

# **Speaker Biographies**



# **MARISA CABRERA, ESQ.**

## Biography

Marisa Cabrera is a criminal defense attorney working as Appellate Counsel at the Center for Appellate Litigation. CAL is a not-for-profit law firm located in lower Manhattan, handling appeals and post-conviction proceedings on behalf of indigent criminal defendants in cases assigned by the Appellate Division, First Department.

Marisa graduated with a B.A. in psychology in 2007 from Williams College in Williamstown, MA. In 2011, Marisa graduated cum laude from American University Washington College of Law in Washington, D.C. where she worked as a teaching assistant for a first-year legal writing course.

Prior to working at CAL, Marisa worked as a law clerk for the Law Offices of Gary M. Gilbert & Associates, a plaintiff-side employment discrimination law firm, and as a judicial intern for Hon. Ariel Belen at the Appellate Division, Second Department.

Additionally, while in law school, Marisa worked as a student attorney at the DC Law Students in Court civil litigation clinical program where she represented low-income tenants in DC landlord-tenant and small claims courts.



# **NOREEN DEWIRE GRIMMICK, ESQ.**

## Biography

### Areas of Practice

Employment Litigation

Labor & Employment

Torts, Insurance & Products Liability

### Admissions

New York

Massachusetts

U.S. District Courts for the Northern, Southern, and Eastern Districts of New York

U.S. Supreme Court

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit

### Education

A.A.S., Maria College

B.A., magna cum laude, Siena College

M.B.A., Graduate College of Union University

J.D., Albany Law School of Union University

Noreen has a varied background that includes academic preparation and hands-on experience in the fields of health care and business. As a seasoned litigator with more than 20 years of experience in state and federal courts, she has defended a diverse array of clients in complex cases that cover the gamut from medical malpractice to products liability and employment discrimination cases. In addition to the depth of litigation experience that Noreen brings to her practice, she has also counseled many clients on topics such as compliance with employment laws and rules, and licensure issues for health care providers and professional practices. Noreen has given presentations on current topics in employment law, discovery in litigation, and interpretation of medical records. Prior to entering legal practice, Noreen practiced as a registered professional nurse at health care facilities in the Capital District of New York State. She is a registered professional nurse licensed in New York State.

### Honors

- Listed, Upstate New York Super Lawyers, 2007-10
- Martindale-Hubbell AV Rating
- Certified senior professional in human resources (HR), as accredited by the HR Certification Institute

## News

Lawyers React to High Court Ruling on Retaliation Suits Law360, June 24, 2013

Hodgson Russ Opens Law Office in Saratoga Springs, NY May 16, 2013

Hodgson Russ Announces New Partners February 10, 2005

## Presentations

-The Modern American Workplace: An Update on Employment Discrimination in New York State, St. Petersburg, Florida, June 3, 2016

-An Employment Law Update for New York Employers: What You Don't Know Can Hurt You! New Paltz, NY, October 8, 2015

-21st National Conference on Employment Practices Liability Insurance: Avoiding and Defending Retaliation Claims, Chicago, IL, June 23, 2014

-19th Annual Labor & Employment Conference Hodgson Russ, Amherst, NY, November 7, 2013

-8th Annual National Employment Practices Liability Insurance ExecuSummit Uncasville, CT, October 1, 2013

-2012 New York State Society for Human Resource Management State Conference Saratoga Springs, NY, July 19, 2012

-Ultimate Software's Interactive Human Resources Workshop, September 24, 2009

## Publications

-*Domestic Violence: Some Considerations for the Workplace Capital District Women's Bar Newsletter*, February 25, 2015

-Business Report: Employment and Medical Marijuana, *Saratoga Business Journal*, February 5, 2015

-What Every Employer Needs to Know About the New Compassionate Care Act (AKA the 'Medical Marijuana Law'), *Employers' Advisor Blog Archives*, February 4, 2015

-President Seeks Expansion of Overtime Requirements, *Employers' Advisor Blog Archives*, March 24, 2014

-Independent Contractor Relationships, *Saratoga Business Journal*, February 6, 2014

-U.S. Supreme Court Reins in Retaliation Claims Under Title VII, *Employment Litigation Alert*, June 27, 2013

-Second Circuit Tackles Third-Party Harassment of Employees, Sets New Legal Standard, *Labor & Employment Alert*, April 26, 2013

-A Transformative Time for the American Workplace, *For the Defense*, August 14, 2012

-Uncertainty in the Pharmaceutical Industry: FLSA Classification of Pharmaceutical Sales Representatives to Be Determined, *The Voice, a publication of the DRI*, March 16, 2012

-The U.S. Supreme Court Rules That Title VII Anti-Retaliation Provisions Apply to Third Parties, *Employment Litigation Alert*, January 28, 2011

### Professional Affiliations

Noreen is chair of the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) Trial Lawyers Section having previously served as its vice chair and treasurer; she also served as chair of the section's Diversity Committee and as a member of the section's Executive Committee. She is also a member of the NYSBA Labor & Employment and Health Law Sections. In addition, Noreen previously served on the board of directors for the Capital District Women's Bar Association and was a past chairperson for its Caregivers Committee. She is currently a member of the Programming Committee for the Capital Region Human Resource Association. She is also a member of the following professional organizations:

- Defense Research Institute Employment Law Subsection
- American Association of Nurse Attorneys
- Society for Human Resource Management
- Capital District Trial Lawyers Association
- National Association of Women Lawyers
- Albany Claims Association
- American Bar Association
- Albany and Saratoga County Bar Associations
- Capital District Women's Bar Association
- Women's Bar Association of the State of New York
- New York State Bar Association

### Community & Pro Bono

Noreen is a member of the Guardianship Committee of Warren, Washington and Albany Counties ARC, which serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Noreen is the chairperson for the Diversity Committee of the NYSBA Trial Lawyers Section, and as such, she has organized and acted as moderator for programs presented at law schools throughout New York that highlight the achievements of women and minorities in legal practice. She has mentored high school students and law school students competing in state-wide moot court programs. Noreen was a founding member and past chairperson of the Caregivers Committee of the Capital District Women's Bar Association, which is a support group for people in professional practice who are rendering care to elderly or infirm friends and family members.





# **JUDGE WILMA GUZMAN**

## Biography

Justice Guzman was born and raised in The Bronx and attended New York City public schools. She worked as a Secretary/Paralegal for a prestigious negligence New York law firm. She received her bachelor degree from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Justice Guzman attended law school at night while working full time and raising two daughters. She received her J.D. from St. John's University School of Law. After law school, she developed a skill and passion for trials, and became a member of the Million Dollar Advocates Forum, an association of trial attorney throughout the United States who have achieved a verdict of one million dollars or more.

Justice Guzman was first elected in 1998 to a Citywide position as Judge of the Civil Court of the City of New York. In 2005 she was appointed Acting Supreme Court Justice in Bronx County and in November 2005 she was elected Supreme Court Justice in the Twelfth Judicial District.

Justice Guzman is President of the Supreme Court Justices Association of the City of New York, Inc., President-Elect of the Puerto Rican Bar Association, and Immediate Past President of the Latino Judges Association, Inc. She is an Adjunct Professor at Pace University. Justice Guzman serves as a mentor for John Jay College of Criminal Justice Pre Law Institute and the Sonia & Celina Sotomayor Judicial Internship Program, Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial Competition among others.

Justice Guzman has received numerous recognition for her work and dedication from Puerto Rican Bar Association, United States Coast Guard, National Association of Professional Women, among others.



# BETTY LUGO, ESQ.

## Biography

Betty Lugo is a founding member of Pacheco & Lugo, PLLC. Pacheco & Lugo, PLLC is the first Hispanic women owned law firm in New York established at One World Trade Center in 1992.

Ms. Lugo leads the firm's litigation practice in the areas of general and commercial liability, construction, restrictive covenants, labor law, real estate, and white collar crime. She conducts trials, hearings, arbitrations, and appeals in complex matters in both State and Federal Courts.

Betty Lugo received her Juris Doctor degree in 1984 from Albany Law School of Union University and her Bachelor of Arts degree *cum laude* from Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. She is admitted to practice in New York, as well as before the U.S. District Court for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York. She began her legal career as the first Hispanic woman to work as an Assistant District Attorney in the Nassau County District Attorney's Office from 1984 to 1987.

Ms. Lugo is a fellow of the New York State Bar Foundation. She is a member of the New York State Bar Association House of Delegates; Trial Lawyers Section, Executive Committee and Diversity Committee member; Commercial and Federal Litigation Section Member and Lecturer; Committee on Federal Priorities and Initiatives Committee and served as Co-Chair of the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (2010-2013) and the Task Force on the Future of the Legal Profession. She is the Past-President of the Puerto Rican Bar Association (2015-2017) (the oldest minority bar association in the United States). She is also a member of the American Bar Association, Brooklyn Bar Association, Catholic Lawyers Guild, Nathan R. Sobel Kings County Inns of Court, Hispanic National Bar Association and the Puerto Rican Bar Association. She served as Regional President of the Hispanic National Bar Association in 1993.

She lectures as a provider of Continuing Legal Education on matters involving commercial matters, litigation and diversity of the legal profession for various bar associations. She has been a speaker and lecturer at Albany Law School, St. John's University Law School, Columbia University Law School, Fordham Law School, Brooklyn College, and the Diversity Research Institute. She serves on the New York City Mayor's Marshall's Committee. She is a member of the Brooklyn College Pre-Law Advisory Council.

Ms. Lugo served as a member of the Board of Trustees of Albany Law School of Union University (2004 to 2010). She served as President of the National Alumni Association of Albany Law School of Union University (2009- 2010) and continues to serve on the Board. She served as a board member of Aspira of New York; National Congressional Business Advisory Council, a delegate alternate to the White House Conference on Small Business and as an United States of America delegate to the Annual Summit for Businesswomen of the Americas. She is a founding member of 100 Hispanic Women, Inc. Ms. Lugo has served as an instructor with the National Institute for Trial Advocacy. She has lectured in real estate, corporate and diversity for various organizations and institutional lending agencies including the Federal National Mortgage Agency, State of New York Mortgage Agency, lending institutions, for profit and not for profit organizations.

Ms. Lugo is fluent in the Spanish language.



# **WILLIAM PAGAN, ESQ.**

## Biography

William Pagan is a 1987 graduate of the St. John's University School of Law. He obtained in undergraduate degree from Fordham University in 1984. He was admitted to the New York Bar in 1988.

He is admitted to practice in the Federal Southern and Eastern District Courts of New York and has been admitted *pro hac vice* to the United States District Court for the Districts of Puerto Rico and Hawaii, as well as New Jersey Superior Court. His professional memberships include the Puerto Rican Bar Association, American Association for Justice, New York State Trial Lawyers Association, New York County Lawyers Association, New York City Bar Association, and the Bronx, Kings, Queens and New York County Bar Associations as well as the Dominican Bar Association.

He's a member of The Pagan Law Firm, P.C. and has accumulated over twenty-five years' experience in trying highly complex medical malpractice cases, serious injuries from construction, lead paint poisoning, municipal premise and general accident cases in State and Federal court in all boroughs of the City of New York, statewide in New York and *pro hac vice* nationwide.

He's a member of The National Trial Lawyers, "Top 100 Trial Lawyers."



# **GENE V. PRIMOMO ESQ.**

## Biography

Gene Primomo graduated from the University of Tulsa College of Law in 1986. He practiced as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Eastern District of Oklahoma, a partner in the Law Firm of Wilcoxon & Primomo before joining the Federal Public Defender's Office in the Northern District of New York in 1999 as a Senior Assistant Federal Public Defender. He is a recipient of the Thurgood Marshall Award in 2008.





# VIOLET E. SAMUELS, ESQ.

## Biography

### Education

TOURO COLLEGE JACOB D. FUCHSBERG LAW CENTER, Huntington, NY

J.D. January 1999

Honors: Law Review

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, NY

M.A. Nursing Administration 1990

CITY COLLEGE, New York, NY

B.S. Nursing 1983

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE, New  
New York, NY

AA: Liberal Arts 1980

Honors: Dean's List multiple semesters.

### Admission to Practice Law

Admitted in New York (2000); New Jersey (2000); United States District Court – Eastern District (2000), United States District Court Southern District (2000), United States District Court - New Jersey (2000); United States Supreme Court (2010); United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces (2010); United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit (2010); United States Court of Federal Claims (2010).

### Legal Experience

Mallilo & Grossman, Flushing, NY, November 1999 to May 2003 - associate attorney in the areas of general practice (worked on family law, estate planning Title VII, false arrest and personal injury matters; trial attorney - personal injury cases).

Castro & Associates, P.C., New York, May 2003 to November 2006 - Lead trial and Appellate Counsel

Samuels & Associates, P.C., Rosedale, New York – November 2006 to present – Principal – Areas of practice – personal injury, family law, Title VII, immigration matters (mainly family based petitions), and appellate work. Successfully negotiates; arbitrates and mediates numerous settlements in a variety of cases and successfully litigates cases at trial.

### Membership and Affiliations in the Legal Community

New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) – member since August 25, 2000; member of Young Lawyers Section 2000-2005 approximately; member of Property and Employment sections approximately 2009-2010; NYSBA Committee on Membership – member (2016-2017); member of subcommittee on solo and Small Firm Practice (2016-2017); member of subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion (2016-2017).

Member of Trial Lawyers Section since March 2008 to present; co-chair of Trial Lawyers Section Membership Committee since 2010 to present; member of Trial Lawyers Section Diversity Committee since 2010 to present; faculty at Trial Lawyers Section annual Trial Academy (2014); treasurer Trial Lawyers Section 2014-2015; Judge in Trial Lawyers Section annual Trial Advocacy Competition 2014 and 2015; secretary for Trial Lawyers section 2015-2016..

Alternate member of the House of Delegates 2012 to 2013; member of the House of Delegates 2013-present;

Member of NYSBA nominating committee 2015 and 2016 appointed by Queens County Bar Association.

#### **A. SECTIONS CAUCUS EXPERIENCE**

Member of the Section Caucus Committee as a delegate from Trial Lawyers Section  
Member of the Section Caucus Committee – Best Practice (2014-present)  
Co-chair of Sections Caucus Membership Committee (2016)

#### **B. OTHER BAR ASSOCIATIONS**

Queens County Bar Association (QBA) – member; QBA Small & Solo Practitioners committee - co-chair; QBA Volunteer Lawyers Pro Bono Panels - uncontested divorces and foreclosure panels for volunteer attorney.

#### **C. OTHER LEGAL COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS**

Civil Court of City of New York – volunteer guardian ad litem - landlord–tenant matters; Arbitrator - Small Claims Court – Queens County and Kings County Small Claims Court Panels

Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center – Active in many areas of volunteer work with Touro Law School - member of the alumni counsel; volunteer judge-moot court competitions, first year legal methods, oral arguments and intra school competitions; member of the law school’s mentor-mentee program, member of Touro Law School Women in Law committee.

#### Other Licenses and Certifications

Registered Nurse (1983 to present)

New York State; Certified CPR Instructor (1985-present)

Regional; Certified Instructor for New York State Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting course (required for all healthcare practitioners, social workers school teachers etc. prior to licensure).

#### Nursing Experience

Worked as independent nurse consultant; and expert witness including giving testimony on behalf of medical malpractice for plaintiff and defense attorneys (1990 -1998);

Worked as general staff nurse (medical and surgery units); preceptor for new nurses (Medical. Surgery and step down intensive care units) and critical care nurse at Cornell University Medical Center, New York, NY (1983-1995);

Risk manager, home care coordinator and nurse instructor at Maximum Health Care Registry, Rosedale NY (1985-2005);

Worked as nursing supervisor in long term care facility (2012-2013 to alleviate nursing shortage associated with Hurricane Sandy).

#### Speaking Engagements and Presentations

November 2014 – Speaker - New York University Law School “Have we crossed the Line” a 3 CLE offering – NYSBA Trial Lawyers Section.

Fall – 2013 – Moderator - Touro Law School “Courtroom Etiquette” a presentation by the NYSBA Trial Lawyers Section Diversity Committee.

Summer 2015 Providence Rhode Island – Co-chair Summer Trial Meeting - a 6 CLE offering by NYSBA Trial Lawyers Section

January 2015 New York Hilton Hotel - Co-chair Joint presentation of a 6 CLE offering at the Annual Meeting by Trial Lawyers Section and Torts Insurance Compensation Law Section at NYSBA Annual Meeting

#### Other

Two children and two grandchildren.



# **CHARLES J. SIEGEL, ESQ.**

## Biography

Charles J. Siegel of New York City is the managing attorney at the Law Office of Charles J. Siegel, an insurance defense firm located in lower Manhattan. Prior to that, Mr. Siegel was an Assistant District Attorney in the Bronx County Homicide Bureau under Mario Merola. Mr. Siegel is the present chair of the Trial Lawyers Section. He received his BA from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He received his Master's degree from Long Island University and his JD from Pace University School of Law. Mr. Siegel has been admitted to practice in New York for almost 35 years. He is a member of the Bar in Florida and New Jersey. Mr. Siegel has lectured over the years to various claim departments, organizations and attorneys in the topics of Website Use, Technologies for the Legal Profession, Premises Liability, Auto Liability, New York Labor Law and Bad Faith. He holds course certificates from Long Island University and C.W. Post College in Computer Repair, Computer Programming and Web Page Design. He has been a member of the New York State Bar Association for the past 25 years and was the past chair of its' Electronic Communication Committee (ECC) which has among other responsibilities general oversight of the NYSBA Website. Mr. Siegel was the past section chair and a member of the Executive Committee of the Torts, Insurance & Compensation Law Section (TICL). He presenting chairs both TICL Information Technology Committee and the TLS Website Committee.



# **PROFESSOR CHRISTIAN B. SUNDQUIST**

## Biography

Professor Sundquist is a nationally recognized scholar on issues of race and law. While his principal research interest lies at the intersection of genetics, race and law, he has published and presented widely on a variety of issues in the fields of constitutional law, evidence law, immigration law, critical race theory, education reform and welfare reform. His publications have appeared in numerous academic journals, including the Harvard Blackletter Law Journal, the N.Y.U. Annual Survey of American Law, the Columbia Journal on Race and Law, and the Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law and Policy. Professor Sundquist has delivered lectures and presentations in a variety of venues, including at the Facing Race annual conference on racial justice, the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, the Society of American Law Teachers annual conference, the National People of Color legal conference, the LatCrit annual conference, and the Research Council for the Sociology of Law annual conference. Professor Sundquist has also delivered lectures to the New York State legislature (staff attorneys) and the New York State Department of Health.

Professor Sundquist teaches Evidence, Advanced Evidence, Federal Jurisdiction and Practice, Immigration Law and Policy, and Economic Justice at the law school. He is a member of the Society of American Law Teachers, the Capital District Black and Hispanic Bar Association, the American Bar Association, and the New York State Bar Association. Before entering academia, Professor Sundquist practiced in the litigation group at Chadbourne & Parke LLP in New York, N.Y., an internationally-known law firm.

