shoss

About Cynthia

Employment includes:

- ▶ Cynthia is a senior partner and Co-Chair of Dewey & LeBoeuf’s Insurance Regulatory Department. She was the Managing Partner of the firm’s London office from 1987-1989. She also chaired the firm’s pro bono practice for a decade. She began her legal career clerking at the Louisiana Supreme Court.

Current activities include Member of:

- ▶ Board of Overseers and Executive Committee of The School of Risk Management, Insurance and Actuarial Science of The Peter J. Tobin College of Business of St. John’s University
- ▶ Board of Directors (Chair), Economic Mobility Corporation (a Lawyers Alliance client)
- ▶ Board of Directors, Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation
- ▶ Board of Governors, Association of Life Insurance Counsel
- ▶ International Insurance Society

Graduate of:

- ▶ New York University School of Law, LLM/Taxation
- ▶ Tulane Law School, JD
- ▶ Newcomb College of Tulane University, BA

This article is one of a series of profiles of the people who have helped to build Lawyers Alliance for New York since 1969.



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