

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

6th Annual Trial Lawyers Awards

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN TRIAL PRACTICE & JUDICIAL SERVICE

Nominations are now open through the NYSBA Trial Lawyers Section for individuals who have made exceptional contributions to both the legal profession and the community. These awards recognize outstanding achievements across various facets of the legal and judicial fields, and nominations are welcome from the general public — membership in the Trial Lawyers Section is not required. Recipients of the annual awards will be honored at the Awards and Networking Reception on January 21, 2027, during the Annual Conference at the New York Hilton Midtown. Light refreshments will be served.

THE PETER C. KOPFF TRIAL ADVOCACY AWARD

ABOUT THE AWARD

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

ABOUT THE HONOREE

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 lectured and published on trial advocacy, mentored many lawyers, and demonstrated a commitment to diversity and inclusion.

AWARD QUALIFICATIONS

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

THE JUSTICE IRMA VIDAL SANTAELLA MEMORIAL AWARD

ABOUT THE AWARD

Created to honor Justice Irma Vidal Santaella, this award recognizes litigators in New York State who demonstrate excellence in the courtroom, uphold the highest standards of advocacy and integrity, and actively promote diversity and inclusion.

ABOUT THE HONOREE

Justice Santaella was the first Puerto Rican/Hispanic woman elected to the New York State Supreme Court and the first Puerto Rican woman lawyer in New York. A trailblazer in civil rights, she founded the Legion of Voters, Inc., helped draft amendments to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and co-founded N.O.W. and other civil rights organizations.

AWARD QUALIFICATIONS

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

BETTY D. FRIEDLANDER AWARD FOR TRIAL EXCELLENCE

ABOUT THE AWARD

The Trial Lawyers Section created this award to honor the pioneering career of Betty Friedlander, one of the first female trial lawyers in upstate New York. Betty spent 18 years in private practice before serving two electoral terms as County Court/Family Court Judge. She also directed the Cornell Legal Aid Clinic, contributed to NYSBA and OCA programs, and mentored countless young lawyers and law students.

ABOUT THE HONOREE

After retiring from the bench at age 70, Betty practiced another 29 years as a trial lawyer, trying cases well into her 90s. The award recognizes a trial lawyer in upstate New York (outside NYC) who has distinguished themselves in trial practice, demonstrated exceptional trial skill and professional conduct, and shown a commitment to excellence through professional engagement, advocacy, teaching, or mentoring.

AWARD QUALIFICATIONS

- Substantial practice as a trial lawyer in state or federal courts in upstate New York.
- Excellence in trial skills, including courtroom practice, case preparation, client and collegial relations, litigation strategy, and ethics.
- Commitment to professional excellence through writing, advocacy, teaching, mentoring, or other forms of engagement.

Nomination Deadline: December 4, 2026

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 4, 2026

Prize Awarded: The recipient will receive an award of recognition and a complimentary registration to the 2027 Trial Lawyers Annual Conference program on Thursday, January 21, 2027.

Presentation Date: The award will be presented during the Trial Lawyers and Torts, Insurance, and Compensation Law Annual Conference Awards Reception on January 21, 2027, at the New York Hilton Midtown.

Questions can be directed to the Seth Rosner, (seth@rosnerlawny.com), and
Section Liaison, Gina Bartosiewicz (gbartosiewicz@nysba.org)

Please email completed nomination form and supporting documentation by **December 4, 2026** to the
Trial Lawyers Section Liaison, Gina Bartosiewicz (Gbartosiewicz@nysba.org).