

## *our mission*

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York provides effective, free civil legal services and education to and advocacy for people with low income or other barriers to accessing the legal system. We secure basic needs, protect and preserve legal rights, provide equal access to justice and seek fairness and dignity for our clients.

Serving the low-income and needy residents of Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, St. Lawrence, Schoharie, Warren and Washington Counties, and the St. Regis Reservation.

## *executive director*

Lillian M. Moy

## *inside:*

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## Three strikes and she's in...a new apartment

**J**essica Rodriguez (not her real name) is a hard-working single mother of four. Until recently, her life had been relatively stable, with the family getting by on Rodriguez's income from retail sales jobs.

However, the family's living conditions were deteriorating. The basement of her building was flooded with sewage, and a foul smell pervaded the family's three-bedroom apartment. Her kids were getting splinters and stubbed toes on crudely patched broken floorboards. Neither the stove nor the refrigerator worked properly, and debris piled up in the yard.

In May, Rodriguez's job selling magazine subscriptions ended and she turned to the Fulton County Department of Social Services (DSS) for assistance. Her application was denied—twice. Rodriguez stopped paying rent.

When Rodriguez received an eviction notice, she contacted attorney Robert Romaker in the Legal Aid Society's Amsterdam office. Romaker recalls that he was immediately drawn to the complexities of the case, which is actually "three cases in one." First, it cried out for help with the nonpayment

issue and negotiations with the landlord. Secondly, the DSS's denial of assistance was ripe for interpretation at a NYS Fair Hearing. Romaker maintains that the agency should have told Rodriguez that she could have applied for ongoing public assistance. And third, Rodriguez and her family needed to find a decent place to live.

The landlord case did not go well at first. When Rodriguez was summoned to court for nonpayment of May and June rent, the landlord refused to make the necessary repairs unless Rodriguez first paid her back rent—totaling \$1050. But even if Rodriguez were able to come up with that amount, how could she be assured that the repairs would be properly made?

Fortunately, Romaker discovered two technical points which weakened the eviction case: first, the landlord did not follow correct procedure for filing his petition; second, he did not properly serve the rent demand, which was tacked to Rodriguez's door instead of being served personally or sent via certified mail. Upon realizing that his eviction case was tanking, the landlord agreed to waive the two months' back

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# An Attitude of Gratitude

You might know that I returned in early May after recovering from a stroke and brain surgery. As I have said to many of you, this experience adds new meaning to the phrase, "glad to be here". I have been savoring all of my friendships at work and in the legal community. I thank everyone for the generous outpouring of support for my family and me during this difficult time.

Thanks to the efforts of members of the LASNNY Board, especially Tim Morrison and Amy Klein, the members of the management team, especially our Deputy Director, Wendy Wahlberg, who served as the Acting Executive Director during my absence, Legal Aid kept on going strong during my leave. The staff

We are also grateful that the NYS Division of Housing & Community Renewal (DHCR) has renewed our foreclosure prevention grants. These are collaborations in the Capital District with The Legal Project and the Empire Justice Center, and in the north country, with Housing Assistance Project of Essex County, Friends of the North Country and Albany County Rural Housing Alliance. The foreclosure prevention projects have provided outstanding services to low and moderate income homeowners threatened with foreclosure. Additionally, we now offer Pro Se Answer clinics to homeowners who have been served with foreclosure petitions. At the clinics, homeowners are taught how to prepare a pro se answer. Legal Aid then determines which cases it can accept for representation or referral to the Empire Justice Center or The Legal Project.

On September 16, we will kick off our 2010 Justice for All Campaign. Lawyers from our JFA Leadership firms are invited to attend a complimentary reception at Dale Miller at 5:30 pm. I hope that you and your colleagues will turn out for this wonderful event.

I am also looking forward to celebrating National Pro Bono Week with our many Private Attorney Involvement (PAI) volunteers. We are developing another year of wonderful programming to celebrate pro bono efforts in the Capital Region. Please email Kristie Cinelli if you

can volunteer at our new Lawyer-For-The-Day program with the Albany County Bar Association. We also look forward to the next Family Offense Basics training offered by the Domestic Violence

Legal Training Coalition on December 18, 2010. Contact Kristie Cinelli at [kcinelli@lasnny.org](mailto:kcinelli@lasnny.org) or 518-689-6322 to register.

Finally, I am pleased to report the imminent publication of our legal rights manual for LGBT victims of domestic violence. The Rainbow Domestic Violence Legal Assistance Project (DVLAP) Legal Rights Manual is available for free download at [www.lasnny.org](http://www.lasnny.org). If you want a print copy, please send me an email at [lmoy@lasnny.org](mailto:lmoy@lasnny.org).

Wishing you and yours a wonderful Fall. I hope to see you soon. In the meantime, I welcome your suggestions for the Legal Aid Society by email at [lmoy@lasnny.org](mailto:lmoy@lasnny.org) or snail mail.

FROM THE *executive director*



## Legal Aid Society Board of Directors

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worked very hard and accomplished a great deal. We submitted a new application to the U.S. Department of Justice for a Legal Assistance to Victims grant—we will not know until the Fall, but we sincerely hope that funding will be restored to this excellent project which serves rural victims of domestic violence.

Donate through the  
SEFA Campaign.  
Our SEFA number:  
**150-50**

*new* join us on  
**facebook**

## Legal Aid *matters*

### September 2010

A regular bulletin published by the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, Inc.

#### Offices:

55 Colvin Avenue, Albany, NY 12206  
(518) 462-6765, (800) 462-2922

1 Kimball St., Amsterdam, NY 12010  
(518) 842-9466, (800) 821-8347

17 Hodskin St., Canton, NY 13617  
(315) 386-4586, (800) 822-8283

100 Court St., P.O. Box 989  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901  
(518) 563-4022, (800) 722-7380

112 Spring St., Suite 109  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
(518) 587-5188, (800) 870-8343

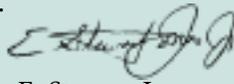
## Dear Friends,

Fall is the time when we gather to thank all of the law firms, corporations and individuals who have been a part of the tremendous growth of our annual campaign since 2004. We hope to see you at Dale Miller on September 16th to to celebrate the \$240,000 raised in 2009 and to launch the 2010 campaign.

You can use the enclosed envelope to become a 2010 campaign leader and RSVP for this year's event.

Hope to see you there.

Campaign Co-Chairs



E. Stewart Jones



Thomas J. O'Connor

Please come to a complimentary reception to Kick Off the 2010

# JUSTICE FOR ALL

CAMPAIGN

Thursday, September 16, 2010

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Light hors d'oeuvres

Wine and Beer

At Albany's spectacular venue

**dalemiller**  
the art of dining

30 South Pearl Street,  
Albany, New York

email [RSVP@lasnny.org](mailto:RSVP@lasnny.org)

Or call 518-689-6336  
for further information

## Taking Pride

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annual contributions; last year, eleven new firms came on board.

Serving the community keeps Valenza busy. He devotes a large part of his spare time to community groups, as president of the Niskayuna Community Foundation and committee chair of his local Boy Scout troop. He served as president of the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, a not-for-profit organization working to save open spaces from overdevelopment. One area in which Valenza's legal and business expertise

came into play is the group's efforts to assist landowners in obtaining conservation easements. In the summertime, Valenza clears time in his schedule for fishing and relaxing with his family in the their cabin on Otsego Lake.

"I'm looking forward to taking on the responsibility of continuing McNamee, Lochner, Titus and Williams's commitment to the community," says Valenza. "Our firm has a long history of extensive support and pro-bono legal services to charitable organizations and people in need."

## Manual: Rights and Remedies for LGBT DV Survivors

LASNNY will shortly publish a new manual for case managers and attorneys who serve Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) victims and survivors of domestic violence. This manual was produced with the support of a grant from the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute. As part of the Rainbow DVLAP (Domestic Violence Legal Assistance Project), Legal Aid provided direct legal services to LGBT victims and survivors of domestic violence. Rainbow DVLAP attorney Jennifer Storm also wrote this comprehensive manual on the legal rights and remedies available to LGBT survivors. The Manual covers topics as diverse as public assistance, public and subsidized housing rights, the rights to a family offense

petition, status of civil unions and LGBT marriages in New York State. There is a comprehensive discussion of the developing law with respect to the rights of transgendered individuals as well.

The Manual will soon be available for downloading at [www.lasnny.org](http://www.lasnny.org). If you desire a print copy, please send a request to Mary Maguire at LASNNY, 55 Colvin Avenue, Albany, NY 12206 or at [mmaguire@lasnny.org](mailto:mmaguire@lasnny.org).

Thanks to our partners at IOOV and the Capital District Gay & Lesbian Community Center, the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute and attorney Jennifer Storm who served the Legal Aid Society well for three years.

Leave a Legacy of Justice

**The Legal Aid Endowment Fund**

**Housed at the Community Foundation for the Capital Region**

**Sample Bequest Available**

Sample language to use when designating your bequest is available on the "Legacy Partnership Endowment" page on our website: [www.lasnny.org](http://www.lasnny.org).

# It's good to be back

It has been a long time since I have had the opportunity to write in the newsletter. There have been a lot of changes! First, I am happily a new mom of a beautiful daughter, Sophia Matea. In addition, the PAI program has evolved from last year. I was named the Director of PAI this Spring and Johanna Williams joined us in July as the PAI Coordinator. The new positions are just one of the ways we hope to expand the program and assist more clients. These



**iHola!**

My name is Johanna Williams and I am the latest addition to the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern NY's family.

I am a Costa Rican-born transplant who came to the US at the age of fourteen seeking the opportunities for education and success that this amazing country has to offer. I've realized many of my dreams. My most recent gift has been to join the Legal Aid team, where equality, fairness, and justice for all regardless of economic status is achieved every day.

I have no legal background but I am a fighter for the human cause and I feel incredibly privileged to be in a position to help people and make a difference in their time of need. Excitement and eagerness cannot begin to convey how thrilled I am that I now have the opportunity to join in the Legal Aid Society's mission.

I look forward to working and getting to know all of you along the way.

Con mucho carino (Warm regards),  
*Johanna*

were my goals when I started in 2006, and continue today.

National Pro Bono Week is quickly approaching, the week of October 25-29. This event recognizes the importance of our volunteers in carrying out our mission. The New York State Bar will host a kick-off celebration on October 22nd at the Court of Appeals. To register please visit The New York State Bar site at [www.nysba.org/pro-bono](http://www.nysba.org/pro-bono). In addition, we plan to launch "Lawyer-For-A-Day" in Albany City Court. This is a unique program for our area, allowing us, with the Albany County Bar Association,



to serve numerous clients who are facing eviction. If you are interested in volunteering, please call me at 518-689-6322.

As for trainings, watch your email and mailbox for registration information. We will be having a bankruptcy training on October 26th at the Holiday Inn Turf on Wolf Road. Also, the well-received "Representing Victims of Domestic Violence in Family Court" training is set for December 10, 2010. We also plan to have an unemployment training in early 2011. Also please check our website for more information regarding events and trainings: [www.lasny.org](http://www.lasny.org).

Thank you for your time, and I am so grateful to be in touch with you!

*Kristie*

## Thanks to the following attorneys who have accepted cases

From January 1 through July 1, 2010:

### Albany County:

Albany Law School (11)  
Jerrold Bartman  
Justyn Bates  
Lawrence Becker  
Sharon Beilinson (2)  
Richard Cirincione  
Guy Criscione (7)  
Joseph Dougherty  
Christian Dribush  
Michael Friedman  
Brian LeCours  
Matthew Mann  
Kathy McCullough  
Day  
Ira Mendelson  
Michael J. O'Connor (7)  
Thomas J. O'Connor  
David Price (2)  
Earl Redding  
Carrie Smith  
Jennifer Storm (3)  
Kenneth Varley  
Richard Weiskopf  
Thomas Welsh (5)  
Kim Williams (2)

### Clinton:

William Favreau  
Cheryl Maxwell (3)  
Meredith Neverett

### Columbia:

Jonathan Cohen  
Richard Koweek  
Barry Sack  
Max Zacker

### Montgomery:

Sherri Vertucci

### Rensselaer:

Tony Arcodia & Marc Ehrlich  
Robert Johnson, III.

### St. Lawrence:

Dana Betz  
Gerlad Ducharme  
Richard Gardner (17)  
Natasha Hill (2)  
Verner Ingram  
Anthony Inserra  
Jerry Leek (2)  
Charles Nash  
Cathleen O'Horo (2)

### Saratoga:

Jim Cox  
James Doern  
Robert Katzman  
Joel Peller  
James P. Trainor

### Schenectady:

Brian De La Fluer  
Eleanor DeCoursey  
Mark Juda  
Elizabeth Lott  
Peter McHugh (4)  
Ralph Nocera  
Schenectady County Bar Association (5)  
Kathleen Toombs

### Warren:

Jennifer Jensen  
Michael J. Toomey

### Albany & Rensselaer County Assigned Counsel Program

Aaron Anderson	Marcia Doyle	Gerald Leary
Gloria Arroyo Copland	Sanford Finkel	Joseph Liccardi
Stanton Ackerman	Joyce M. Galante	Susan B. Millstein
Chad Blazer (2)	David L. Gruenberg	Nestler & Gibson
P. J. Blanchfield	Nicole Helmer	Kevin O'Brien
Michael J. Biscone	Michelle Haskin	Lou Jack Pozner
Tamara Cappellano	Jo M. Katz	Arnold Proskin
Jo Ann Coughtry	David Kavanaugh	Jo Ann Shartrand
Kelly M. Curro	Suzanna Latimer	

# Knightly in Shining Armor

When Robert Knightly moved to Albany from New York City two and a half years ago seeking a quieter, small-city life, he figured that doing some pro bono work would be a good way to find his way around the local courts, and meet judges and other lawyers, while also helping out people in need. Knightly had spent 18 years working for Legal Aid in New York City as a criminal defense attorney, before which he had been a police officer for 20 years. In Albany he has set up a private criminal defense practice.

Knightly attended the “Java with Justice” training on debt collection law offered by LASNNY, funded by the Assemblyman Robert Reilly Salary Fund. LASNNY offers such trainings to attorneys, helping them learn about or get updated in a new area of law, asking that in return they take on a pro bono case.

They provide plenty of back-up if needed, as well. “The advantage of volunteering for organizations like Legal Aid” says Knightly, “is you have an invaluable resource, just a phone call away.”

Knightly accepted the case of Diane Jones (not her real name), a chambermaid in a Capital District hotel. An ambulance company, working through a local collections law firm, was claiming that she had assumed the debts of her homeless, chronically alcoholic brother who had had to be taken to the hospital.

Knightly met with Jones over her lunch hour and learned that she

## Task Force to Expand Civil Legal Services

Chief Judge Jonathan Lippmann has convened a Task Force to Expand Access to Civil Legal Services. LASNNY’s Executive Director, Lillian M. Moy, serves on the Task Force. The Task Force will hold a public hearing at the Court of Appeals in Albany on October 5, 2010 from 10 am to 1 pm. Individuals wishing to testify should review the public notice posted on the LASNNY website at [www.lasnny.org](http://www.lasnny.org). The deadline for requesting an opportunity to present testimony is September 21, 2010.

PROFILE: *PAI volunteer*

hadn’t seen her brother in years, and hadn’t even been aware of the hospitalization. And yet, the letter from the collection agency claimed that she had “assumed his debts” and was threatening to garnishee her wages to recover them. It seems likely that they had gotten her name from a form somewhere where it had been entered as next of kin or emergency contact.

Unfortunately, Jones couldn’t read, and the rest of her family were intimidated by letters from lawyers, so the initial summons and complaint, which included instructions to challenge the judgment, went unread and unresponded to.

*...in the face of the threat of a lawsuit, they quickly promised to vacate the judgment and halt the garnishee order.*

Unsurprisingly, when Knightly reached the law firm and challenged them to produce any written evidence that Jones had agreed to assume these debts, they couldn’t do so. Instead, in the face of the threat of a lawsuit, they quickly promised to vacate the judgment and halt the garnishee order.

This kind of unsubstantiated debt complaint is not an uncommon occurrence, says Knightly, but “people pay because they don’t know what to do. Thank goodness for Legal Aid.” Lillian Moy, the Society’s Director, notes that “This is a classic David and Goliath match up – I’m grateful for lawyers like Bob Knightly who level the playing field for low-income debtors.”

“There’s nobody except Legal Aid for the bulk of people,” says Knightly. “It’s not just the poor, it’s the whole blue-collar working classes as well. Legal Aid is an invaluable resource, as is the Public Defender’s office. Without Legal Aid and the Public Defender, far more ordinary people would be as bereft as Diane Jones was.”

## Funding:

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York is funded by grants from the Legal Services Corporation, the Interest on Lawyer Account Fund of the State of New York, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, New York State Legislature, NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, NYS Department of Health, NYS Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, Albany County Department for Aging, Fulton County Office for Aging, St. Lawrence County Office for the Aging, Washington County Office for the Aging, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Office for the Aging, City of Saratoga Springs, City of Albany, Bank of America as trustee for the Frederick McDonald Trust, New York State Bar Foundation, United Way of the Greater Capital Region, Legal Aid Society of Rochester, Albany Law School, Nutrition Consortium of the State of New York, The Community Foundation for the Capital Region’s Sara Huntington Catlin Memorial Fund, Assemblyman Robert Reilly Salary Fund, NYS Unified Court System, Office of Court Administration, NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal, NYS Division of Banking, Barry Alan Gold Memorial Advised Fund, The Equinox, Warren County, City of Saratoga Springs, Schenectady County, Wait House, Albany County Department of Social Services, Opportunities, Schenectady Community Action Program, Corporation for AIDS Research, Education and Services, ’s House, Catholic Charities of Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties, Charities of Schoharie County, Albany County Rural Housing Alliance, Law Firms and private contributors through the Justice for All Campaign.

# Teach Globally, Think Locally

Jondavid DeLong, the newest addition to LASNNY's board, has been around the block in the legal profession. He got his start in legal publishing, in editorial and business management positions. After graduating law school (SUNY Buffalo), he served as counsel for the St. Lawrence County Department of Social Services. Two years ago, DeLong made the transition to academia. Joining the faculty of SUNY Canton

teaching law is not just about presenting intellectual challenges but equipping students with the interpersonal skills they need to serve their clients

has allowed DeLong to shift from the intense pace of agency work to the steadier rhythms of teaching and scholarship.

DeLong feels privileged to be able to teach students who may not otherwise have been able to pursue a legal career. For nontraditional students juggling family and work, SUNY's degree in Legal Studies offers the opportunity to study online. Canton's program is unique in the SUNY

system in that it is the only legal studies program offering a four-year degree.

Under DeLong's leadership, the Canton program has grown exponentially. He recently helped set up a partnership with the American University in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a program that enrolls 225 students in a comparative law program. "The degree they get allows them to practice law in Bosnia or pursue law school in the United States," said DeLong. To him, teaching law is not just about presenting intellectual challenges but equipping students with the interpersonal skills they need to serve their clients. "In most areas of legal practice, you're dealing with people in very stressful and challenging situations," said DeLong. "When I went to law school, I thought about that stress in a very abstract way, but students need to address the issue of how they're going to deal with the stress. They need to be good listeners and fully understand how to become an effective advocate for their clients." The SUNY Canton program also offers the opportunity

PROFILE: *board member*



to gain some of these skills through hands-on practical experiences in the form of an internship.

Busy with students on both sides of the Atlantic, DeLong

manages to carve out time in his schedule to take pro-bono cases and to assist the Legal Aid Society on the Executive Finance Committee. "I want to make sure Legal Aid is a viable resource, especially in the wake of all the funding problems that government agencies are facing. There's a huge unmet need, particularly in areas like housing and matrimonial law because of limited resources, and we need to assure that that legal services continues to work for those in need." I'm delighted to have a Board member who is both a pro bono volunteer and concerned about the big picture in delivery of legal services in rural New York. Jondavid is a real asset to the Board" said Lillian Moy, the Society's Director.

## Three strikes

*continued from page 1*

rent, allowing Rodriguez two weeks to find a new place and move out. Rodriguez had to agree to forego her security deposit (one month's rent). But in the end, she came out \$525 ahead instead of \$525 behind.

In mid-June, Rodriguez found a clean, pleasant three-bedroom apartment in Gloversville. She needed to come up with \$575 for the first month's rent and the security deposit. In 2009, the Legal Aid Society received about \$700,000 in federal stimulus money to support its Homelessness



Robert Romaker,  
LASNNY attorney

Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP). The project supports short-term or medium-term rental assistance, relocation, utility payments, and a range of activities to prevent homelessness and help homeless people find housing. "We were able to negotiate [with the new landlord] for a six-month lease," said Romaker. "DSS helped with the first month's rent, and we paid the security." Beginning in August, the DSS and HPRP will continue to share the cost of Rodriguez's rent, so that she can apply more of her assistance money to food and other living expenses.

Meanwhile Romaker is still waiting for a decision from the Fair Hearing to

determine whether or not Rodriguez can retroactively collect the DSS benefits for which she was eligible. Although he expects the judge to rule in favor of DSS, he hopes that the agency will be more thorough in the information it provides to its clients about public assistance programs

As for Rodriguez, her days of scrambling for low-paid retail jobs are ending. She is currently enrolled in a bridge program at Fulton-Montgomery Community College, which will enable her to complete her GED and pursue cosmetology. She credits Romaker and the Legal Aid Society with helping navigate through the legal maze, accompanying her to court appearances, and ultimately helping her turn her life around. "Robert really had my back the whole time."

# Health Care Reform Impacts Low And Moderate Income Households

This year, the federal government enacted two significant laws that dramatically change health care coverage in the United States for low and moderate income households. The two new laws—the Patient Protection & Affordability Care Act of 2010 (PPACA) and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Reconciliation Act)—are very complex. This article provides an overview of some of these changes.

The new health care requirements will be phased in by 2014. The laws address the large number of uninsured people in the country and the

there are both significant benefits and significant complications to the new Medicaid requirements

increasing cost of health insurance by requiring that most people have health insurance coverage, thus bringing more people into the health insurance risk pool. For low and moderate income households, free or government-subsidized health coverage will be available. The new law also prevents health insurance companies from denying coverage for pre-existing medical conditions or terminating coverage when an individual gets sick.

By 2014 states will be required to make Medicaid available to households with incomes up to 133% of the federal poverty level. Additionally, Medicaid income eligibility will be determined based on modified adjusted gross income used for income tax filing rather than specific Medicaid income criteria currently used. There will not be asset limitations for Medicaid eligibility. However, states will have the option of deciding the extent to which the new Medicaid eligibility criteria apply to those over the age of 65 or disabled. It is important for advocates to monitor the direction New York

takes with regard to this vulnerable population as there are both significant benefits and significant complications to the new Medicaid requirements.

The new law also requires that employers with more than 50 employees make health insurance coverage available to their employees. For those who are self-employed, work for employers which do not offer health insurance, or do not otherwise have coverage, the new law creates state health insurance exchanges under which private health insurance plans with basic coverage requirements will be available. The government will subsidize the cost of these plans for people with modified adjusted gross income up to 400% of the federal poverty level.

The subsidies will be on a sliding scale and may either be income tax credits for premium assistance or reductions in cost-sharing.

One significant change this year is the ability to keep uninsured adult children on the parent's health insurance plan until age 26. Those with adult children under age 26 should check with their insurance company for specifics on whether the child may continue on the plan or re-enroll in the plan because some insurance companies have opted to make some of the new requirements immediately available, particularly for those children who were due to be dropped from coverage this year.

Finally, people who have been uninsured for the past six months and have a pre-existing condition will be able to get temporary insurance through high risk pools to be set up by the state by the end of the summer. This coverage will be available until the exchanges start in 2014. Watch for announcements from the state on how to apply for this high risk coverage.

## At Last—No-Fault Divorce in NY

No-fault divorce is now the law in New York State. On August 15, 2010, Governor David Paterson signed into law a bill that would permit married couples to separate without having to prove fault or live separate and apart for one year pursuant to a judicial separation or a separation agreement, making New York State the last state in the nation to allow “no-fault” divorce. The final version of the bill adds a new grounds for divorce to the existing list: the relationship between husband and wife has broken down irretrievably for a period of at least six months.

This change had many advocates and opponents, including some women's groups, the Roman Catholic Church and for many years, the matrimonial bar. In 2005, then Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, the Honorable

Judith Kaye, convened a commission to examine what was right and wrong about matrimonial proceedings and hearings were held across the state. As a result of the testimony provided, the Commission recommended moving to a no fault statute, authorizing Supreme Court justices to award attorneys fees to the non-monied spouse early in the proceedings and streamlining custody proceedings to minimize the time litigants are in court working out custodial arrangements.

In addition, Governor Paterson also signed legislation which would provide a process for setting awards of temporary maintenance while the divorce is pending and another bill which creates the presumption that a less monied spouse is entitled to payment of attorney's fees.

Dated Material—Please Expedite

**Our SEFA  
number:  
150-50**



  
printed on recycled paper

Join us as we Kickoff  
the 2010  
**JUSTICE  
FOR ALL**  
CAMPAIGN  
Thursday, September 16<sup>th</sup>  
5:30–7:30 p.m.  
*At the area's hottest venue*  
**dalemiller**  
the art of dining  
30 South Pearl Street, Albany  
**RSVP@lasnny.org**  
*Complimentary for all members of  
JFA leadership firms*

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PROFILE: *justice for all leadership*

## Taking Pride in Justice

Vincent L. Valenza is the new Managing Principal of McNamee, Lochner, Titus & Williams, a prominent member of the Justice for All Campaign Leadership.

Valenza graduated from the University of Florida with a law degree and a master's of law in taxation. Reversing the familiar pattern of New Yorkers migrating South, in 1991 Valenza and his wife moved from Orlando, Florida to put down roots in Niskayuna, where they now live with their two boys, ages 12 and 16.

After serving as head of the firm's corporate and tax law department, Valenza recently became the firm's managing principal.

Providing legal services to a wide range of businesses, government

institutions and agencies in the Capital Region, McNamee, Lochner, Titus & Williams



maintains its commitment to a long track recording of providing pro-bono legal services to charitable organizations and indigent clients. Valenza takes pride in the fact that the firm was among the first to sign on to the Justice For All campaign, reaching out to fellow attorneys to encourage them to contribute money and time to Legal Aid's work. The campaign has grown each year as firms have renewed their

*continues on page 3*