



Trial Lawyers
Section

*4th Annual
Trial Lawyers
Awards*

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

4th Annual Trial Lawyers Awards

Nominations for exceptional contributions to both the legal profession and the community are currently open through the NYSBA Trial Lawyers Section. These awards acknowledge various facets of the legal and judicial realms and are open to nominations from the general public, not limited to Trial Lawyers Section members.

The recipients of the annual awards will be honored during the Awards and Networking Reception on January 16, 2025 during Annual Meeting at the New York Hilton Midtown Light refreshments will be served.

The Peter C. Kopff Trial Advocacy Award

In recognition of a career marked by integrity and adherence to the highest ethical standards.

This award, established by the Trial Lawyers Section, the distinguished career of private practice trial lawyers in New York State who embody integrity and the highest ethical standards in their profession.

About Peter C. Kopff: Peter C. Kopff is a highly distinguished attorney and trial advocate who served as Chair of the NYSBA Trial Lawyers Section from 2012-2013 and received the Distinguished Trial Lawyer Award in 2017. Known for his unwavering ethics, he has extensively lectured, published on trial advocacy, mentored many lawyers, and demonstrated a commitment to diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

Award Qualifications

The nominee has:

- Practiced as a trial lawyer in private practice in New York State
- Demonstrated success in providing high-quality education, training, teaching, or mentoring
- Exhibited excellence in trial advocacy and/or judicial service, maintaining integrity and ethical standards
- Committed to fostering diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

The Betty Friedlander Award for Trial Excellence

In recognition of a distinguished career marked by excellence in trial practice, demonstrating the highest quality of trial skill and conduct, and showing a commitment to professional growth, echoing the legacy of Betty Friedlander.

This award, established by the Trial Lawyers Section, honors a trial lawyer in upstate New York who demonstrates exceptional trial skills and a commitment to professional excellence.

About Betty D. Friedlander: The Betty D. Friedlander Award for Trial Excellence was created to honor Betty Friedlander, one of the first female trial lawyers in upstate New York. Betty's pioneering career spanned over 18 years in private practice, litigating personal injury, criminal defense, and matrimonial/custody cases followed by two electoral terms as County Court/Family Court Judge. She directed the Cornell Legal Aid Clinic, contributed to various NYSBA and OCA programs, and mentored numerous young lawyers and law students. Even after mandatory retirement from the bench at age 70, she continued practicing as a trial lawyer into her 90s.

Award Qualifications

The nominee has:

- Substantial experience practicing as a trial lawyer in state (or federal) courts in upstate New York (outside New York City)
- Excellence in developing and utilizing trial skills, including courtroom practice, case preparation, client and colleague interactions, litigation strategy, and ethical conduct
- Proven commitment to achieving excellence in legal practicing
- In recognition of a career marked by excellence in trial advocacy and dedication to professional growth.

The Justice Irma Vidal Santaella Memorial Award

In recognition of outstanding dedication to upholding integrity, justice, and empowerment in the legal profession, echoing the remarkable legacy of Judge Irma Vidal Santaella

This award, established by the Trial Lawyers Section, honors a female litigator in New York State who exemplifies excellence in the courtroom, upholds the highest standards of advocacy, due process, and integrity, and demonstrates significant experience in trial advocacy or judicial service in state or federal courts. Recipients are committed to promoting diversity and inclusion, engaging in professional development, community involvement, teaching, and mentoring. This award celebrates their courageous efforts in championing integrity, justice, and fairness, embodying the spirit of Judge Santaella's dedication to justice and the empowerment of the powerless.

About Justice Irma Vidal Santaella: The Justice Irma Vidal Santaella Memorial Award for Excellence in the Courtroom was created by the Trial Lawyers Section in honor of the First Puerto Rican/Hispanic Female Judge elected to the New York State Supreme Court. Justice Santaella graduated from Brooklyn Law School in 1961 and became the first Puerto Rican woman lawyer in New York. She served from 1983 through 1994 in Bronx and New York Counties. Prior to serving as a Supreme Court Judge, Judge Santaella served as a Commissioner for the Human Rights Appeal Board and a commercial litigator and accountant in private practice. During the 1960s, she became a strong advocate for Puerto Rican rights and founded the Legion of Voters, Inc., serving as its president until 1968. Santaella helped Senator Jacob Javits and Robert F. Kennedy draft an amendment to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to grant non-English speaking citizens the opportunity to vote. She is also a founder of N.O.W. and many other civil rights organizations.

Award Qualifications

The nominee has:

- Significant experience as a trial lawyer in state (or federal) courts in downstate New York
- Demonstrated excellence in trial advocacy and/or judicial service, displaying integrity and ethical conduct
- Dedication to achieving excellence in trial practice and/or judicial service through professional engagement, community involvement, teaching, or mentoring
- Commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion within the legal profession



NOMINATION FORM

Candidate Name: _____

Title (if applicable): _____

Nominated for the following Award:

- Betty Friedlander Award for Trial Excellence
- The Peter C. Kopff Trial Advocacy Award
- The Justice Irma Vidal Santaella Memorial Award

(One selection per form. Note that you may nominate as many candidates as you would like in each category. Please use a separate form for each).

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Nominated by: _____

Title (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Candidate's Qualifications: Please provide details regarding the candidate's qualifications for this award, including:

- Number of years in practice
- Location and nature of practice
- Trial experience and significant distinguishing qualities
- Demonstrations of commitment to the cultivation of excellence in trial skills (e.g., professional affiliation, writing, teaching, mentoring, etc.)

Optional Supporting Information: Supporting documentation is encouraged, such as:

- A resume or similar biographical material for the nominee
- News articles
- Brief writings
- Letters of support

Please limit all nomination materials to 25 pages or less.

Nomination Deadline: December 2nd, 2024

Prize Awarded: The recipient will receive an award of recognition and a complimentary registration to the 2025 Trial Lawyers Annual Meeting program on Thursday, January 16th, 2025.

Presentation Date: The award will be presented during the Trial Lawyers and Torts, Insurance, and Compensation Law Annual Meeting Awards Reception on January 16th, 2025, at the New York Hilton Midtown.

Questions can be directed to the Trial Lawyers Chair, Angélicque M. Moreno (amoreno@jkavanzino.com).

Please email completed nomination form and supporting documentation by **December 2nd, 2024** to the **Trial Lawyers Section Liaison, Gina Bartosiewicz (Gbartosiewicz@nysba.org)**.