

BROOKLYN LAW SCHOOL

**PUBLIC SERVICE
AWARDS CEREMONY**

Honoring Public Service at Brooklyn Law School
and the Accomplishments of the Class of 2022

Tuesday, April 5, 2022
6:00 - 7:00 pm
Zoom

Public Service Awards Ceremony

6:00

Welcome

Dean Michael T. Cahill, President, Joseph Crea Dean, and Professor of Law

Presentation of Distinguished Commitment to Public Service Award to Hon. Margarita Lopez Torres, Tina Davis and Karen Lin '95

Sarah Lorr, Assistant Professor of Clinical Law & Co-Director of the Disability and Civil Rights Clinic, and Prianka Nair, Assistant Professor of Clinical Law & Co-Director of the Disability and Civil Rights Clinic

Keynote Speaker

Hon. Margarita López Torres, Judge, Kings County Surrogate's Court

Presentation of Faculty Award for Excellence in Public Service to Professor of Law, Debra Bechtel

David Reiss, Professor of Law

Presentation of Alumni Award for Excellence in Public Service to Claudia Connor

Elizabeth Schneider, Rose L Hoffer, Professor of Law

Presentation of Staff Award for Excellence in Public Service to Florence Attino

Dean Michael T. Cahill, President, Joseph Crea Dean, and Professor of Law

Presentation of Public Service Awards to the Class of 2022

Stacy Caplow, Associate Dean for Professional Legal Education

Presentation of Pro Bono Project Leadership & Access to Justice Awards

Danielle Sorken, Executive Director, Public Service Law Center

Closing Remarks

Danielle Sorken, Executive Director of the Public Service Law Center

Our Honorees

Members of the Class of 2022, who will pursue a wide array of careers, have performed exceptional pro bono and public service work at organizations ranging from The Legal Aid Society to the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office and from the Mississippi Center for Justice to the National Labor Relations Board. Over the course of these students' law school careers, they have devoted over 100,000 hours to assisting individuals including people who seeking unemployment benefits during the pandemic, immigrants, survivors of domestic violence, children, veterans, and others, as well as helping government agencies provide critical services to the public. The Pro Bono Scholars are devoting thousands of additional hours to working full-time at government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Our pro bono project leaders have dedicated their time and passion to running the Law School's almost two dozen projects.

STUDENTS WHO PERFORMED OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVICE

GOLD - 1,000+ hours

Kacy Vance
Youngran Chaey
Ashlyn Dean
Emily Ingraham
Meghan Johnke
Jack Herrick
Xinxin Zhou
Taylor Sandella
Michael Meyers
Gavriella Fried
Subha Tasnim
Taylor McCandless
Patrick Lin
Octavia Ewart
Ravneet Dehal
Matthew Boyd

Amanda Perez
Zachery Penzone
Meredith Wiles
Luc Figueiredo Miller
Elizabeth Feinberg
Karla Gonzalez
Danika Gallup
Faryaal Abid
Sydney Wolchok
Amal Alzendani
Rachel Laubis
Hannah McMillan
Kerry Ashe
Jaemyung Lee
Cohl Love
Spencer Goodson

SILVER - 500-999 hours

Shana Krauss
Taylor Lupi
Rachel Marc
Bianca Dilan
Marissa Cunha
Augustus Ipsen
Erin Naylor
Allison Liu
Michael Cederblom
Jillian McDonald
Alec Vanek
Kellie VanBeck
Olivia Mittman
Sydney Segal
Jacob Joseph
Katherine Torres
James Sanderson

Khrystyna Sahin
Harpreet Kaur
Daniel Brenner
Ru Hochen
Lydia Saltzbar
Gabrielle Gorelik
Alexa Ornelas
Thomas Pearce
John Guzman
Julia Cummings
Alicia Nakhjavan
Cameron Molyneaux
Alexa Cohn
Kristin Kuraishi
Olivia Rose

PRO BONO AWARD - 100-499 hours

Cole Jaeger
Carl Wu
Eun Bi Kim
Jamie Gewurz
Sharmeen Khan
Barbara Vega
Hadel Alfagir
Matthew Kasner
Sari Kreutzer
Shauna Shalvey
Shanni Lynch
Francesca Esposito
Derek Knight
Sarah Kenny
Amanda Yang

Hasan Tariq
Crystal Liu
Sumayyah Siddiqui
Justin Peralta
Colleen Cummings
Jake Wohl
Katherine Knoepker
Benjamin McDermott
Nicole Moccio
Andrew Lefkowitz
Casey McIntyre
Moriah Son
Brandee McDermott
Mary Berfield
Michelle Lepkofker

PRO BONO PROJECT LEADERS

Student-led projects are at the heart of the BLS pro bono experience. They offer unique leadership and practical opportunities while helping underserved populations. This celebration, in part, is to honor those graduating students who displayed outstanding student leadership in the school's pro bono projects. These students founded projects, revived and revitalized dormant projects, and took over other projects requiring sophisticated oversight. For all your hard work, we thank you, graduating pro bono project leaders:

Alessandro Nardi
Gavi Fried
Jack Herrick
Erica Baker
Cameron Molyneaux
Ashlyn Dean
Zachery Penzone
Eric Green
Michelle Verkhoglaz
Katherine Torres

Cole Jaeger
Meghan Johnke
Emily Ingraham
Jake Wohl
Bianca Dilan
Amal Alzendani
Octavia Ewart
Arianna Rappy
Jahi Liburd
Ellaree Miller

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AWARD Pro Bono Scholars

BLS's Pro Bono Scholars are spending their final semester providing direct legal services to low-income individuals:

Sumayyah Siddiqui
Amal Alzendani
Cameron Molyneaux

Luc Figueiredo Miler
Shana Krauss
Cohl Love

Hon. Margarita López Torres

Judge, Kings County Surrogate's Court

Public Service Awards Ceremony 2022 Keynote Speaker

Distinguished Commitment to Public Service Award

Judge Margarita López Torres was born in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, and was raised in the Brownsville and East New York sections of the Great Republic of Brooklyn. She began her legal career as an attorney, and later as a managing attorney, with various community-based legal services programs, where she represented clients in the area of family, housing, and immigration law. She has served as an Assistant Corporation Counsel with the New York City Law Department and later went on to become the Deputy General Counsel for the New York City Child Welfare Administration. In 1992, Judge López Torres became the first Latina ever elected to the Civil Court, and served in the Civil, Family, Criminal, and Housing Courts. In 2005, she became the first Latinx ever elected to Surrogate's Court in New York State, and the first woman elected to that court in Kings County. She was the first judge to institute the use of gender neutral language as a local court rule and the first to institute video hearings. As a member of the Office of Court Administration Surrogate's Advisory Committee, Margarita was a member of a subcommittee that authored a proposed Article 17-A statute, which provides for greater rights for persons asserted to be in need of a guardian.

Tina Davis

Principal Surrogate's Court Clerk and Supervisor of the Guardianship and

Adoptions Department, Kings County Surrogate's Court

Distinguished Commitment to Public Service Award

Tina Davis is a Principal Surrogate's Court Clerk and Supervisor of the Guardianship and Adoptions Department in the Kings County Surrogate's Court. Ms. Davis brings 28 years of experience in the court system to serve the people and families in Brooklyn. She previously served in the guardianship department in New York County Surrogate's Court as an office assistant, administrative service clerk, and court analyst. Her vast knowledge, experience, and compassion are evident daily as she assists individuals and families, most of whom are unrepresented by counsel, with their petitions, liaises with state agencies, trains and supervises court staff, manages the adoptions and guardianship case load, issues citations, facilitates hearings and court calendars, and develops protocol for the department.

Karen Lin, BLS'95

*Court Attorney-Referee, Kings County Surrogate's Court
Distinguished Commitment to Public Service Award*

Karen Lin serves as Court Attorney-Referee in Kings County Surrogate's Court, which adjudicates guardianships, adoptions, probate and estate administration proceedings, including conducting SCPA Article 17A guardianship hearings. Ms. Lin immigrated to the United States when she was three years old and was raised in Queens, which she has happily never left. Educated in the New York City public school system and a graduate of the State University of New York at Buffalo, Ms. Lin has worked in the public sector for over twenty years. She has served as a Judge in the New York City Housing Court. Prior to her appointment to the bench, she served as Principal Court Attorney in New York County Supreme Court, in trial, general IAS, medical malpractice, and city parts. Before that, Ms. Lin was a litigation associate at a civil rights litigation firm, practicing family law and representing parents embroiled in the child welfare system. She has also served in the New York State Senate as District Counsel and Chief of Staff to the late Senator Catherine Abate. She has served as a pro bono attorney at the Center of Constitutional Rights, where she participated in the Ella Baker Internship Program. Ms. Lin has also taught litigation, legal research and writing at CUNY Queens College as an adjunct instructor. She volunteers as Co-Chair of the Pro Bono and Community Service Committee of the Asian American Bar Association of New York. She is a proud alumna of Brooklyn Law, where she was a BLSPI Fellow and President of APALSA.

Claudia Connor '88

Alumni Award for Excellence in Public Service

Claudia has over 30 years of experience working on behalf of marginalized people, fighting for social justice and social change. She is currently the Managing Director of Strategic Development Priorities with Save the Children. She previously worked with the International Rescue Committee, the Women's Refugee Commission, and was the President & CEO of the Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants, a social justice nonprofit serving refugees and immigrants. From 1998-2008, Claudia lived in Mozambique, Malawi, and Myanmar where she was a consultant with UNICEF, the Carter Center, and Population Services International among other organizations, and worked on human rights issues including child trafficking, child soldiers, women's rights, and the impact of HIV/AIDS. Before moving overseas, Claudia was a senior trial attorney for The Legal

Aid Society, Criminal Defense Division, in New York City. She has her JD from Brooklyn Law School and a B.A. in History from University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She and her family live in Norwalk, CT where she has the honor of serving on the Norwalk Commission on the Status of Women.

Debra Bechtel

Faculty Award for Excellence in Public Service

Debra Bechtel is one of New York City's foremost legal experts in low-income cooperatives. She has been teaching at Brooklyn Law School since 1997 when she founded the Corporate and Real Estate Clinic. The Clinic provides representation for these low-income co-ops and each semester enrolls approximately six to ten students. Dozens of low-income cooperatives in three boroughs have been preserved in part because of the students' assistance with loan closings, real estate tax arrears, shareholder meetings and other challenges. She also developed a real estate externship program and teaches the Real Estate and Community Development externship seminar. In 2014, she was appointed as Deputy Director of the Center for Urban Business Entrepreneurship, which trains students to represent entrepreneurs and involves them, along with faculty, in housing and economic development policy issues. Prior to teaching, Professor Bechtel was the Director of the Community Development Legal Assistance Center, a project of what is now Lawyers Alliance for New York, and a staff attorney with the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago. Professor Bechtel has been active in the New York State Bar Association's Real Property Section, serving on the Executive Committee for the past two years and as the Co-Chair of the Legislation Committee and the Student Affairs Committee. She has published:

New York City Low-Income Cooperatives: A Guide for Practitioners, 48
New York Real Property Law Journal, Spring-Summer 2020 at 17

"Forming Entities to Negotiate Community Benefits Agreements" in
the *Journal of Affordable Housing and Community Development Law*.

Florence Attino

Staff Award for Excellence in Public Service

After a 30-year career at all levels and types of education, Florence Attino began her most fulfilling job to date at Brooklyn Law School in 2005, working

with law students and directing the Public Service Grant and the Loan Repayment Assistance programs. Making it financially possible for BLS students to work in unpaid public interest internships, helping students navigate the confusing financial aid process and then helping BLS alumni get assistance with their loan repayment because they choose to stay in public interest is the most rewarding position Ms. Attino has ever held. She can never imagine retiring. BLS students who choose careers in public interest truly make a difference in our world, and she is honored to be a part of this unique population. On a personal note, Ms. Attino has been blessed with John, her husband of 46 years; remarkable children, Natalie, Thomas, and son in-law Brian; and most recently, Aria, her granddaughter, whom she loves more than words can express and is the joy and sunshine in her heart.



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