

## Speaker Biographies



## Lisa J. Allen, Attorney



Lisa concentrates her legal practice at Schop, Powell & Allen in Estate Planning, Disability Advocacy, Elder Law, Medicaid Eligibility, Guardianships, Supplemental Needs Trusts, Nursing Home Planning, Tax Planning and Estate Administration. Admitted to practice in New York State, United States District Court and United States Bankruptcy Court, Lisa is also an adjunct professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Law, a frequent community lecturer on issues affecting the elderly and disabled and an instructor of continuing education for financial professionals, accountants and attorneys.

She is a member of the Trusts and Estates Section and Elder Law Section of the New York State Bar Association, the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys and the Surrogate's Court Practice and Procedure Committee, Elder Law Committee and Disability Law Committee of the Erie County Bar Association.

A recognized leader in the area of Elder and Disability Law, Lisa was formerly the Eighth Judicial District's representative on the Executive Committee for the New York State Bar Association's Trust and Estates Section and is a member of the Estate Analysts of Western New York, Financial Planning Counselors of Western New York and the Network in Aging of WNY.

Lisa received her law degree from the University at Buffalo School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Harpur College, Binghamton University. While in law school, she received a Baldy Fellowship for the study of law and social policy.

Her community service has included serving on the Board of Directors for the People Inc. Foundation, the University at Buffalo Law Alumni Association and the Professional Advisory Committee of the Buffalo Community Foundation. She was named a Business First Woman of Influence in 2003 and a New York Super Lawyer (Upstate) in the area of Trusts and Estates in 2012 by the Thomson Reuters news organization.

[lallen@schoppowellallen.com](mailto:lallen@schoppowellallen.com)



## Adrienne Arkontaky, Esq.

Adrienne J. Arkontaky is the Managing Partner of the White Plains office of the Cuddy Law Firm, P.C.. Adrienne's practice focuses on special needs planning, special education advocacy and litigation, guardianship, Medicaid, OPWDD and other administrative appeals including SSI and SSDI appeals.

Adrienne has been instrumental in assisting families throughout the state obtain appropriate educational services for children with special needs and plan for the future by setting up proper special needs estate planning. Adrienne previously served as the Pro Bono Coordinator for a major law firm and a Service Coordinator for Family Connection, an agency providing case management for families of children with disabilities. Adrienne received her Juris Doctor degree from Pace University School of Law and received her Bachelor of Science degree from Iona College.

Adrienne is the Co-Chair of the Special Needs Planning Committee of the Elder Law Section of the New York State Bar Association, the Co-Editor of the Elder Law and Special Needs Law Journal, Co-Chair of the Education Committee and Lawyering and Parenting Committee for the Westchester Women's Bar Association. Adrienne is also a member of the committee on Issues Affecting Persons with Disabilities for the New York State Bar Association and a Director of the Westchester Women's Bar Association. She has been named as "A Rising Star" in Super Lawyers 2013.

Adrienne serves as the Chairperson for the Board of the John A. Coleman School, with campuses in New York City and White Plains. The John A. Coleman School serves children with multiple disabilities in Westchester and the five boroughs. She is a member of the Council of Parent Advocates and Attorneys (COPAA) and serves on the Board of Family Ties, an organization dedicated to serving the needs of families with loved ones with mental illness. Adrienne lectures frequently to advocacy groups and other professional organizations on special needs planning and the importance of understanding special education laws.

Adrienne lives in Hawthorne with her husband, Peter and 3 children. She is the parent of a special needs child.

Kerri A. Canzone-Ball, Ed.D.

Dr. Canzone-Ball is the Director of Special Education in the Ballston Spa Central School District. She previously served as the K-12 Supervisor of Special Education, and has been with the district since 2008. Before relocating to the Capital Region, Dr. Canzone-Ball was the Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services in the Islip Union Free School District. She was Assistant Director of Student Support Services in the South Country Central School District, where she taught as a special educator prior to becoming a school district administrator.

Dr. Canzone-Ball earned her Bachelor's Degree from Syracuse University in Inclusive Elementary and Special Education and English and Textual Studies. She received her Master's Degree in Applied Educational Psychology: Reading, from Teachers College, Columbia University. Dr. Canzone-Ball attended Dowling College's Educational Leadership Program and received her certification in school district administration. She went on to earn her doctorate in Educational Leadership and Accountability from St. John's University. Dr. Canzone-Ball published an article based on her dissertation, "*A Descriptive Study of Funded Homeless Education Programs: Barriers and Supports in New York State*," Long Island Education Review, Spring 2012, Vol. 11, No. 1, P. 10.

In her current role, Dr. Canzone-Ball is responsible for all aspects of the Committee on Special Education and Preschool Special Education. She provides coordination and direction for special education and support services. Dr. Canzone-Ball administers special education federal grants and budgets, supervises and evaluates special education faculty and staff, coordinates professional development, homeless services and gifted and talented programs. She serves as the district liaison for the newly established Parsons Child and Family Center School Based Behavioral Health Project.

Charles J. Crowley is an Attorney at the New York City Department of Education where he is a Litigation Supervisor in the Special Education Unit. He received his JD from the New England School of Law in 2001. He lives in Queens with his wife who is also an Attorney.



**Michael J. Cuddy, Jr | Cuddy Law Firm, P.C.**

**Email:** [mcuddy@cuddylawfirm.com](mailto:mcuddy@cuddylawfirm.com)

**Michael J. Cuddy, Jr.** is a graduate of Le Moyne College (B.A., 1982), Carnegie-Mellon University (M.A., History, 1983), the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Law (J.D., 1988), and Canisius College (M.S., Educational Administration, 1994). He completed a graduate certificate program in labor studies at the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University. He was admitted to the practice of law in New York State in 1989.

Michael has worked as a high school teacher and, for nineteen years, as a school district administrator, and has represented school districts in collective negotiations, in grievance hearings and arbitrations, and in matters before the New York State Public Employment Relations Board and the New York State Division of Human Rights. He has served as the hearing officer in over one hundred "superintendent's hearings" related to student discipline.

Since joining in the firm in 2009, Michael has successfully represented parents in a score of due process hearings, represented teachers in disciplinary matters, and presented on the topic of disciplining students with disabilities.



**Andrew K. Cuddy | Cuddy Law Firm, P.C.**

**Email:** [acuddy@cuddylawfirm.com](mailto:acuddy@cuddylawfirm.com)

**Andrew K. Cuddy** graduated from the College of the Holy Cross in 1987, where he attended on a Navy R.O.T.C. (Marine Option) scholarship. Upon graduation he was commissioned into the U.S. Marine Corps. He served on active duty for nearly five years and is a combat veteran of the First Gulf War. After active duty, Andy attended the University at Buffalo School of Law, while remaining active in the Marine Reserves. During this time, as a reservist, Andy served in Somalia. He graduated from law school in 1996 and was admitted that same year. He remained active in the Marine Reserves until 1996 and attained the rank of Captain.

Andy initially practiced criminal defense law. In 2001, a criminal case with overlapping special education issues introduced him to the special education problems families were experiencing. He began representing families in these matters, and in a very short time this area of law took over his practice. He now devotes his practice to represent families of children with special needs. He has initiated due process hearings against roughly 100 school districts across New York State. He speaks publicly on the topic of special education law routinely for various entities. In 2007 Andy wrote *The Special Education Battlefield: A Guide to the Due Process Hearing and Other Tools of Effective Advocacy*.

As the firm's founder, Andy has grown the firm to meet the increasing demand for special education representation, and in 2011 expanded the services of the firm to other areas of disability law, including special needs trust planning, guardianship, supplemental security income (SSI), social security disability insurance (SSDI), Veterans' Benefits and Medicaid. To meet this demand, Andy has brought together attorneys with key litigation skills and combined those skills into an effective team.

Andy serves as a board member of [Unity House of Cayuga County, Inc.](#), a non-profit agency that provides transitional and permanent housing, respite care, and rehabilitative and employment services to adults with mental health illnesses, developmental disabilities, and/or chemical dependencies from which they are recovering.

Andy lives with his wife Shoby and their two boys Danny and Deonsay.





**Jesse Cole Cutler, Esq. | Law Offices of Regina Skylar L.L.P.**

Jesse knew he would be entering the field of special education as early as high school when he was volunteering in a program for special education teenagers. He came to work for Regina Skyer while attending college and at that time began to learn about the legal process as it pertains to special education. While in college (S.U.N.Y. Albany) he worked in the New York State assembly, and still closely follows the legislature as it pertains to special education law.

Jesse joined our firm as an associate upon receiving his J.D. from Brooklyn Law School in 2002 and became a partner in 2004. He works closely with Regina on all aspects of firm management and is in charge of the Litigation and Appeal Team. Jesse works on all of the firm's federal court appeals and is admitted to practice in each of the federal districts of New York.

Jesse regularly lectures on special education policies, procedures and litigation strategies to parent and attorney groups. He has published decisions on the federal and state level.

Jesse lives in Brooklyn Heights with his wife, an editor and author of children's books.

## Edgar De Leon | De Leon & Associates, P.L.L.C.



Edgar De Leon is a graduate of the Fordham University School of Law (J.D.) and Hunter College (M.S. & B.A.). He has worked as a Detective-Sergeant and an attorney for the New York City Police Department (NYPD). His assignments included investigating hate-motivated crimes for the Chief of Department and allegations of corruption and serious misconduct for the Deputy Commissioner of Internal Affairs and the Chief of Detectives. While assigned to the NYPD Legal Bureau, Mr. De Leon litigated both criminal and civil matters on behalf of the Police Department. He conducted legal research on matters concerning police litigation and initiatives and advised members of the department on matters relating to the performance of their official duties. Mr. De Leon has counseled NYPD executives and law enforcement and community-based organizations domestically and internationally concerning policy and procedure development in police-related subjects, including cultural diversity. In 2005, Mr. De Leon was part of an international team that traveled to Spain and Hungary. Working under the auspices of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), a subdivision of the Organization for Cooperation and Strategy in Europe (OCSE), the team drafted a curriculum and implemented the first-ever training program for police officers in the European Union concerning the handling and investigation of hate crimes.

In January 1999, Mr. De Leon retired from the NYPD with the rank of Sergeant S.A. (Special Assignment) and began his private law practice. In 2003, he was one of the founding partners of De Leon & Martin, PLLC, now known as De Leon & Associates, PLLC. The firm practices in the areas of criminal defense, matrimonial/family law, and employment and general litigation matters. De Leon & Associates, PLLC works on a *per-diem* basis representing members of the NYPD Patrolman's Benevolent Association. Mr. De Leon also serves as Impartial Hearing Officer for the New York State Department of Education, where he adjudicates claims arising under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA).

Mr. De Leon has served as a member of the advisory board of the Advanced Systems Technology Corporation (AST) located in Lawton, Oklahoma and Instructional Systems Incorporated (ISI) located in Hackensack, New Jersey. He counseled both companies in legal and related issues regarding computer-based training in the area of cultural diversity for the law enforcement community and private security industry nationwide. Mr. De Leon also served on the Board of Directors of Loisaída, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation founded in 1979 to address the problem of social and economic disenfranchisement of poor and low-income residents in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. He remains of service to the organization as a "Friend of Loisaída." In September 2003, Mr. De Leon was appointed by the Mayor of the City of New York Michael R. Bloomberg to serve on the Mayor's Committee on City Marshals. Mr. De Leon also served as the President of the Puerto Rican Bar Association (PRBA) from June 1, 2004 to June 1, 2005. All PRBA Presidents serve a one-year term. In June 2012, Mr. De Leon was elected to the Board of Directors of Equal Justice USA (EJUSA). EJUSA is a national, grassroots organization working to build a criminal justice system that is fair, effective and humane, starting with repeal of the death penalty and increased services to families of homicide victims. Mr. De Leon has also served as a legal analyst and frequent guest on Court TV and the WWRL radio show Legally Speaking.

Mr. De Leon has at various times been a member of the American Bar Association, the New York State Bar Association (Criminal and Family Law Section), the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, the New York County Lawyers Association (Civil Rights and Small Firm Committee), the Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey, the Puerto Rican Bar Association and the Dominican Bar Association. He received the Network for Women's Services Commitment to Justice Award in 2000, the Borough of Manhattan Community College's Latino Honor Society Award for 2001 and the Fordham University School of Law LALSA Alumni Award for 2004, and he was one of the El Diario newspaper's "Most Notable & Featured Latinos" for 2012. Mr. De Leon is admitted to practice law in the state and federal courts of New York and New Jersey.

**Matthew J. Delforte** is a partner at the New York City law firm Shebitz Berman Cohen & Delforte, P.C., where he leads the firm's education law practice. Mr. Delforte represents public and private schools, from pre-schools to colleges and universities, in all areas of education law, as well as Early Intervention, SEIT, and related services provider agencies. He has worked on the creation of colleges, business and trade schools, private schools for grades pre-kindergarten through twelve, and schools for children with disabilities, and serves as general counsel to education institutions. Mr. Delforte focuses much of his practice on representing charter schools in New York City and provides counsel to charter school advocacy groups. He has also worked extensively on the charter school authorization process. Mr. Delforte also represents children with disabilities, creates and counsels the schools they attend, and litigates to protect and secure their interests and entitlements.

Mr. Delforte is a Special Professor of Law at Hofstra Law School where he teaches *Legal Issues in Public Education*. He serves on the Hofstra University Special Education Advisory Board, and is a regular presenter at conferences on education law in the New York City area.

Mr. Delforte earned his Juris Doctorate from the City University of New York School of Law, and his undergraduate degree from St. Bonaventure University. He is admitted to practice law in the Courts of New York State, the United States District Court for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York and the United States Supreme Court.



Member

### ***Professional Experience***

Together with other members and associates in the firm, Ralph DeMarco represents public school districts as General Counsel, Labor Counsel and Special Education Counsel in Westchester, Putnam, Rockland and Nassau Counties, NY. He handles school litigation matters in state and federal courts, appeals to the Commissioner of Education, impartial special education hearings under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Education Law, employee disciplinary proceedings pursuant to the Education Law and Civil Service Law and discrimination and/or retaliation claims before the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commissioner and State Division of Human Rights.

Mr. DeMarco joined Keane & Beane in 2010 with many years of experience in representing school districts.

### ***Admissions***

- State and Federal Courts of New York

### ***Professional Associations***

- New York State Bar Association
- Westchester County Bar Association

### ***Professional Activities/Publications***

Mr. DeMarco is a frequent lecturer at in-service training workshop on a variety of legal topics to public school district clients.

### ***Education***

- 1993, J.D., St. John's University School of Law
- 1990, B.A., Niagara University

## GUSTAVE J. DIBIANCO



**Judge DiBianco** retired after serving as the Chief United States Magistrate Judge in the Northern District of New York for 9 years. He served for 22 years as a Judge and presided over several thousand civil and criminal cases. Prior to his judicial service, **Judge DiBianco** was an Assistant U.S. Attorney and Chief Assistant U.S. Attorney in the United States Attorney's Office in Syracuse, New York.

**Judge DiBianco's** judicial responsibilities included managing all aspects of pretrial litigation, deciding discovery disputes and other pretrial motions, and conducting many Settlement Conferences. Federal judges in most Districts become very familiar with the claims and defenses in the cases they manage and actively promote settlement through settlement conferences or Alternate Dispute Resolutions. **Judge DiBianco** is familiar with New York State law and many federal cases include state claims as part of the complaint.

**Judge DiBianco** has personally conducted more than 150 MEDIATION-type settlement conferences where the litigants fashioned a mutually acceptable settlement ending the federal litigation. These "resolutions" saved large expenses of continued litigation and were tailor-made and confidential. Many times, the parties agreed on very specific settlement provisions to fit the facts. This was advantageous since a court or jury cannot always give the relief that parties can fashion by themselves.

As with many judges & lawyers in Upstate New York, **Judge Di Bianco** has a relaxed and friendly style without ever losing sight of the important benefits of using **ALTERNATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION** to resolve disputes. Litigation is not only very expensive with unpredictable results, but is fraught with numerous and frustrating delays.

Both members of the firm are available to conduct Mediation, Arbitration, Early (or not so early) Neutral Evaluation, or "Dual Mediation" as the parties desire. Anyone considering hiring the firm of **DiBianco & Pease** should inquire with local lawyers in Onondaga County about the reputation of either member of the firm.



**Barbara J. Ebenstein, Esq. | Law Offices of Barbara J. Ebenstein**

Barbara J. Ebenstein, Esq. is a parent and an attorney with law offices in New Rochelle, New York. Her practice focuses on the representation of parents in special education, general education, and related matters. Barbara is an adjunct associate professor at New York University where she teaches the graduate courses in Education Law. Barbara served as a member of the Disability Policy Committee of the presidential campaign of Barack Obama, and she served as one of the surrogates speaking on disability issues on behalf of the campaign. Barbara also serves as an impartial hearing officer in New York City and Long Island, and as a Vocational Rehabilitation hearing officer. She represent families in Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, and all other counties outside New York City and Long Island.

Barbara has extensive experience conducting CLE for attorneys and workshops for parents, advocates, school personnel, and other professionals from Hawaii to New Hampshire. She served as the lead instructor for the New York pilot site of the SEAT Project (Special Education Advocacy Training) and she serves as an attorney skills trainer for the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA). Barbara has authored articles on special education law from the parents' perspective for numerous national publications. Barbara served as Chair of the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA) from 2005 to 2006.

Barbara J. Ebenstein holds a J.D. from Pace University Law School, a M.A. in Education from Teachers College of Columbia University, and a B.A. cum laude from Boston University.

Andrew J. Freedman  
Direct tel: 716.848.1332  
afreedman@hodgsonruss.com  
www.hodgsonruss.com

The Guaranty Building  
140 Pearl Street  
Suite 100  
Buffalo, NY 14202-4040  
716.856.4000  
Fax. 716.849.0349



Partner  
Education Law Practice Group  
Labor & Employment Practice Group Buffalo Office

Areas of Practice: Education law

**Professional Experience:** Mr. Freedman focuses his practice on education law and has extensive experience counseling school districts and boards of education on the full range of complex legal challenges they face. His experience includes representing school districts in proceedings and appeals before the Commissioner of Education, advising school boards on their powers and duties under New York State Education Law, representing schools in all phases of special education litigation and student discipline matters, and advising on the development and implementation of school district policies. Mr. Freedman teaches education law courses as an adjunct professor at SUNY Buffalo Law School, Canisius College School of Education Administration, and Buffalo State College Education Administration Program.

**Honors/Awards:** Mr. Freedman was named one of the top education law attorneys by his peers in Business First's Who's Who in Law.

**Presentations:** Mr. Freedman is a frequent lecturer on a wide range of legal issues affecting school districts. Most recently, he presented a three-part, CLE-accredited series on special education law for the Bar Association of Erie County (February 6, 20, and 27, 2013). He also recently participated in a panel discussion on cyberbullying at the 2012 Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention Annual Conference at the University at Buffalo (September 19, 2012) and presented "School Bullying, Cyberbullying, and Sexting: A Timely Discussion" at an event hosted by SUNY Buffalo Law School's Buffalo Human Rights Center (April 11, 2012).

**Publications:**

- "How to Handle Test Opt-Out Requests," On Board, a publication of the New York State School Boards Association, April 15, 2013
- "New State Regs Aimed at Curbing School Bullying," Buffalo Law Journal, September 19, 2011

Media:

- "Soaring Autism Diagnoses Will Bring Changes to Special Ed Programs," School Board News Today, April 12, 2013
- "Cyberbullying Responders Tackle Issue," Buffalo News, September 21, 2012
- "DASA Updates Tackle Cyberbullying," Buffalo Law Journal, July 16, 2012
- "Fight Against Bullies Getting Lots of Help," Buffalo Law Journal, October 31, 2011

Professional Associations: Bar Association of Erie County (past chair, School and Municipal Law

Committee), New York State Bar Association, New York State School Attorneys Association  
Community Activities: Board member, Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance

Abuse

Admitted to Practice: New York, U.S. District Court for the Western District of New York

Education:

B.A., University at Buffalo, State University of New York J.D., SUNY Buffalo Law School



## **Randa P. Glasser, Esq. | Guercio & Guercio, LLP**

Ms. Glasser graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of Maryland in 1977, and is a graduate of Hofstra University School of Law, Class of 1981. She is admitted to the New York State Bar, and to the Bar of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York. She served as the Chairperson of the Education Law Committee at the Nassau County Bar Association from 2008 to 2011 and in October 2011 commenced a two year term as a Board Trustee for the Nassau County Supreme Court Library. She has lectured on special education issues and bullying at the Annual School Law Conference held by the Suffolk & Nassau Academies of Law, and at Legal Clinics held at Hofstra University, on bullying at the Practicing Law Institute, and on FERPA and special education issues for the National Business Institute, and has trained arbitrators for the American Arbitration Association. Ms. Glasser is a member of the firm of Guercio & Guercio, LLP in Farmingdale, New York. Before joining Guercio & Guercio, LLP, held the position of Staff Attorney at Long Island Advocacy and Long Island Advocates, Inc. She has presented numerous workshops for members of school administration and personnel, on topics such as bullying, sexual harassment, special education, parliamentary issues, student discipline, FERPA, HIPAA and student residency. Ms. Glasser also served as an Associate Professor at Adelphi University and an Adjunct Professor at Hofstra University and Long Island University. In addition, she was appointed Arbitrator on various matters before the American Arbitration Association, New York Stock Exchange and National Association of Securities Dealers. She concentrates on various aspects of representing municipalities, including school districts, libraries, water districts and fire districts.

### **Areas of Practice:**

Education Law

Various Aspects of Representing Municipalities, School Districts & Libraries

Various Aspects of Representing Water and Fire Districts

### **Bar Admissions:**

New York

### **Education:**

Hofstra University School of Law, Hempstead, New York, 1981

J.D. University of Maryland, 1977

B.A.

### **Classes/Seminars Taught:**

Lecturer, Special Education Issues, Suffolk & Nassau Academies of Law, School Law Conference Lecturer, Alternate Dispute Resolution Issues, American Arbitration Association

Associate Professor, Adelphi University

Adjunct Professor, Hofstra University

Adjunct Professor, Long Island University

### **Professional Associations and Memberships:**

New York State Bar Association

Member, Disabilities Law Committee

Nassau County Bar Association

Member, Education Law Committee/Alternate Dispute Resolution Committee

Nassau County Bar Association, 2008 – Present

Chair, Education Law Committee

### **Past Employment Positions:**

Long Island Advocates, Inc., Staff Attorney

Gayle T. Murphy, Esq. is an attorney who has a private law practice focusing on children's rights and the rights of individuals with disabilities for over twenty years. She continues to be a frequent lecturer and trainer on education and disability law issues for parents, educators, attorneys and other professionals. Ms. Murphy received a B.S. Ed. degree summa cum laude, majoring in exceptional education and mental retardation, and an MS. Ed. degree in exceptional education and learning and behavioral disorders from Buffalo State College. She received her J.D. degree from the University at Buffalo. She is a former clinical legal education instructor at the University at Buffalo, an instructor in the exceptional education department at Buffalo State College, and a former special education teacher. She also practiced law at Legal Services for the Elderly, Neighborhood Legal Services and a private law firm in Buffalo, NY. Ms. Murphy is a certified teacher of special education and serves as an impartial hearing officer for the NYS Education Department. Since 2004, Ms. Murphy has served as a court appointed Attorney for the Child in custody and access matters in Family and Supreme Courts. She is a Court appointed attorney and court evaluator in Article 81 guardianship proceedings. Ms. Murphy is a member of the New York State Bar Association, the Erie County Bar Association, and the Western New York Chapter of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York. She serves on the board of Legal Services for the Elderly, Disabled, Disadvantaged of WNY, Inc.

Lisa Isaacs has practiced law since 1996. She dedicates her practice to special education and disability rights and family law. Prior to establishing her firm in 2011, she was the director of the Education Program in the Disability Rights Center at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest and Family Law and General Practice at Legal Services, New York City (Queens). A graduate of Brooklyn Law School, she holds degrees in English and American Literature from Bard College and Washington University. She maintains law offices in Yardley, Pennsylvania and New York City. She is licensed to practice law in New York and Pennsylvania and District Courts in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Circuits.

***Julie Michaels Keegan, Esq.***  
**Disability Rights New York**

Julie Michaels Keegan recently joined Disability Rights New York as a staff attorney focused on individual cases and systemic issues impacting persons with developmental disabilities. For ten years prior to joining DRNY, Julie practiced independently through the Law Office of Julie Michaels Keegan, a firm devoted exclusively to special education law and future care planning throughout upstate New York. Having negotiated the special education system for members of her own family, Julie is committed to the educational rights and lifelong needs of people with disabilities. Julie has provided hundreds of trainings on a wide variety of special education issues for parents, advocates, service providers, attorneys and school personnel.

Julie is a magna cum laude graduate of Albany Law School. She served as a Court Attorney for the Appellate Division – Third Department, staff attorney with the Law Revision Commission, and Legal Training Director of the NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence. She is a former Fellow of the Center for Women in Government and Civil Society and a graduate of the Capital Leadership program of the Capital Region Chamber of Commerce. She is an Executive Board member of the Special Education Task Force in Albany and former member of the NYS Bar Association’s Committee on Issues Affecting Persons with Disabilities, Governing Board of the Center for Disability Services, Executive Board of the Autism Connection of Greene County, and Aspire, and is an active volunteer in her church and community.



Bernard A. Krooks is a founding partner of the law firm Littman Krooks LLP and Chair of its Elder Law and Special Needs Department. Mr. Krooks is a nationally-recognized expert in all aspects of elder law and special needs planning.

Mr. Krooks is past President of the Special Needs Alliance, a national, invitation-only, not-for-profit organization dedicated to assisting families with special needs planning. Mr. Krooks is past President of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA), a Fellow of NAELA, past Chair of the NAELA Tax Section and past Editor-in-Chief of the NAELA News. In addition, he is certified as an Elder Law Attorney (CELA) by the National Elder Law Foundation and is an Accredited Estate Planner (AEP). He is a founding member and past President of the New York Chapter of NAELA. In 2008, he received the Chapter's Outstanding Achievement Award for his lifelong work on behalf of seniors and those with disabilities. In 2007, his firm received the NYSARC employer of the year award for employing people with disabilities. In 2011, his firm received the Family Friendly Employment Policy Award from the Westchester Women's Bar Association.

Mr. Krooks is past Chair of the Elder Law Section of the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) and past Editor-in-Chief of the Elder Law Attorney, the newsletter of the NYSBA Elder Law Section. He also is a member of the Trusts and Estates Law Section and Tax Section of the NYSBA. Mr. Krooks co-authors (1) a chapter in the NYSBA publication Guardianship Practice in New York State entitled "Creative Advocacy in Guardianship Settings: Medicaid and Estate Planning, Including Transfer of Assets, Supplemental Needs Trusts & Protection of Disabled Family Members."; and (2) the NYSBA publication Elder Law, Special Needs Planning and Will Drafting. He is chair of the elder law committee of the editorial advisory board of Trusts & Estates Magazine, and serves on the Editorial Boards of Exceptional Parent Magazine, and Leimberg Information Services.

Mr. Krooks, a sought-after expert on elder law, special needs planning and estate planning matters, has been quoted in The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Newsweek, Forbes, Investment News, Financial Times, Money Magazine, Smart Money, Worth Magazine, Kiplinger's, Bloomberg, Consumer Reports, Wealth Manager, CBS Marketwatch.com, Lawyer's Weekly USA, Reader's Digest, Bottom Line, The Journal of Financial Planning, The New York Law Journal, The Daily News, New York Post and Newsday, among others. He has testified before the United States House of Representatives and the New York City Council on long-term care issues. He also has appeared on Good Morning America Now, National Public Radio, Sirius XM Radio, CNN, PBS, NBC, and CBS evening news, as well as numerous cable television and radio shows.

Mr. Krooks is past President of the Estate Planning Council of Westchester, a member of the Advisory Board of the National Association of Estate Planning Councils (NAEPC), and a member of the New York City and Hudson Valley Estate Planning Councils. He also is a member of the Real Property, Probate & Trust Law Section and Tax Section of the American Bar Association; a member of the Bar of the Supreme Court of the United States, and a member of the American Institute of CPAs. Mr. Krooks also is a Fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC) and serves on its Elder Law Committee. He is an Adjunct Professor at NYU Center for Finance, Law & Taxation and is a member of the NYU Institute on Federal Taxation Advisory Board. At the 46th Annual Heckerling Institute on Estate Planning, Mr. Krooks presented a general session titled the Use of Irrevocable Income-Only Trusts in Elder Law Planning.

Mr. Krooks has served on the Board of Directors of the Alzheimer's Association Westchester/Putnam Chapter and the Bioethics Advisory Committee of New York Hospital. He is the President-elect of the board of directors of ARC of Westchester, a member of the Blythedale Children's Hospital Planned Giving Professional Advisory Board, a member of the Trusts & Estates Group of the Lawyer's Division of the UJA-Federation of New York, a member of the legal advisory committee of the Evelyn Frank Legal Resources Program of Selfhelp Community Services, Inc., and a board member of the Caregiver's Insights Foundation. He is listed in the Best Lawyers in America, New York Super Lawyers, Who's Who in America, the New York Area's Best Lawyers, New York Magazine and New York Times, and the Top 25 Westchester, New York Super Lawyers.

Mr. Krooks is married and has four children. He is an AYSO certified soccer coach and an NYSCA certified baseball coach.

Michele Kule-Korgood is managing attorney of Kule-Korgood, Roff and Associates, PLLC, a private practice with an office located in Forest Hills, New York. The practice focuses on representing parents of children with disabilities in obtaining appropriate special education services. Ms. Kule-Korgood has 20 years of experience in special education law, representing families who challenged school district recommendations in thousands of matters. Her experience as a former special education teacher gives her unique insight into the complex issues surrounding these issues. She is admitted in the U.S. Supreme Court, as well as the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, the Southern and Eastern District Courts of New York where she has argued and presented dispositive motions and matters of first impression. Ms. Kule-Korgood serves on the board of the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, and is a frequent speaker at conferences held by the Practicing Law Institute, Lehigh University Special Education Law Symposium, National Business Institute, Lorman, the New York Bar Association and the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates. She is a member of the New York State Bar Association's Committee on Issues Affecting People with Disabilities, as well as other special education related community organizations. She also lectures at various agencies which provide special education and/or advocacy services. Ms. Kule-Korgood earned her Juris Doctor Degree from Hofstra University School of Law and prior to that obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Special Education and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology from Boston University.

**Layna Maher** is an Advocacy Specialist at the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs. She is deeply committed to educating individuals with disabilities, as well as their family members and service providers about individual rights and responsibilities.

Prior to the NYS Justice Center, Layna worked for the Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities as a Director of New York's Protection and Advocacy for Developmental Disabilities program. Layna also managed three Special Education Advocacy training programs located throughout New York. She has provided training statewide on special education regulations, IEP development, transition services, advocacy skills and other topics related to education, disability and consensus building. She has trained advocacy groups, parents, education staff and other professionals, including Medicaid Service Coordinators through NYS.

Layna's past professional work also includes Family Support Services Coordinator and Home Service Director for the Center for Disability Services where she provided advocacy at CSE meetings, developing and implementing parent training programs, and working closely with a variety of community organizations. Prior to her work in community services, she spent several years teaching in integrated classroom settings.

Layna is a Board Member of the Special Education Taskforce, a member of the Systems Change and Community Education Committee for the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council and a member of the Statewide Consortium of the New York State Partnerships in Employment Systems Change project of National Significance.

Bob Mascali is an attorney with the Pierro Law Group in Latham, New York and concentrates in the areas of Special Needs Planning for persons with disabilities, Long-Term Care Planning, and Estate Planning. Before joining the Pierro Law Group in 2012, Mr. Mascali served as the Associate General Counsel at NYSARC, INC. and served as Counsel to NYSARC Trust Services. Prior to that position, Mr. Mascali was appointed and served as Deputy Counsel and Managing Attorney for the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (now the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities).

Mr. Mascali is a member of the New York State Bar Association and its Elder Law and Trusts and Estates sections. He serves on the Executive Committee and is Co-Chair of the Special Needs Planning Committee of the Elder Law Section. In 2013, Mr. Mascali was elected as the Third District Representative for the Elder Law Section to the NYSBA House of Delegates. He is a member of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA), a member of the Board of Directors of the New York Chapter and currently serves as Secretary. Prior to his governmental service, Mr. Mascali was a founding partner of Cohen, Jason and Mascali in Scarsdale, New York and was engaged for over 20 years in private practice in metropolitan New York concentrating on real property and estate and trust matters.

Mr. Mascali currently serves on the Board and Directors of Northern Rivers Family Services, Inc. which provides services and supports to vulnerable children and their families in upstate New York and is a member of the Executive Committee and chair of its Audit and Compliance Committee. He is a graduate of St. John's University (1973) and its law school (1976).

Mr. Mascali has lectured at a number of NYSBA and NAELA sessions dealing with planning issues for the elderly and for individuals with special needs and their families and care givers and has authored and co-authored a number of articles on these and related issues.



## **Maria C. McGinley | Mayerson & Associates**

Maria knew she would be entering the field of special education law during her tenure with theNYCDOE, as a special education classroom teacher assigned to a District 75 6:1:1 class of students diagnosed on the autism spectrum. Her experiences working within “the system” were quite literally the “fuel” behind her law school applications.

Maria is a graduate of New York Law School and is admitted to practice in New York and New Jersey. She is a member of the U.S. District Courts for the Southern District of New York and New Jersey and the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

Maria earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Politics from New York University and her Master’s Degree in Education from Fordham University. She is dually certified in New York State as a special education and general education teacher and was an ABA therapist servicing children and families in New York and New Jersey. Maria’s extensive special education experiences give her a unique and valuable perspective that benefits our families with students with autism.

Maria’s role at MAYERSON & ASSOCIATES includes litigating at the administrative and federal levels. Additionally, Maria has lectured and published on special education topics



Carol A. Melnick, Esq. | Jaspan Schlesinger, LLP.

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New York Office

T: 516.393.8276

F: 516.393.8282

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Carol A. Melnick

**Partner**

Carol A. Melnick is a partner in the Firm's Education and Municipal Law Practice Groups, where she handles a wide range of matters as general and labor counsel for public school districts, public libraries and other municipal entities. Ms. Melnick's general counsel background includes policy development, Freedom of Information Law and Open Meetings Law matters, election issues, fiscal management, administrative-level hearings regarding special education matters, student discipline, residency issues, and appeals to the Commissioner of Education and the State Review Officer. In addition, Ms. Melnick litigates special education matters in both State and Federal Courts. Her Labor Law experience includes collective bargaining, contract administration, grievance arbitration, administrative-level hearings regarding employee discipline, practice before the Public Employment Relations Board, practice before the State Division of Human Rights, and counseling on various employment-related matters under the New York State Labor Laws, Fair Labor Standards Act, Family Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Executive/Human Rights Laws and Title VII. Ms. Melnick frequently lectures on issues relating to special education.

Ms. Melnick received her Juris Doctor degree in 1993 from Brooklyn Law School. She is admitted to practice law in the courts of the State of New York and New Jersey and in the United States District Court for the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York and the District of New Jersey. Ms. Melnick is an active member of the Nassau and New York State Bar Associations, and their respective Education, Labor and Employment and Municipal Law Sections.

**EDUCATION**

B.A., University of Kentucky – 1985

J.D., Brooklyn Law School – 1993

**BAR ADMISSIONS**

New Jersey



**Howard M. Miller**  
Member (Partner)  
[hmill@bsk.com](mailto:hmill@bsk.com)

Garden City, NY  
(516) 267-6318  
(516) 267-6301 fax

#### Education

St. John's University School  
of Law (J.D., 1990)  
State University of New York  
at Albany (B.S., *cum laude*,  
1986)

#### Bar/Court Admissions

New York  
Connecticut  
U.S. Court of Appeals for the  
Second Circuit  
U.S. District Court for the  
Eastern District of New York  
U.S. District Court for the  
Northern District of New York  
U.S. District Court for the  
Southern District of New York

## Howard M. Miller

Howard M. Miller is a Labor and Employment Law attorney at Bond, Schoeneck & King whose practice includes most aspects of employment and education law and related litigation. Many of his cases have received media attention and have been reported in the New York Law Journal and Employment Law 360. Mr. Miller frequently lectures on topics such as Constitutional Law, non-compete and trade secret litigation, employment and Constitutional issues relating to social networking sites and various aspects of employment discrimination and education law.

#### Representative Matters

- *Spataro v. Glenwood Supply*, 479 Fed. Appx. 403 (2d Cir. 2012) (affirming grant of motion to dismiss age discrimination claims)
- *Carroll v. City Of Mount Vernon*, 2011 WL 6759597 (2d Cir. 2011) (argued and on the brief in case granting post-Ricci motion for summary judgment dismissing reverse race discrimination claim), affirming 707 F.Supp.2d 449 (S.D.N.Y. 2010) (analyzing post-Ricci disparate impact claims)
- *Mosby v. William Floyd School District*, 2010 WL 376842, 363 Fed. Appx. 788 (2d Cir. 2010) (argued and on the brief in case affirming grant of summary judgment in discrimination, hostile environment and retaliation case)
- *Hammond v. Keyspan*, 2009 WL 337727 (2d Cir. 2009) (on the brief in case affirming grant of summary judgment in disability discrimination case)
- *Capone v. Weeks*, 326 Fed. Appx. 46 (2d Cir. 2009) (argued and on the brief in case seeking recovery of defendant's attorney's fees in employment case) on remand 2010 WL 2771845 (E.D.N.Y. 2010) (granting fee shift against plaintiff's counsel)
- *Cotarelo v. Village of Sleepy Hollow Police Department*, 460 F.3d 247 (2d Cir. 2006) (on the brief in First Amendment retaliation case)
- *New York & Atlantic Railway Company v. Surface Transportation Board*, 635 F.3d 66 (2d Cir. 2011) (upholding right of Town to enforce local zoning ordinances on transloading facility)
- *Evans v. City of Mount Vernon*, 92 A.D.3d 829, 939 N.Y.S.2d 130 (2d Dep't 2012) (argued and on the brief in case dismissing negligent hiring and supervision claims)
- *William Floyd School District v. Wright*, 61 A.D. 3d 856, 877 N.Y.S.2d 395 (2d Dep't 2009) (argued and on the brief in novel application of "faithless servant doctrine")
- *Ciancuilli v. Bronxville Police Commissioners*, 57 A.D.3d 661, 868 N.Y.S.2d 548 (2d Dep't 2008) (argued and on the brief in case upholding termination of police officer)
- *Murray v. Downey*, 48 A.D.3d 817, 852 N.Y.S.2d 387 (2d Dep't 2008) (argued and on the brief in case requiring exhaustion of remedies under collective bargaining agreement prior to filing lawsuit)
- *Deem v. New York Retirement System*, 44 A.D.3d 1235, 843 N.Y.S.2d 869 (3rd Dep't 2007) (argued and on the brief in case rejecting challenge to employer's military leave policy)
- *Beale v. Mount Vernon Police Department*, 2012 WL 4473282 (S.D.N.Y. 2012) (dismissing sex-based hostile environment claims)
- *Guardino v. Village of Scarsdale Police Department*, 2011 WL 4000999 (S.D.N.Y. 2011) (granting motion to dismiss ADA claim)
- *Zucker v. Five Towns College*, 2010 WL 3310698 (E.D.N.Y. 2010) (granting motion to dismiss age discrimination claim)

- Burchette v. Abercrombie & Fitch Stores, Inc., 2010 WL 1948322 (S.D.N.Y. 2010) (dismissing claims alleging selective enforcement of “look policy”)
- Blanco v. Village of Scarsdale, 2009 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 42773 (S.D.N.Y. 2009) (granting motion to dismiss retaliation claims)
- Meyer v. William Floyd School District, 2009 WL 33227208 (E.D.N.Y. 2009) (successful motion to dismiss employment discrimination claims)
- Kempkes v. Marvin, 2008 WL 5330673 (S.D.N.Y. 2008) (successful motion to dismiss First Amendment retaliation claim)
- Sanzo v. Uniondale School District, 381 F.Supp.2d 113 (E.D.N.Y. 2005) (successful motion for summary judgment in disability discrimination claim)
- Kelly v. City of Mount Vernon, 344 F.Supp.2d 395 (S.D.N.Y. 2004) (successful motion to dismiss First Amendment and FLSA claims)
- Capone v. Patchogue-Medford Union Free Sch. Dist., 2006 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 96016 (E.D.N.Y. Sept. 15, 2006) (affording absolute immunity to school board members who terminated plaintiff upon recommendation of section 75 hearing officer).

### Honors and Affiliations

- Listed in:
  - The Best Lawyers in America® 2013, Education Law
  - New York Super Lawyers 2012®, Employment & Labor, Schools & Education, Civil Rights/First Amendment
- New York State Bar Association
- Nassau County Bar Association
- Member, Law Review
- St. Thomas More Scholar

### Representative Presentations

- “Sexual Harassment Involving Faculty Under Title IX,” Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center, 4/5/13
- “Americans with Disabilities Act,” Nassau and Suffolk Academies of Law, 12/3/12
- “Constitutional Issues Related to Supermajority Votes, School Funding and Unfunded Mandates,” Mid-Hudson School Study Council, 8/3/12
- “How Unfunded Mandates and the Tax Cap Jeopardize a Sound Basic Education,” Mid-Hudson School Study Council, 5/7/12
- “Current issues in Employee and Student Discipline,” Mid-Hudson School Study Council, 3/12/12)
- “Legal Update -- Legal Implications for Board Members Using Social Media Sites,” Orange County School Boards Association, 12/7/11
- “Hot Topics in Employment Discrimination Law,” Nassau and Suffolk Academies of Law, School Law Conference, 12/5/11
- “Legal Issues in Classroom Assignments and Activities,” New York State School Boards Association, 10/28/11
- “Recent Developments in the Electronic Workplace,” New York State Association of School Personnel Administrators, 10/19/11
- “Discipline for Off-Duty Conduct with an Emphasis on Social Media,” Mid-Hudson School Study Council, 8/5/11
- “Student Free Speech and Religious Opt-Out Issues in Classroom Assignments and Activities,” Nassau Association of District Curriculum Officials, 2/17/11
- “Discipline for Off-Duty Conduct with an Emphasis on Social Media,” New York State Bar Association Labor and Employment Law Committee Section Meeting, 1/28/11)
- “Executive Sessions & Emails: What’s Public and What’s Private,” Nassau and Suffolk Academies of Law, School Law Conference, 12/6/10
- “Protecting Public Funds,” New York State Association of School Business Officials, Fall 2010 School Treasurers Workshop - Panel Discussion, 10/27/10
- “The Electronic Workplace,” New York State School Boards Association, 10/23/10

- "Hypothetical School Law Case Studies," Panel discussion of First and Fourth Amendment Issues, Mid-Hudson School Study Council, 8/6/10
  - "Legal Issues Involving Discipline and Investigations in the Digital Age," Nassau Academy of Law, 11/19/09
  - "Technology in the Workplace and Courtroom," Suffolk Academy of Law, 11/6/09
  - "Student and Staff Discipline in the Digital Age," New York State School Boards Association, 10/16/09
  - "Legal Issues and Investigations Involving Student and Staff Discipline in the Digital Age," Mid-Hudson School Study Council, 3/12/09
  - "Navigating Federal Legal Issues in the Electronic Age and its Impact on Staff and Students," Nassau and Suffolk Academies of Law, School Law Conference, 12/8/08
  - "E-Discovery and Other Technology Related Conundrums," New York State Association of School Attorneys, 5/29/08
  - "Special Education -- A Practical Guide to Understanding Recent Developments in the Law and How to Best Protect a School District from Unnecessary Litigation," (Mid-Hudson School Study Council, 8/3/07)
  - "Constitutional Rights of Students," Mid-Hudson School Study Council, 3/29/07
  - "Workplace Violence Prevention," Long Island Association of School Personnel Administrators, 2007
  - "Responding to Various Forms of Harassment in the Workplace," Long Island Association of School Personnel Administrators, 11/30/06
  - "Confidentiality of Executive Sessions," New York State School Boards Association, 10/26/06
  - "Mock Oral Argument on Intelligent Design," Mid-Hudson School Study Council, 8/4/06
  - "Managing Labor and Employment Issues in the School Setting," National Business Institute, 4/27/06
  - "Evaluation, Documentation and Discipline within the Framework of the Taylor Law," Mid-Hudson School Study Council, 3/14/06
  - "Dealing with the Progressively Disabled Employee," Nassau and Suffolk Academies of Law, School Law Conference, 12/5/05
  - "Sex Discrimination Under Title IX," New York School Boards Association, 10/28/05
  - "Avoiding Legal Vulnerability in the Hiring Process," Long Island Association of School Personnel Administrators, 12/8/04
  - "Recent Cases Involving Student First Amendment Rights," Nassau Academy of Law, 12/6/04
  - "Discipline of Students for Off-Campus Activities," Lorman Educational Services, 11/5/04
  - "Avoiding Employment Discrimination Suits," Long Island Association of School Personnel Administrators, 12/10/03
  - "Access/Free Speech/ Exercise of Religion in the Public Schools," Nassau Academy of Law, 12/8/03
  - "Discipline of Students for Off-Campus Activities," Lorman Educational Services, 11/20/03
  - "Confidentiality, Compatibility and Conflicts of Interest in the Public Schools," New York State School Boards Association, 10/03
  - "NCLB and IDEA -- New Legal Issues and Challenges," New York State School Boards Association, 5/29/03
  - "Tenure, Seniority, Excessing, and Recall Rights," Long Island Association of School Personnel Administrators, 3/13/03
  - "New Directions: Religion and the Schools," New York State School Boards Association, 10/26/02
  - "Writing and Revising Student Handbooks and Other Related School Issues in New York," Lorman Educational Services, 2/26/02
  - "Sexual Harassment and Other Forms of Prohibited Harassment," Nassau Academy of Law, 12/3/01
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- "Disciplining Students with Disabilities," New York State School Boards Association, 6/1/00
- "Recent Developments in Restrictive Employment Covenants and Trade Secrets," Nassau County Bar Association, 12/14/99

#### **Upcoming Presentations**

- "What Every Board Member Should Know About Litigation," New York State School Boards Association (October, 2013)

#### **In-House and Firm Sponsored Presentations**

- Mr. Miller has presented on numerous topics involving students, such as: discipline; special education; teen pregnancy and suicide; child abuse; student free speech; peer-on-peer harassment; and legal issues involving MySpace, Facebook and Twitter.
  - Mr. Miller has also presented on numerous workplace issues such as: conducting workplace investigations; documenting performance; anti-harassment training; protecting trade secrets and enforcing non-compete agreements; and social networking.
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Tara Moffett, concentrates her practice in the area of education law with a focus on special education. She is experienced in the field of special education, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Her practice includes consultation, negotiation, mediation, litigation and appellate work in state administrative proceedings and federal court. She is a frequent presenter on special education law and current issues affecting students with disabilities. Ms. Moffett provides guidance and training to school districts on general education matters such as confidentiality of student records, residency issues, bullying and discipline. She also provides training and guidance on issues related to school district board policies, employment policies, investigation of discrimination and sexual harassment and related concerns.

Ms. Moffett is admitted to practice before the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York and in the State of New York.

Ms. Moffett is a *cum laude* graduate of the State University of New York at Albany and a graduate of Albany Law School of Union University. In law school, she completed a concentration in international law and received the Disabilities Law Clinic Prize.

Ms. Moffett is also an adjunct professor with Empire State College teaching Business Law and Employment Law. She serves as a member of the Colonie Youth Center board and a member of the Community Hospice Walk Board. Ms. Moffett participates annually in fundraising for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and the Community Hospice. Ms. Moffett is a member of the Albany-Colonie Chamber of Commerce Capital Leadership Alumni Association and a graduate of its Leadership Program.

## Jennifer J. Monthie

Jennifer Monthie is the Statewide Director of the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (PADD) program at Disability Rights New York. Prior to her appointment to Director, Jennifer served as staff attorney and senior staff attorney of the PADD program at Disability Advocates, Inc. Jennifer practices in the areas of education, community integration, and civil rights of individuals with developmental disabilities. She is a founding member and co-chair of the Special Education Task Force which educates parents and advocates on Special Education. Jennifer is a frequent lecturer to attorneys and other professionals on issues affecting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Jennifer received a J.D., cum laude, from Albany Law School.



Gayle T. Murphy, Esq. is an attorney who has a private law practice focusing on children's rights and the rights of individuals with disabilities for over twenty years. She continues to be a frequent lecturer and trainer on education and disability law issues for parents, educators, attorneys and other professionals. Ms. Murphy received a B.S. Ed. degree summa cum laude, majoring in exceptional education and mental retardation, and an MS. Ed. degree in exceptional education and learning and behavioral disorders from Buffalo State College. She received her J.D. degree from the University at Buffalo. She is a former clinical legal education instructor at the University at Buffalo, an instructor in the exceptional education department at Buffalo State College, and a former special education teacher. She also practiced law at Legal Services for the Elderly, Neighborhood Legal Services and a private law firm in Buffalo, NY. Ms. Murphy is a certified teacher of special education and serves as an impartial hearing officer for the NYS Education Department. Since 2004, Ms. Murphy has served as a court appointed Attorney for the Child in custody and access matters in Family and Supreme Courts. She is a Court appointed attorney and court evaluator in Article 81 guardianship proceedings. Ms. Murphy is a member of the New York State Bar Association, the Erie County Bar Association, and the Western New York Chapter of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York. She serves on the board of Legal Services for the Elderly, Disabled, Disadvantaged of WNY, Inc.



Karen Norlander, has served special counsel to Girvin & Ferlazzo, P.C. since 1999, representing individual school districts in special education matters and supports the firm's special education law practice through the development of training programs and preventive law initiatives. She also is counsel to the statewide Council of New York Special Education Administrators (CNYSEA) and legal advisor to the National Publishing Resources, for which she developed the first in a series of DVDs on Response to Intervention (RTI) and laminates on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Ms. Norlander began her legal career in Westchester County, where she served as general counsel to Student Advocacy, Inc., and represented families and children in family court matters. In 1989, Ms. Norlander moved with her family to Albany, NY to join the Office of Counsel as a managing attorney in elementary, middle and secondary education at the New York State Education Department. In 1995, she became general counsel to Statewide Youth Advocacy, Inc., where she wrote and lectured extensively on children's rights issues and resumed an active practice in the family courts.

Ms. Norlander has successfully represented school district in hearing, appeals, and litigation in cases involving children with disabilities and civil rights. Most recently, as a consultant to Southern Westchester BOCES, Ms. Norlander developed and delivered professional development training for administrators and professional staff responsible concerning the implementation of the Dignity of All Students Act. She has also taught graduate level courses at the College of St. Rose and the State University of New York at Albany, and has taught an undergraduate course at Russell Sage College. Ms. Norlander is a frequent presenter and faculty member at statewide conferences on matters involving students and educational entitlements.

**Julie P. Passman, Attorney at Law**  
**Special Education Advocacy**  
**2900 Westchester Avenue, Suite 100**  
**Purchase, NY 10577**  
**914.253.8804 (p)**  
**914.694.2244 (f)**  
**passmanspecial@aol.com**

Julie P. Passman, Attorney at Law, has a private practice devoted to special education advocacy. Building on a passion developed in law school, Ms. Passman is committed to ensuring that children with special needs receive a free appropriate public education. Ms. Passman provides legal counsel to parents of children with special needs, representing clients at special education meetings (CPSE, CSE, and §504), resolution sessions, disciplinary proceedings, due process hearings, and settlement negotiations. She is a member of the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA). Julie is a New York State certified special education mediator and an impartial hearing officer for special education matters in New York State.

Ms. Passman graduated from Cardozo School of Law of Yeshiva University in 1990 and was a member of the Cardozo Law Review. She is the author of “Retroactive Reimbursement: The Standard of Review for a Parent’s Unilateral Placement Under the Education For All Handicapped Children Act”. Ms. Passman is admitted to practice law in New York and Connecticut.

Ms. Passman began her law career as a member of the Litigation Department at Weil, Gotshal and Manges. In addition to her current legal practice representing clients in special education matters, Ms. Passman lectures to parent groups (including special education PTAs, preschool parent groups, and private school parent groups), professional groups and practices (including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, behavioral therapists, and mental health professionals) and at Continuing Legal Education programs focusing on special education issues.

Ms. Passman is a Local Director of the Westchester Women’s Bar Association (WWBA). As co-chair of the Education Committee of the WWBA, Ms. Passman has developed an active committee, regularly hosting roundtable discussions on current issues in Education Law.

Lillian Abbott Pfohl is a law clerk for the Hon. Rosemary S. Pooler of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. Prior to joining Judge Pooler's chambers, Pfohl worked as an associate at Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC. Pfohl is a graduate of Syracuse University (B.S.) and Syracuse University College of Law (J.D., summa cum laude, 1999).



Tara Anne Pleat practices in the areas of special needs estate planning and administration, traditional estate planning and administration, long-term care planning, and elder law.

Tara is admitted to practice in New York, Florida, and Massachusetts as well as the United States Tax Court and the U.S. Federal District Court in the Northern District of New York. She graduated cum laude from Albany Law School and earned her undergraduate degree from the State University of New York at Albany. Special Needs Attorney in Clifton Park, Albany

After undergraduate school, Tara began working as an estate planning paralegal in Albany. She quickly realized that she enjoyed the connection with families that position provided her and wanted to develop further those skill sets. She graduated from Albany Law School in 2002 with honors in the estate planning concentration and was fortunate to begin her legal career already with six years of meaningful hands-on experience behind her.

“I began working with Ed in 2004, which offered me an introduction to special needs law. However, my passion for this area of the law was solidified when my son was diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome (an autism spectrum disorder) several years ago.”

I feel very fortunate to have a practice that allows me to be a better mother to and advocate for my son. While no two family’s experiences will be identical, there are shared concerns. Understanding those concerns as a mother makes me a better lawyer.”

Dedicated to serving her community and helping others to navigate the complex world of special needs law, her many local, statewide, and national affiliations include co-vice chair of the Special Needs Planning Committee of the Elder Law Section of the New York State Bar Association; member of the Special Needs Alliance, an invitation-only, national network of leading attorneys dedicated to the practice of disability and public benefits law; and vice president of the Estate Planning Council of Eastern New York.

Tara Anne Pleat Special Needs Attorneys She is secretary for Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Services of Saratoga County; board member of the Children’s Museum at Saratoga; a graduate of the 2006 class of Leadership Saratoga, sponsored by the Saratoga Springs Chamber of Commerce; and is a member of the Leadership Saratoga Advisory Board. She is a writer and presenter on numerous topics in her field and is “AV” rated by Martindale-Hubbell—the highest rating for expertise and ethics given by the independent rating service of the legal profession.

You may see her around town taking a local Pilates class with friends or running a 5K with her husband Andy. Tara and her family roam the Adirondacks every chance they get. They hike and ski and are hoping to have two “46ers” before her son and daughter graduate from high school. (For those unfamiliar, those are some pretty hard hikes up our highest mountains!)

“About three years ago a friend gave me a book that she authored about the history of the women’s movement in Saratoga, Warren, and Washington counties. Her insignia to me read: ‘Remember, you’re a mother, a daughter, a wife, a sister, and a friend—and at the end of the day what we all really have and can rely on are our family, our friends, and our faith.’

That has stayed with me and in someone else's words, sums up entirely what's most important to me."



**Kenneth S. Ritzenberg | Young, Sommer, LLC.**

Kenneth S. Ritzenberg maintains an extensive education law practice. His primary focus is special education, and he has represented over 20 school districts and hundreds of families in administrative proceedings and in federal court throughout New York State. He is the founder of the Capital District Special Education Breakfast Group.

In addition to his education practice, Ken has represented clients in almost every aspect of private and public sector labor and employment law for over 20 years.

He graduated cum laude from Syracuse University College of Law following a 10-year college teaching career.

#### **BAR ADMISSIONS**

New York, 1985

Ohio, 1985

U.S. Court of Appeals 3rd Circuit, 1986

U.S. Court of Appeals 6th Circuit, 1986

U.S. District Court Northern District of Ohio, 1986

U.S. District Court Northern District of New York, 1992

U.S. District Court Eastern District of New York, 1992

U.S. District Court Southern District of New York, 1992

U.S. District Court Western District of New York, 1992

U.S. Court of Appeals 2nd Circuit, 2002

#### **EDUCATION**

Syracuse University College of Law, Syracuse, New York, 1984

J.D., Doctor of Jurisprudence

Honors: Cum Laude

Honors: Justinian Society

Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, 1976

M.A., Master of Arts

Major: Sociology

Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, 1968

B.A., Bachelor of Arts

Major: Political Science

#### **HONORS AND AWARDS**

NYCLU's 1st Annual Roland Smith Award for Outstanding Contributions to Civil Liberties in the Cap District Region

Named as top Schools and Education lawyer in New York Super Lawyers – Upstate Edition for 2009

#### **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS**

Congregation Shaara Tfilla, 1999 – 2003, President

Beth Joseph Historical Preservation Society, Incorporated, 1990 – Present, President

Beth Joseph Synagogue, 1990 – Present, President, Board of Directors

Living Resources Inc., 1998 – Present, Board of Directors

## Joan Lensky Robert | Kassoff, Robert & Lerner, LLP



A tireless advocate for clients challenged by age and disability-related issues, Ms. Robert offers skilled, compassionate representation to those dealing with elder care matters.

Recognized throughout the legal and judicial arena for her depth of knowledge and experience, Ms. Robert understands the small, complicated details of elder law that make a big difference in the lives of the elderly and the disabled. Providing thoughtful, knowledgeable counsel, Ms. Robert practices in the following areas:

Elder law  
Disability law

**Admitted:**  
New York, 1991

**Education:**  
J.D., Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center  
Summa cum laude, Deans Fellowship, valedictorian of the part-time division  
B.A., Skidmore College  
Periclean, Skidmore College Honor Society, member  
Ford Foundation scholarship

**Professional Associations:**  
New York State Bar Association Elder Law Section, chair, 2003-2004  
New York State Bar Association Special Needs Planning Committee, co-chair, 2006-2009  
New York State Bar Association Elder Law Section, current co-chair  
Nassau County Bar Association, past director  
Nassau County Bar Association Elder Law/Social Services/Health Advocacy Committee, past chair  
Nassau Academy of Law, past dean  
New York Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA), past president  
NAELA, co-chair of the Special Needs Planning Summit  
Guardianship Advisory Committee formed by the Office of Court Administration, attorney member  
New York State Trial Lawyers Association, the Bill of Particulars, board of editors  
New York Elder Law and Guardianship Newsletter, past editor-in-chief

**Honors:**  
Long Island Alzheimer's Foundation, Project Real, Outstanding Service honor  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Outstanding Service honor  
NAELA, 2012 recipient of the Theresa Award  
NAELA, 2012 Outstanding Member of the New York Chapter  
New York State Trial Lawyers Association, honored as outstanding downstate speaker

**Articles:**  
Guardianship Practice in New York State, Special Needs Planning chapter, co-author  
Ongoing contributor to community and professional groups on matters of elder and disability law

**Seminars:**  
New York State Bar Association, Elder Law Supplemental Needs Trusts and asset preservation programs, faculty member  
Certification programs, Supplemental Needs Trust Trustees and Court Evaluators, instructor





Stephanie M. Roebuck | Keane & Beane, PC  
Principal Member

#### Professional Experience

Together with other members and associates in the firm, Stephanie M. Roebuck represents numerous public school districts as General Counsel, Labor Counsel and Special Education Counsel in Westchester, Putnam, Rockland and Nassau Counties, NY. She regularly handles school litigation matters in both state and federal courts, appeals to the Commissioner of Education, impartial special education hearings under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Education Law, employee disciplinary proceedings pursuant to the Education Law and Civil Service Law and discrimination and/or retaliation claims before the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and State Division of Human Rights. She also represents school districts and other municipalities with regard to labor relations from negotiation of labor contracts for all types of bargaining units to improper practice proceedings and arbitrations. Ms. Roebuck joined Keane & Beane in 1998 from a law firm in Rochester, NY.

#### Admissions

State and Federal Courts of New York

State Courts of Massachusetts

#### Professional Associations

Management Advocates for School Labor Affairs

National School Boards Association Council of School Attorneys

New York State Bar Association (Member of Executive Committee of Labor and Employment Law Section; Co-Chair of Continuing Legal Education Committee of Labor and Employment Law Section; Past Co-Chair of Public Sector Labor Law Committee of the Labor and Employment Law Section; Member, Municipal Law Section)

New York State Association of School Attorneys

Westchester Women's Bar Association (Past Co-Chair of the Labor and Employment Committee, Co-Chair of Outreach Committee)

Woman's Bar Association of the State of New York (Past Co-Chair of the Education Committee)

#### Professional Activities/Publications

Ms. Roebuck is an Adjunct Professor at Manhattanville College teaching a graduate level course on school law. She was previously an Adjunct Professor at Fordham University and at the College of New Rochelle. She has been a frequent lecturer at various conferences and seminars on labor and employment law and education law issues, including "Legal Ethics: Social Networking, Blogging and More" (New York State Bar Association, 2010); "Back to School: Bullying and Cyber-Bullying Legal Primer 101" (Westchester Women's Bar Association, 2010) and "Teacher Layoffs – Don't Get Lost in the Legal Maze" (New York State School Boards Association, 2010).

#### Community Service

Ms. Roebuck is a former Member of the Board of Directors of Junior Achievement of the Hudson Valley and was its Corporate Secretary from 2003 to 2007.

#### Education

1996, M.I.L.R., Cornell University School of Industrial Labor Relations

1992, J.D., Fordham University School of Law

1989, B.A., cum laude, University of Massachusetts

***Neal Howard Rosenberg / Law Offices of Neal H. Rosenberg***

Neal Howard Rosenberg has been representing parents of students with disabilities for more than thirty-five years. Mr. Rosenberg completed his Bachelor of Arts from City College of New York and was awarded an honors degree. Mr. Rosenberg then continued his education at Rutgers Law School.

After law school, Mr. Rosenberg received his Master of Science degree and a professional diploma in educational administration and supervision from Pace University. He achieved an honors degree while at Pace University.

Mr. Rosenberg's professional experience includes being a teacher and intern in administration in the New York City public schools. Mr. Rosenberg is also a certified school principal. Prior to opening the Law Offices of Neal Howard Rosenberg, Mr. Rosenberg worked as a Board of Education Attorney for the City of New York in the Office of Counsel to the Chancellor.

After leaving the Board of Education, Mr. Rosenberg worked for the State Education Department of the State of New York. While at the State Education Department, Mr. Rosenberg was involved in the codification of the laws and regulations for students with disabilities, in addition to developing program standards for students with disabilities. Upon completion of the codification of the laws and regulations project, Mr. Rosenberg opened his own private law practice and has been advocating on behalf of students with disabilities for more than thirty-five years. He is admitted to the New York State Bar and the Southern and Eastern District Federal Courts of New York.

## **Brad H. Rosken, Esq. | Law Offices of Brad H. Rosken**

I have been a trial attorney for the past thirteen years. I began my career as an Assistant District Attorney, in the Bronx County District's Attorney's Office. My last year in the office, I was assigned to the Felony Narcotics Bureau where I prosecuted and tried felony cases dealing with the sale and possession of narcotics. I left the District Attorney's Office to pursue a career as a plaintiff's personal injury attorney advocating for the rights of those who had been injured by the negligence of others. I have experience analyzing the reports of psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and other doctors and professionals that I have cross-examined over the years at trial. While it is possible and preferable that a dispute over a child's educational needs be settled prior to going to a hearing, it is vital to build a solid case and have an attorney at your side who is able to offer you the right advice and who is not afraid to fight for what your child needs. I understand your frustrations because I have been where you are. I am not only an attorney advocating for children with special needs but I am also a parent of child with special needs. I will advocate for the full amount of services required for your child so that they can reach their fullest educational potential.

Several years ago my twins were born three (3) months premature. After 3 months of visiting our children in the hospital NICU, my son, Sam, was diagnosed with Periventricular Leukomalacia (PVL). When he was two (2) he was officially diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. When my wife and I were faced with Sam's first Committee on Special Education meeting (CSE) we had no idea what to expect or how far we could push the school district. That is when I began to study the specific laws applicable to our situation so that I could become the best advocate for Sam. During that first CSE meeting I realized how much the system was slanted in favor of the school district. My wife and I were shocked to discover that all of the important decisions concerning Sam, were being made by a room full of people who had never met him. Listening to some of the explanations as to why he shouldn't receive certain services made me cringe at how ridiculous they were; they needed to be challenged. Thankfully, I had my trial experience to fall back on and I began to cross examine the school district's psychologist (Ph. D). It was effective and Sam received the additional services he needed. Sam was placed in a blended general education class. We were fortunate that our district provided him with an effective Individualized Education Plan (IEP). After that initial CSE meeting, I committed myself to learning everything I could about the area of School/Special Education Law.

As a parent, I believe that the school district could always provide more, but as an attorney, knowing what the law deems appropriate is the key to winning these negotiations with your district. I will always remain current and conversant in this area of law since my son has several years left in the public education system. As stated earlier it is preferable that any dispute over a child's educational needs be settled amicably with the school district, prior to the need to attend a hearing before an Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO), and it is crucial to build a solid case in order to maximize your chances of success at such hearing. Therefore, it is necessary to have an attorney on your side who is able to offer you the right advice and who is not afraid to fight for what your child needs. It is my responsibility as your counselor-at-law to determine who your child is, what their needs are, and what your goals are for them. I understand your frustrations because I have been where you are. I will advocate for the full amount of services necessary for your child so that they can reach their fullest educational potential. I will also teach you how to become the most effective advocate you can be for your child.

**Randi M. Rothberg | Thivierge & Rothberg, P.C.**

Email Randi M. Rothberg (NY) [Randi@trspecialedlaw.com](mailto:Randi@trspecialedlaw.com)

Randi Rothberg is a co-founding partner and principal in the law firm of Thivierge & Rothberg, P.C. Randi previously served as the Associate attorney at a prominent New York law firm that concentrates on special education cases, as well as an Associate attorney at a general practice/defense litigation firm. Randi received her law degree from the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University, and her Bachelors degree, cum laude, from the University of Pennsylvania. During law school, Randi was a published member of the CARDOZO WOMEN'S LAW JOURNAL Executive Board ("Not As Simple As Learning the ABC's: A Comment on Owasso Independent School District No. I-011 v. Falvo and the State of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act," 9 CARDOZO WOMEN'S LAW JOURNAL 27 (2002)).

A recipient of the David Berg and Charles H. Revson Fellowships, Randi previously interned at the renowned Innocence Project and a small private law firm (where she concentrated on civil rights litigation). She also participated in the Cardozo Advocates for Battered Women's "uncontested divorce" program, through which she assisted an attorney at Sanctuary for Families. Also during law school, Randi was competitively selected for the Brechner Fellowship, through which she worked at the Anti-Defamation League.

## **MELINDA R. SARAN, ESQ.**

Melinda R. Saran is Vice Dean for Student Affairs at the SUNY Buffalo Law School. She is also member of the teaching faculty, teaching Legal Profession and Ethics, the Law and Social Work Clinic and Colloquium. In the past she has also taught Special Education Law and Practice, and a three part course on the Americans with Disabilities Act. Prior to her current position, Ms. Saran was the supervising attorney of the Education Law Clinic at the Law School. She frequently lectures for on special education and disability law, including ethical implications for clients with disabilities. Ms. Saran received her Juris Doctor degree from the SUNY Buffalo Law School and also earned a Master in Public Health degree from the University of Rochester. She began her law career with Neighborhood Legal Service in the Disability Rights Unit. She is active in many membership organizations, including the NYSBA Committee on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar and Committee on Issues Affecting People with Disabilities, of which she is a past chair. In addition, she is a member of the Bar Association of Erie County, and Women's Bar Association of the State of New York (WBASNY), where she is co-chair of the Amicus Curiae Committee and past president of the Western New York Chapter. Ms. Saran also serves on the boards of the Western New York Law Center, Inc. and the Bar Association of Erie County's Volunteer Lawyer's Project.

**Name:** Thomas Scapoli

**Education:** Fordham University, B.A., 1990

Qunnipiac University, J.D., 1995

**Email:** [tscapoli@ingermansmith.com](mailto:tscapoli@ingermansmith.com)

**Phone:** 914 777 1134

Mr. Scapoli joined Ingerman Smith, L.L.P. in November 2010. He has served as general counsel to public, private and charter school clients since 1996. Mr. Scapoli represents clients at labor arbitrations, student disciplinary proceedings, appeals to the Commissioner of Education, special education hearings, Section 75 proceedings and tax certiorari appeals. He also counsels clients on issues pertaining to public finance, construction and commercial agreements. In 2006, Mr. Scapoli assisted in the matter of Arlington Central School District v. Murphy, 547 U.S. 291 (2006) in which the United States Supreme Court held that school districts are not required to pay for parents' expert fees in special education proceedings. Mr. Scapoli represents clients in proceedings before Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, New York State Division of Human Rights, Public Employment Relations Board, and the state and federal courts of New York and New Jersey. He has served as a speaker for the New York State School Boards Association on school construction matters and he presents to school district clients on a variety of school related legal issues.

Mr. Scapoli is admitted to practice law in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. He is also admitted to practice in the United States Supreme Court and the United States District Courts for the Northern, Southern and Eastern Districts of New York as well as the District Court for the State of New Jersey. Mr. Scapoli is a member of the New York State Bar Association and the Westchester County Bar Association.

**Jeffrey J. Schiro** is a New York State certified Impartial Hearing Officer with extensive experience in special education and student discipline matters. Prior to his certification, Mr. Schiro practiced in the field of education law for thirteen years where he regularly represented school districts at special education impartial hearings and appeals and before the Commissioner of Education. Mr. Schiro has also appeared before the Second Circuit and in the Southern District on claims alleging Section 1983, IDEA, Section 504 and ADA violations.

Mr. Schiro has lectured extensively throughout the state on legal issues affecting public education. He has spoken on the topics of emerging issues in special education and student discipline at seminars sponsored by the Practising Law Institute and the New York State Bar Association.

Mr. Schiro is admitted to practice in the courts of the State of New York, the United States District Courts for the Southern, Eastern and Northern Districts of New York, the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and the Supreme Court of the United States.

Mr. Schiro is a *cum laude* graduate of Albany Law School of Union University and a *magna cum laude* graduate of Hamilton College.

## Tracey Spencer Walsh | Mayerson & Associates

Tracey, a partner at MAYERSON & ASSOCIATES is a graduate of Fordham University School of Law and is admitted to practice in New York and Connecticut and the U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Tracey litigates at the administrative and federal levels. Tracey is also an Adjunct Law Professor at Fordham University School of Law, teaching a skills based course in Special Education Advocacy. Tracey speaks at national and local conferences on legal issues related to students with autism and other developmental disabilities, and is a regular speaker at schools educating children with autism. Tracey was a featured speaker at the 15th Annual National COPAA conference in Albuquerque, NM on March 8, 2013 training attorneys in cross examining expert witnesses. She was also a featured speaker at the 14th Annual National COPAA conference in Miami, FL on March 10, 2012 and was a featured speaker at the 13th Annual National COPAA conference in San Antonio, TX in March 2011. Tracey educates other attorneys in the field of Special Education law and co-chaired the New York State Bar Association's Continuing Legal Education Seminar on Special Education in October, 2011. Tracey also lectured at Fordham University School of Law's Family Advocacy Clinic and was a featured speaker at The National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA) Substantive Law and Litigation and Advocacy Directors Conference, in Chicago, IL, in July 2010 and at the Oklahoma Statewide Autism Conference in Norman, OK in November 2009.

You can read Tracey's published articles on "Parent Counseling and Training," Summer 2010, "Parents: Give the IEP Team Quality Evaluations with Recommendations," Winter 2011, and "Compensatory Education is an Important Remedy to Consider," Spring 2011 in the nationally syndicated Autism Spectrum News, Summer 2010, found at [www.mhnews-autism.org](http://www.mhnews-autism.org). Tracey's more recent articles can be found in [NYSBA Elder and Special Needs Law Journal](#), "Bullying and a Discussion of *T.K. and S.K., Individually and on Behalf of L.K. v. New York City Department of Education*," Spring 2012, Vol. 22, No. 2; [News from the Hill](#) (Eagle Hill School, Greenwich, CT), "Why an IEP?," Fall 2012; and [Independent School Magazine](#), "Meeting Their Needs - Helping Parents Secure Tuition and Related Services for Students with Special Education Needs," Fall, 2012.

Prior to working at MAYERSON & ASSOCIATES, Tracey was the Dean of Students for a private school in Rye, NY, where she had the opportunity to advocate for students with learning differences. Tracey also worked in the litigation departments of Mendes & Mount, Griffin, Coogan & Veneruso, and Alimonti Law Offices.



## Jeffrey J. Weiss

### Legal Practice

Mr. Weiss is a member of the firm. He practices with the Educational Institutions Industry Team and Labor and Employment Law Practice Group. He focuses primarily on special education law. Mr. Weiss represents school districts in impartial due process hearings, appeals to the Office of State Review, and federal and state court actions. He also counsels school districts on their duties and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). In addition, he represents employers in administrative and court proceedings. Following law school, Mr. Weiss served for three years as an assistant corporation counsel in the New York City Law Department, General Litigation Division, where he represented the City of New York and municipal agencies, including the New York City Board of Education. Mr. Weiss is frequently invited to present at school districts and BOCES centers throughout western and southern New York on topics in special education law, including the IDEA, Section 504, and the development of appropriate individualized education plans. He has also lectured at the University at Buffalo, Niagara University, and D'Youville College and at programs presented by the New York State School Boards Association, Western New York Education Services Council, New York State Bar Association, and Erie County Association of School Boards.

### Professional & Community Activities

Mr. Weiss is a member of the New York State and Erie County Bar Associations. He is a former member of the Amherst Youth Board and of the Ronald McDonald House of Buffalo Board of Directors. He served as a managing editor and associate member of the Buffalo Law Review. He was named among Buffalo's Who's Who in Law by Buffalo Business First and Buffalo Law Journal in 2012.

### Recognition

Named among Buffalo's Who's Who in Law by Buffalo Business First and Buffalo Law Journal in 2012.



[jweiss@harrisbeach.com](mailto:jweiss@harrisbeach.com)

Buffalo Office  
Larkin at Exchange  
726 Exchange Street, Suite 1000  
Buffalo, NY 14210  
phone: (716) 200-5141  
fax: (716) 200-5204

Areas of Experience  
Educational Institutions  
Labor and Employment Law

Education  
JD, 1996, cum laude, State University of  
New York at Buffalo School of Law  
BA, 1993, Binghamton University

Bar Admissions  
New York State Bar  
United States District Court  
· Western District of New York  
· Eastern District of New York  
· Southern District of New York  
· Northern District of New York  
United States Court of Appeals  
· Second Circuit

<http://www.harrisbeach.com/people/jeffrey-weiss>

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**Jay Worona, Esq.**, is general counsel for the New York State School Boards Association. He has served in this capacity since 1990. Mr. Worona is responsible for representing the New York State School Boards Association and its membership of approximately 750 school districts in both direct and amicus-curiae (friend-of-the Court) litigation on wide-ranging legal topics such as tenure and seniority rights of school employees, special education, the constitutional separation of church and state as it applies to the operation of public schools and the legal authority of school boards. Mr. Worona served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Council of School Attorneys (COSA) in 2007. This organization represents the interests of school lawyers throughout the nation. He also serves as an adjunct professor at the School of Educational Administration and Policy Studies at the State University of New York at Albany as well as the College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York. Mr. Worona successfully argued and won a case before the United States Supreme Court involving the separation of church and state entitled, *Board of Education of the Kiryas Joel Union Free School District v. Grumet*.

## **George Zelma, Attorney | The Law Offices of George Zelma & David Berlin**

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George Zelma is a graduate of New York University and received his J.D. from Boston University Law School. He began his career as an Assistant District Attorney. While maintaining his practice in commercial civil litigation, George has focused for the last 15 years on special education law, representing families of children with special needs at impartial hearings, suspension hearings and manifestation reviews. George has participated in seminars designed to train lawyers, parents and professionals involved in special education, and has also helped train and educate psychologists and physicians about their role in IDEA Hearings.

In other areas of law, George's cases have included clients who have suffered cognitive deficits as a result of head trauma, exposure to toxic chemicals, and medical malpractice.

George is a member of the Bar of New York, Arizona, California and Washington, D.C. and a member of the New York City Bar Education Law Association and the Council of Parents Advocates and Attorneys (COPAA).

Contact George Zelma at: [zelma@specialedlawfirm.com](mailto:zelma@specialedlawfirm.com)