



Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities

Spring 2012



HON. ROSE H. SCONIERS
CHAIR

Message from the Chair

Even with the numerous demands placed on our time, it is important that we seek to positively affect our communities through service. Serving the community allows for greater access to role models from all sectors of the justice system including but not limited to interacting with judges, attorneys, court officers, analysts and reporters. Service to the community can encompass but is not limited to serving on a board, speaking at a school, acting as a mentor, or volunteering.

Judge Jane M. Bolin, the first black woman to serve as a judge in the United States, was a shining example of service to the community. In 1939, New York City Mayor Fiorello La Guardia appointed Judge Bolin as a judge to the New York City

Domestic Relations Court (since re-named "Family Court" in 1962.) She devoted much of her

time as an activist for children's rights and improving educational opportunities for students of color. A graduate of Yale Law School, she was also a board member of the NAACP, the Child Welfare League and the National Urban League. After her retirement, Judge Bolin continued to serve by volunteering as a reading instructor in the New York City Public School system.

Many in our legal community continue the tradition of service. Justice Doris Ling-Cohan, Supreme Court, New York County, reaches out by participating in public service forums in the community as well as serving on a Board to reduce gang violence. Judge Gayle P. Roberts, Family Court, Bronx County, serves as Chair of a committee to reduce the disproportionate number of young people of color in the family court system. Judge Joanne Quinones, Criminal Court, Bronx County, is involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City and participates as a mentor with the Practicing Attorneys for Law Students.

It is through this community effort that we can bring about social change. Therefore, let us make a conscious effort to serve when the opportunity arises and thereby contribute to the progress of generations to come. ■

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HON. DORIS LING-COHAN

OPENING DOORS TO THE BENCH

ON THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 2012, the Association of the Bar of the City of New York hosted a program entitled, "Pathways to the Bench and Beyond". The program moderators were Hon. Doris M. Gonzalez, Acting Supreme Court Justice, Bronx County and Hon. Milton Tingling, Supreme Court Justice, New York County. The panelists included Hon. Luis A. Gonzalez, Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, First Department, Hon. Sylvia Hinds-Radix, Administrative Judge for Supreme Court, Kings County (Civil), Hon. Leslie G.

Leach, Appointments Secretary to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Hon. Doris Ling-Cohan, Supreme Court Justice, New York County and Hon. Jeffrey Oing, Supreme Court Justice, New York County. The panelists discussed their career paths to the bench and offered advice and suggestions to those interested in a judicial career.

The event was sponsored by the New York City Bar Committee on Minorities in the Profession, Committee on Women in the Courts, Committee to Encourage Judicial Service and Committee on Minorities in the Courts. The Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities co-sponsored the event, along with other minority bar associations.



HON. LESLIE G. LEACH, HON. JEFFREY OING, HON. SYLVIA HINDS-RADIX, HON. LUIS GONZALEZ (SEATED), HON. MILTON TINGLING, HON. DORIS GONZALEZ, HON. DORIS LING-COHAN

MEET "BO" - BONITA WALKER-RICKS



BONITA WALKER-RICKS

WITHIN MINUTES OF MEETING BONITA WALKER-RICKS, YOU UNDERSTAND WHY SHE IS SO HIGHLY RESPECTED by those who know and work with her. Her warmth is contagious and she reflects an authenticity that is hard to find. Bonita Walker-Ricks, or "Bo," as she is affectionately called, is the

Administrative Assistant to Chief Administrative Justice A. Gail Prudenti.

A NATIVE NEW YORKER, MS. WALKER-RICKS BEGAN HER CAREER IN THE UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM IN 1987 as confidential secretary to the late Justice Sybil Hart Kooper, an Associate Justice of the Appellate Division, Second Department. In 2002, she joined Justice Prudenti's staff after her appointment as the Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, Second Department. Last year, Justice Prudenti invited Bo to join her as she assumed her new duties as Chief Administrative Judge of the Unified Court System.

MS. WALKER-RICKS MANAGES JUSTICE PRUDENTI'S SCHEDULE AND THE MANY DEMANDS ON HER TIME, which have increased tremendously with the judge's new position. This requires her to balance accommodating others while ensuring that Justice Prudenti is not overwhelmed by these requests. "I often review work products submitted to her because I know exactly how Judge Prudenti likes things done."

WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO HER EXCELLENT WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH JUSTICE PRUDENTI IS THE MUTUAL RESPECT AND ADMIRATION THEY HAVE FOR EACH OTHER. For her, Justice Prudenti is an excellent role model with a strong work ethic that is truly inspiring. She refers to Justice Prudenti as a brilliant administrator; an outstanding jurist; a fabulous individual and a good friend.

ONE OF MS. WALKER-RICKS FOREMOST ATTRIBUTES IS

PATIENCE. Whether she is responding to a judge or a pro-se litigant, who is overwhelmed by the process, she remains calm in dealing with others. She understands the importance of being empathetic to others while remaining professional. In order to do well and to stand apart from the crowd, her advice to others is to "keep an open mind, be willing to give a little more than is expected of you." Ms. Walker-Ricks is also a team player who contributes no matter what it takes to get the job done. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that in 2004, at the Brooklyn Marriott, the American Lung Association honored Ms. Walker-Ricks as outstanding professional of the year in the legal field.

IN 2000, MS. WALKER-RICKS HAD TO UNFORTUNATELY COME TO TERMS WITH THE DEATH OF HER ONLY CHILD, HER DAUGHTER, TERÉ. She notes that it is the precious and beautiful memories of her daughter that not only remind her of the beauty of each day but strengthens her faith.

IN HER PERSONAL TIME, MS. WALKER-RICKS IS AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN HER CHURCH, New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, in Queens, New York, where she utilizes her leadership skills as Trustee, Deaconess, and Directress of the church Mass Choir. Ms. Walker-Ricks is a stellar example of the exceptional people who make up the OCA family. ■

22ND ANNUAL PROGRAM TO COMMEMORATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH



CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
A. GAIL PRUDENTI

Contributions of African Americans to the history of the United States is acknowledged throughout the year. However, February is specifically designated as Black History Month.

On February 16, 2012, the Unified Court System's Black History Month Committee, co-sponsored by the Tribune Society, Inc. and the Judicial Friends Association, honored Jewel Williams, Chief of the Department of Public Safety, and Hon. Edwina Richardson-Mendelson, Administrative Judge of the Family Court of the City of New York.

The Honorable A. Gail Prudenti provided welcoming remarks. Judge Richardson-Mendelson made heartfelt remarks as the keynote speaker, and a video presentation, featuring women of distinction within the court system, was enjoyed by all.



FRANKLIN H. WILLIAMS COMMISSION
MEMBER BARRY CLARKE, ESQ.,
HON. EDWINA RICHARDSON-
MENDELSON, CHIEF JEWEL
WILLIAMS, MAJOR ERNEST OWENS

MEETING WITH CHIEF JUDGE JONATHAN LIPPMAN AND CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE A. GAIL PRUDENTI

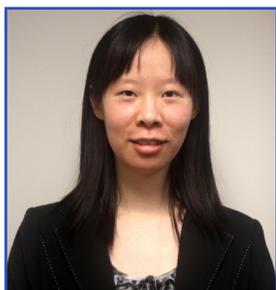


MATTHEW KIERNAN, ESQ., (EXTREME LEFT), MEMBERS OF THE FRANKLIN H. WILLIAMS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MINORITIES, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE A. GAIL PRUDENTI, (CENTER LEFT) HON. ROSE H. SCONIERS, COMMISSION CHAIR, (CENTER), CHIEF JUDGE JONATHAN LIPPMAN (CENTER RIGHT)

ON JANUARY 26, 2012, the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities met with Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman and Chief Administrative Judge A. Gail Prudenti to discuss issues of concern for minority court employees and to dialogue on matters of race and diversity in the courts and the legal profession. The Commission conducts such meetings on an annual basis as part of its ongoing mission to address matters of race and diversity in the court system.

AN INTERN'S POINT OF VIEW

JING SUN IS EXCITED ABOUT SERVING AS AN INTERN IN THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT OF THE NEW YORK STATE UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM. She is currently an international student in the Middle Eastern Studies Division



JING SUN

at New York University Graduate School of Arts & Science. As a Public Affairs Intern, Ms. Sun gets the opportunity to observe different court settings and to interview court employees about their experiences and perspectives, and is thereby afforded a unique perspective into the court system and how it serves the public.

MS. JING SUN WAS BORN IN ZHENGZHOU CITY, HENAN PROVINCE, IN CHINA. She attended Peking University, in Beijing, where she majored in Arabic Language and Culture. She undertook this major because it was an emerging area of study. Ms. Sun says her interest in learning new languages started as a child. She reinforced her English speaking skills by watching Disney movies. She also taught herself Japanese.

BEING A SELF MOTIVATOR HAS SERVED MS. SUN WELL IN HER CAREER PURSUITS. In 2007, during

her sophomore year at Peking University, she traveled to Egypt for a summer camp and then to Tunisia as an exchange student. In 2009, upon graduating from Peking University with a Bachelor of Arts in Arabic Language and Culture, Ms. Sun was hired to work in the Human Resources Division of a construction company in Libya as a translator.

MS. SUN'S ADVICE TO OTHERS WANTING TO PURSUE THEIR DREAMS IS TO ALWAYS BE PREPARED AND TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES AS THEY COME. She stresses the importance of discovering your passion, being tolerant of different viewpoints, and notes that if you hate your work, it is hard to excel.

MS. SUN FINDS THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS INTERNSHIP MOST ENRICHING as it has given her a view into the United States judicial culture. ■

实习生的视角

孫婧是紐約大學文理研究院中東研究系的一名國際學生。她對能在紐約州聯合法院公共關係部實習感到十分高興。作為一名公共關係實習生,孫小姐有機會旁聽不同種類的法庭審理,以及採訪法院的工作人員,瞭解他們各自的經歷和意見,在此同時,她也為法院系統和它如何服務公眾這個話題帶來了獨特的視角。

孫小姐來自中國河南省鄭州市,畢業於北京大學阿拉伯語言文化系。她選擇該專業作為自己本科專業的原因有二,一是該專業是當時國內的新生專業、發展前景較廣闊。孫小姐說,自己對學習新語言的興趣從孩童時就開始了。她通過迪士尼電影來加強自己的英語口語能力。此外她還自學了日語。

積極主動的學習態度給孫小姐的職業追求帶來了積極的成果。2007年,在她於北京大學讀大二時,她訪問埃及,參加了一個夏令營;之後又作為交換生前往突尼斯。2009年,她從北京大學畢業,獲阿拉伯語言文化學士學位,隨後進入一家建築公司在利比亞分公司的人事部擔任翻譯。

孫小姐對其他希望追求職業夢想的人的建議是:要時刻準備好自己,當機會來臨時就要抓住。她強調說,發掘自己的熱情所在,包容不同的觀點,這些也很重要。如果你討厭自己的工作,那就很難做得出色。

孫小姐認為公共關係實習工作使她受益良多,這些工作給了她深入瞭解美國司法文化的機會。

WOMEN LAWYERS OF WESTERN NEW YORK

ON DECEMBER 14, 2011, at their annual luncheon in Buffalo, NY, the Women Lawyers of Western New York, Inc. honored Honorable Rose H. Sconiers as the Woman Lawyer of the Year. The Women Lawyers of Western New York, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing women in the legal profession, providing scholarships to female law students, and working on charitable and educational causes related to women and the law. The luncheon provided a networking opportunity for attorneys and judges in Western New York. Justice Sconiers, a longtime resident of Buffalo, New York, currently serves as Associate Justice of the Appellate Division, Fourth Department.



TRENEEKA CUSACK, ESQ. AND HON. ROSE H. SCONIERS



(LEFT) DR. BARBARA A. SEALS, JOHN COLLINS, ESQ., JOHN ZIEGLER, ESQ., ANDREA WILSON, LESTER SCONIERS, ESQ., CECILIA HENDERSON (SEATED LEFT), HON. ROSE H. SCONIERS (SEATED)

JUDICIAL FRIENDS DINNER DANCE AND LEADERSHIP

ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2011, the Judicial Friends Association hosted the 30th Annual Rivers Toney & Watson Reception Celebration at Steiner Studios in Brooklyn, New York. The year's theme, Leaders in the Law, honored attorneys who displayed exceptional leadership in the courts and in their various practice areas. The honorees included Joyce Y. Hartsfield, Executive Director of the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities; Juan Cartagena, President and General Counsel of Latino Justice PRLDEF; Margarita Rosa, Executive Director, Grand Street Settlement; Zachary W. Carter, Partner, Dorsey & Whitney; Renaye B. Cuyler, Partner, Clark, Cuyler, Mederos, LLP; and solo practitioners Regina L. Darby, Jeanne M. Hammock, and Michael W. Warren.

SANDRA LESPINESE, ESQ., JOYCE Y. HARTSFIELD AND ABENA DARKEH, ESQ.



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COMMISSION MEMBER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FRANKLIN H. WILLIAMS JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MINORITIES ATTEND THE NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING



At the Public Service Awards Reception - Franklin H. Williams Commission member T. Andrew Brown, Esq. (extreme right), Hon. Theodore T. Jones of the New York State Court of Appeals, (center right), Manuel A. Romero, Esq. (center left), Tracee E. Davis, Esq., (extreme left)



Meeting of the NYSBA Committee on Diversity and Inclusion - Joyce Y. Hartsfield, Executive Director of the Franklin H. Williams Judicial Commission on Minorities (back row, third from right) is a member of the NYSBA Committee on Diversity and Inclusion. Among the front row are Hon. Theodore T. Jones of the New York State Court of Appeals (second left), Kenneth Standard, committee co-chair, (third left), President Elect James Seymour, Esq., (center), Betty Lugo, committee co-chair, and Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman.

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