

The Bar Around The Corner: Network of Bar Leaders

Name of Association: Network of Bar Leaders

Address: P.O. Box 1081, New York, NY 10150

Website: www.networkofbarleaders.org

Founded: 1981

Number of Members: Forty-six member bar associations

Vision: The Network of Bar Leaders (“The Network”) is charting a course to “Raise the Bar” on the services we provide to our members for this decade.

Purpose: The Network is the legal community’s most diverse institution. The Network provides a forum for the exchange of information and ideas and serves as a vehicle for joint action on issues of mutual concern and pending legislation.

It is a coalition of 46 member bar associations dedicated to bringing together the leadership of the diverse bar associations of the greater New York Metropolitan area. Bar leaders and executive directors from these associations comprise the Network’s membership.

Brief History: Formed in 1981, our members include each of the five county bar associations around New York City, numerous citywide and statewide specialty groups, specialty bar associations dedicated to every field of practice, as well as ethnic and religious bar associations. Because of its great diversity, the organization is often called upon to express a consensus opinion on behalf of the organized bars in matters affecting the legal community as a whole.

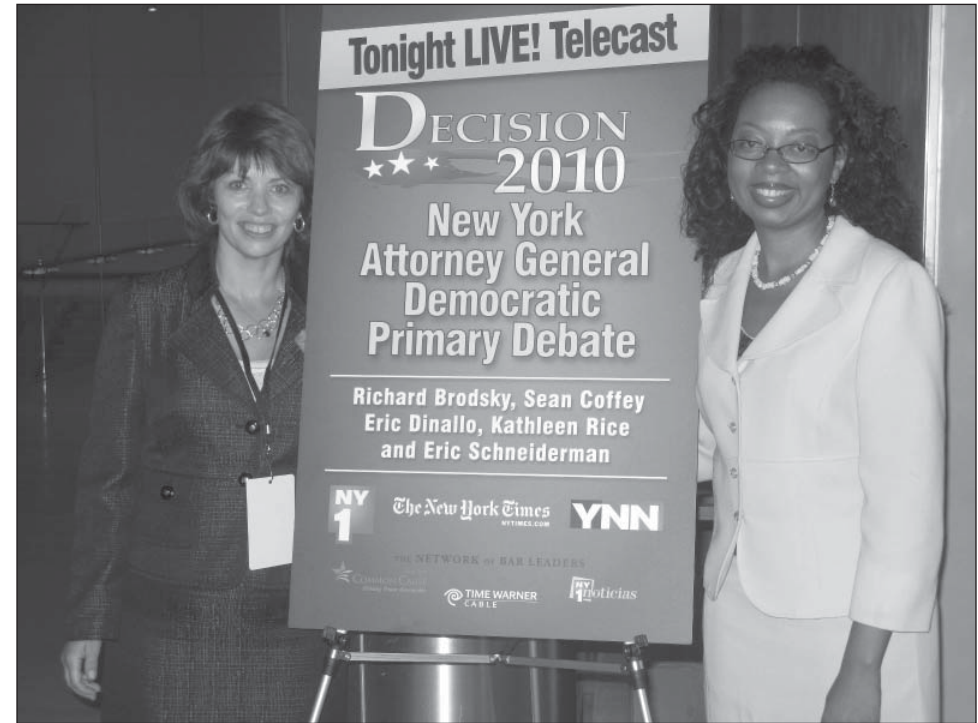
During the 2010 - 2011 bar year, the Network joined NY1, The New York Times and Common Cause to sponsor the Attorney General Debate televised on NY1. After that debate, we held a legislative forum, CLE programs, a State of the Judiciary presentation by Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, and a forum on WikiLeaks.

What is your association’s goal for next month? Next year? For the 2011 - 2012 year, the Network will focus on the impact of the financial downturn on the legal community. Our members are very concerned about the possible deleterious impact of the crisis on the practice of law and the provision of legal services.

The first significant impact is on access to justice. We are concerned that the budget cuts will reduce access to justice for the most financially vulnerable, as well as the middle class. The second significant impact is on graduating law students. The contraction of the legal job market, as well as the shift to using non-law firms to provide legal services, is reducing the opportunities for future lawyers to learn how to practice law.

What are your association’s most important current projects / initiatives? The strong foundation of services that we provide to our members includes:

1. On-Point Programming – Holding regular monthly meetings in midtown Manhattan that provide an opportunity for members to network, share ideas, and obtain valuable, pertinent information.



Community leaders—Network of Bar Leaders First Vice President Kathryn Salensky (left) and President Taa Grays lend the Network’s support to a debate during the 2010 political season.

2. Website Resource – Our webpage is a central source of information about member programming across metropolitan New York City.
3. Regular Communication – Every two weeks, the president publishes a “President’s Update” via email to alert our leaders to events and issues of importance.

In addition, the Network will continue to provide on-point meetings focusing on information our members can use to improve the management of

their associations. Topics range from running a 501(c) organization and obtaining corporate funding, to fostering greater inclusion of diverse members in the bar and providing pro bono services.

The 2010 – 2011 leadership of the Network includes: Taa Grays, president; Kathryn Salensky, first vice president; Gordon Eng, treasurer; Neysa Alsina, recording secretary; Bahaati Pitt, corresponding secretary. Executive Council members are Justice Kelly O’Neil-Levy, Mary Lacerenza, Lois Woll, and Eliza Filipowski. ♦