

New York State Administrative Law Judges Association



2011-2012 OFFICERS

Hon. James T. McClymonds
President

Hon. Ruth Kraft
President Elect

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Vice-President

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Treasurer

Hon. Edward R. Mevec
Secretary

Hon. John G. Farrell
Immediate Past President

TO: Members of the New York State Administrative
Law Judges Association (NYSALJA)

FROM: James T. McClymonds
Out-Going President

DATE: September 5, 2012

RE: Message to Membership and Annual Report

Dear NYSALJA Members:

As I write this -- in a few short hours -- the Honorable Ruth Kraft will assume the role of President of our association, the members will elect a slate of new officers, and I will begin my role as Immediate Past President.

In scanning the NYSALJA by-laws to learn the specific duties of the Immediate Past President, I happened to notice that among the duties of the President is the distribution of an annual report to the general membership. I must regrettably admit that this was a duty I failed to execute. Accordingly, please accept this letter as the required annual report (or reports) for my term as President.

I began my tenure on the NYSALJA Executive Board in September 2008, as President Elect to then President Marc Zylberberg. NYSALJA had just concluded hosting a very successful annual meeting of the National Association of Administrative Law Judiciary (NAALJ) in New York City. My training as President-Elect was cut short, however, when in June 2009, an unfortunate accident and pending retirement from State service resulted in President Zylberberg's desire to

step down as President. (As an aside, we are all gratified that Marc has recovered and is apparently enjoying retirement, regularly calling into NYSALJA Executive Board meetings from various remote and foreign locations!) I have been serving as the NYSALJA President since that time.

As I assumed the Presidency, I was advised that the NYSALJA membership was somewhat exhausted from the efforts associated with running a NAALJ annual meeting, and that the association would likely need a “break.” Nevertheless, NYSALJA has remained active in the past several years and has achieved a number of significant accomplishments. Among the most notable accomplishments are (in roughly chronological order):

- NYSALJA has continued the practice of awarding grants to members attending both annual and mid-year NAALJ conferences.
- NYSALJA now has more or less permanent meeting locations both in New York City (thanks to the Hon. Raymond Kramer, who has made the facilities at the City’s Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) available to NYSALJA) and in Albany (thanks to the Hon. Deborah Richards, who organized a meeting room at SUNY Albany’s Downtown Campus).
- NYSALJA regularly holds pre-meeting receptions in both New York City and Albany, which allow members to meet and greet one another in a less formal setting.
- In March 2010, NYSALJA became a charter life member of the NAALJ Foundation.
- Also in March 2010, the Hon. Eric Zaidins stepped forward and assumed the role of NYSALJA webmaster. He subsequently accepted the role as Chair of NYSALJA’s Technology Committee. Under his able leadership, NYSALJA has a fully functioning website (www.nysalja.org), and email, list serve, and telephone capabilities through Google, thereby bringing NYSALJA fully into the 21st Century.
- In June 2010, the NYSALJA membership voted to increase annual membership dues from \$45 to \$50, thereby bringing NYSALJA’s dues structure into conformity with NAALJ’s.
- Also in June 2010, a CLE Committee was formally established, which is presently chaired by the Hon. Edward Mevec. The CLE Committee has had a number of significant accomplishments, including the execution of a memorandum of understanding with PACE for the provision of jointly sponsored CLE programs, and the co-sponsorship of CLE programs with OATH’s Administrative Judicial Institute. The CLE Committee continues to explore new ways to provide CLE to NYSALJA members, including the development of a speakers bureau, and the provision of CLE through electronic media, such as DVDs and video.

- In the fall of 2011, NYSALJA members met with a delegation of lawyers from the People's Republic of China, and presented a program on constitutional and administrative law in New York.
- In early 2012, NYSALJA submitted a letter to the State Education Department in support of comments prepared by an ad hoc working group of special education independent hearing officers on proposed amendments to the Department's regulations.
- Through the efforts of Judge Kraft, chair of the NYSALJA Public Affairs Committee, New York City Council Member Karen Koslowitz issued a Proclamation honoring the members of NYSALJA and declaring June 20, 2012 to be NYSALJA Day.
- NYSALJA has developed a handsome Certificate of Membership, which has been distributed to all current and new members. Through the efforts of Judge Zylberberg, an attractive NYSALJA label pin is also now available.

With respect to membership, membership dropped from 89 members in 2008, to 51 at the beginning of the 2009-2010 membership year. This drop was to be expected in the wake of a NAALJ annual meeting hosted in New York City. Membership has since seen a steady and significant increase. At the June 2012 Executive Board meeting, Treasurer Anne Murphy reported 74 members in good standing. I would expect this positive growth in membership to continue as NYSALJA builds upon current programs and continues to develop new ways to provide benefits to its members.

Finally, NYSALJA remains financially sound, running well in the black and maintaining a significant savings balance.

All in all, I believe that the past three years have witnessed the continued health and growth of NYSALJA as an association consistent with its goals of promoting the highest professional standards of administrative adjudication in New York, and fostering the improvement of administrative processes and procedures.

As my term as President concludes, I would like to thank the various Officers and Executive Board Members who have served on the Executive Committee during the past three years. NYSALJA functions through its Board, and were it not for the efforts of its active members, none of the accomplishments noted above would have been possible. Those active members include the current Board: President-Elect Ruth Kraft, Vice President Joel Ziev, Treasurer Anne Murphy, Secretary Edward Mevec, and Executive Board Members Hon. Deborah Richards, Hon. Eric Zaidins, Hon. Raymond Kramer, Hon. Sally Farrow, and Hon. Christine Marbach-Kellett. I would also like to thank former Secretary Hon. David Lenihan, and former Executive Committee members Hon. Elizabeth Leibschutz, and Hon. Mindy Wolman for their service on the Board. Also, thanks to Past Presidents Hon. Abigail Bernhardt, Hon. James Horan, and Hon. Marc Zylberberg, who remain active in the association.

I would also like to extend a special thanks to Immediate Past President John Farrell, who provided regular counsel, and agreed to take on special projects, notwithstanding his already

very busy involvement in both NYSALJA and NAALJ. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to extend a personal thank you to both Hon. Catherine Bennett and Hon. Peter Loomis, both Past President, who together encouraged me to take on the role of President, and continued to provide me with encouragement and support.

I wish President Elect Kraft success as she assumes the Presidency of NYSALJA. It has been a real pleasure serving as your President and I look forward to working with President Kraft and the in-coming Board in my new role as Immediate Past President.