

WCBF *Benefit* and Silent Auction

Knollwood Country Club,
Elmsford, NY
November 7, 2019

We are pleased to report that the WCBF's 9th Annual Benefit and Silent Auction was a great success, thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, contributors and attendees! Profits will go towards the salary of a new lawyer's *pro bono* legal services at a local non-profit.



- 1 Former and current WCBF Fellows: Virginia Foulkrod (2009-2011) now of Hudson Valley Justice Center, Luis Leon (2017-2019) of Make the Road NY, and Antonio Iglesias (2019-2021) of Legal Services of the Hudson Valley
- 2 Lucy Klingenstein, WCBF Honoree Hon. Brandon R. Sall and WCBA President Hon. Linda S. Jamieson
- 3 Judson Siebert, David Glasser, WCBF Honoree Edward F. Beane and WCBF Treasurer Hon. Richard L. O'Rourke, all of Platinum Sponsor Keane & Beane, P.C.
- 4 Tichina Peters, Joy Beane, Charlie Scott, Jody Keltz and Joann Forbes





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- 5 Hon. Terry Jane Ruderman, Hon. Gina Capone, Sareena Sawney of Gold Sponsor Grassi & Co.
- 6 Tiffany Kenny, Stacy-Ann Gill, Michael Andreou
- 7 Charles Newman and Hon. Daniel J. Angiolillo
- 8 Reginald Lafayette and Hon. Helen Blackwood
- 9 WCBA Executive Director Isabel Dichiara, Hon. Brandon R. Sall, Erica Aisner and WCBA Assistant Treasurer Julie Cvek Curley



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WCBF Honorees Praise the Foundation for Its Commitment to the Underserved in Speeches Made at the 9th Annual Benefit

2019 WCBF Honorees

REMARKS BY HONORABLE BRANDON R. SALL

Westchester County Surrogate



THANK YOU TO MARK WEINGARTEN for that kind introduction.

Thank you to the Westchester County Bar Foundation for bestowing this incredible honor upon me. When I was advised by Anthony Enea that the Foundation wanted to honor me, I was both humbled and honored, especially when I realized who some of the past honorees have been. Congratulations to my co-honoree Ed Beane on receiving this well-deserved honor.

I am so glad that you are all here tonight to celebrate the good work of the Westchester County Bar Foundation. I am particularly

grateful that all of you are here tonight to share this wonderful honor with my family and me.

I would like to thank my colleagues from the Westchester County Surrogate Court, who took the time to be here tonight. You are a pleasure to work with, and I thank you for all you do to make our Court one of the best, if not THE best, Surrogate's Courts in the State.

As many of you know, I was raised in Westchester and was fortunate to have practiced law in Westchester County for most of my legal career and have been a long-time member of the Westchester County Bar Association. I was very honored and privileged to have been elected the Westchester County Surrogate in 2015 and am very much enjoying my time on the bench.

Even though I am a judge now, being a practicing attorney is never far from my heart. There is not a day

that goes by without me remembering how hard it is to be a practicing attorney. I still remember the Sunday afternoon "pit in my stomach" when I started to think about all I had to do in the coming week. But what I most enjoyed about being an attorney was my ability to help clients; by solving their problem or helping them achieve their goal. Now I have been given the opportunity to help people on a much grander scale.

One of the main goals of the Bar Foundation is to contribute to the administration of justice. One of the ways the Bar Foundation does this is by contributing to the salary of an attorney that works in one of the County's not-for-profit legal agencies.

Similarly, in Westchester Surrogate's Court, I have been focused on improving the administration of justice in our Court, which has been a cornerstone of our Chief Judge Janet DiFiore's Excellence Initiative.

But what I most enjoyed about being an attorney was my ability to help clients; by solving their problem or helping them achieve their goal. Now I have been given the opportunity to help people on a much grander scale. — Hon. Brandon Sall

In Surrogate's Court, we are dealing with people at what usually is the worst time in their lives - right after they lost a family member. As Surrogate, I have implemented procedures, policies and programs, which, hopefully, will make it easier for people to navigate this difficult time in their lives as painlessly as possible.

One such program I spearheaded is our Surrogate's Court pilot-presumptive mediation program, which is the first in the State. It was my goal to give litigants, who are reasonable and rational, the ability to settle their differences early on, instead of litigating for years in Surrogate's Court. Believe it or not, there are reasonable and rational litigants out there who have taken advantage of our mediation program. I am happy to report that over 50% of our cases that have been referred to mediation, have settled, in whole or in part. The ability for litigants to resolve their differences early on greatly reduces the emotional and financial stress that is all too common in protracted litigation. And, as it is often said, for the average estate, litigation in Surrogate's Court is too expensive to be affordable.

The success we have achieved is the direct result of the hard work of court staff, mediators, attorneys and litigants who have recognized that litigating isn't the only way to resolve conflict and that there are other appropriate ways, such as mediation, to resolve disputes. Our

program is being duplicated in many other Surrogates' courts throughout the State.

Another initiative that I am proud of is that we are partnering with Pace Law School to represent unrepresented litigants in mediations. Danielle Shalov, a Pace Law School professor, is designing a course which will start in the fall of 2020, which will train law students in Surrogate's practice so that the law students, under a law professor's supervision, can represent pro se litigants in Surrogate's Court mediations.

Tonight, though, we celebrate the Westchester Bar Foundation - the charitable arm of the Westchester County Bar Association - and by extension, all of you, because without your generous support, the Foundation would not exist.

I truly appreciate the honor that has been bestowed upon me by the Westchester Bar County Foundation, and I am grateful that all of you have been here to share this honor with me.

Thank you.



That is what the Foundation is all about, helping persons and families in desperate need of legal assistance.

— Edward F. Beane

**REMARKS BY
EDWARD F. BEANE, ESQ.**

Senior Counsel & Founding Member
Keane & Beane, P.C.



THANK YOU for your gracious introduction Mayor Feinstein. As I listened to your kind words I kept asking whom is she is talking about? Seriously Joan, I thank you and Paul for being here and for your friendship.

First, I want to congratulate my Co-Honoree, the Honorable Brandon R. Sall, Westchester County Surrogate, who is a most deserving recipient.

I am truly humbled by this honor. I accept it not only for myself but on behalf of Keane & Beane, P.C. Over the nearly 40 years the firm has been in existence, since May 1, 1980, the firm and I have had a long involvement in the Westchester County Bar Association and have served in numerous capacities. My partner, Stephanie Burns is a former WCBA President. We have supported a number of charitable and public interest causes including the

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Westchester County Bar Foundation.

I joined the WCBA in 1973 shortly after I began to practice law in Westchester County and have been active in many capacities since that time.

I am honored to join the preeminent group of Past Honorees that includes Jack Geoghegan and the Honorable Daniel Angiolillo, last year's recipients, and previous honorees, Chief Judge DiFiore, Appellate Division, Second Department Presiding Justice Alan Scheinkman and Professor Jay Carlisle.

The Foundation established its two year public interest law fellowship program in September 2007. The fellowship provides legal assistance to the County's under represented and most vulnerable residents and training to a newly admitted lawyer with a passion for public interest law.

The Foundation has sponsored six fellows, the most recent of whom Luis Leon, Esq., who completed his two year fellowship in September 2019. Our newly selected fellow, Antonio Iglesias, started his fellowship with Legal Services of the Hudson Valley in September, and I wish him all success.

Each fellow has had his or her unique experiences in strongly advocating for the rights of the individuals and families they have represented. Their experiences, however, all have a common theme, making a positive and critical difference in the lives of those they have helped and their families. The dedication and desire to secure and protect the legal and human rights of their clients are the same, and their successes do not end there. They extend to many other similarly situated residents in our Westchester County community.

Of course, none of this would be possible without your help and support in making the Foundation and its fellowship program a success

I would like to recognize several special people who have played an important role in my professional and personal life.

I again want to thank Keane & Beane, P.C. for being a sponsor of this evening and its continued support.

I especially want to thank my wife Eva who is here with me this evening. We have been married for more than 52 years. She always has been and still is my best friend, partner, and when necessary, my favorite critic, to try

to keep me out of trouble. As you all know, practicing law is not the easiest profession, and I could not have done it without her support and sacrifices.

The reason we are all here this evening is to support the Foundation. That sentiment is best summed up by the words of my seven and one half year old granddaughter, Blake Lerner. After she finished a project to collect children's books and other educational materials for a charitable organization, I asked her how she liked doing it. This is what she said "Grandpa I'm glad I did this project. I really like doing nice things for other people. It makes me feel good."

Blake is spot on. That is what the Foundation is all about, helping persons and families in desperate need of legal assistance. Accomplishing that mission through the fellows, with our support and participation, makes us all feel good.

Once again, thank you for being here this evening, for being so supportive of the Foundation and its endeavors and for turning out to honor Surrogate Sall and me. I deeply appreciate the honor and everyone's efforts.

Please enjoy the rest of your evening.

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Bijou Fine Jewellery of Katonah
Lucille A. Fontana, Esq., for her delicious
homemade cookies
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How the WCBF Fellowship Helped a New Lawyer Follow His Passion

BY ANTONIO IGLESIAS, ESQ.

WCBF Fellow 2019-2020



I WANT TO BEGIN BY EXPRESSING my sincerest gratitude to the Westchester County Bar Foundation for providing this opportunity and selecting me for the Fellowship. The Fellowship will serve as a vehicle for me to not only develop my skills as an attorney, but to provide legal services to our society's most vulnerable and underrepresented groups. I am thankful that I was connected with Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, the sole provider of comprehensive civil legal services to all seven counties of the lower Hudson Valley. At LSHV, I have the privilege of advocating for indigent individuals and families that otherwise would not be able to afford legal representation in Landlord-Tenant court or in proceedings with various administrative agencies.

As New Yorkers all across the state today continue to face the critical issue of affordable housing, the need for zealous advocacy is at a premium. In New York, an overwhelming amount of people on any given day are forced to face the possibility of losing their homes – an obviously critical and fundamental part of anyone's life. Without the help of attorneys, these individuals are often lost in the legal system and their chances at success are quite low – despite the stakes being so incredibly high. I remember one of my first experiences in Landlord-Tenant court during my first week at LSHV where I watched one of the

many daily proceedings in which a *pro se* tenant litigated her eviction against opposing counsel. Needless to say, it is hard to imagine a more vivid picture of injustice: on one side of the courtroom you have a person who cannot afford an attorney, fighting to keep her home for herself and her family, and on the other side you have legal counsel, with years of experience in Landlord-Tenant court, advocating that she be locked out of her home immediately.

There is no right to counsel in housing court in Yonkers. Thankfully though, attorneys at LSHV dedicate themselves to mitigating this injustice. I have always been passionate about serving marginalized and underrepresented groups and am grateful for the opportunity to do so daily at LSHV. Although I am just beginning my journey in the legal profession, I find comfort in knowing that I have mentors around me at LSHV who will continue to support and challenge me to become a better advocate.

They wasted no time in putting me to work. In one of my first cases, I represented a single mother with two young children, living in a rent-stabilized apartment. She came to us with a notice from a Court Marshal detailing how she was being evicted and had 14 days to vacate the premises. When I met with her, she emphasized that her primary concern was that her two

young children had a place to live. I got to work right away and with some advocacy with her landlord and various administrative agencies, we were able to stop her eviction, fully resolve her rent arrears, and get the case dismissed without prejudice. She is now able to maintain housing for herself and her children without the fear of being evicted. This is one of the countless examples of why this Fellowship is so important and how it can make a lasting, positive impact on people's lives. It is fulfilling to know that my work can help improve the lives of others and help them find more stability in their future.

Once more, I want to thank all those who support the WCBF and the Fellowship. It is because of your contributions that I am able to have this experience and provide legal services for the Westchester community.

Antonio Iglesias, Esq., was born in Queens, N.Y. He graduated from Villanova University with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and earned his J.D. from Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law. During law school, Antonio interned with both Mobilization for Justice and Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem and was a student attorney at Cardozo's Immigration Justice Clinic. Currently, he is a Law Fellow at Legal Services of the Hudson Valley.