

Michael Miller Joins NYSBA Council of Judicial Associations September Meeting

The Honorable Cheryl E. Chambers, presiding member of the New York State Bar Association's (NYSBA) Judicial Section, convened a meeting of the Council of Judicial Associations on September 14 at the Appellate Division, First Department courthouse in Manhattan. Guest speakers were NYSBA President Michael Miller and Stroock & Stroock Co-Managing Partner Alan M. Klinger, who counsels the Associations of State and New York City Supreme Court Justices.

The council, which consists of section officers, the presidents of 14 judicial associations from across the state and past presiding members, met to discuss important issues affecting the courts, judges and judicial administration.

Council members used this opportunity to press the point that attacks on the judiciary have increased, while noting that public understanding of the role of the judiciary has decreased and that our constitutional democracy depends on the separation of powers. They also urged NYSBA to work with the council to create opportunities to increase public understanding of the role of the judiciary as a co-equal branch of the government.

Justice Chambers also encouraged bar leadership to work with NYSBA's Judicial Section to develop effective ways to educate the public on the importance of upholding the rule of law.

Miller applauded the work of judges and the courts and stressed that NYSBA continuously works to preserve judicial independence. He noted that the association has established a Rapid Response Advisory Group to respond on matters needing prompt action in today's 24-hour news cycle



Front row, from left to right: Hon. Toko Serita (Asian American Judges), Hon. Michelle Weston (past Presiding Member), Hon. Ellen Spodek (past Presiding Member), Michael Miller (NYSBA President), Hon. Cheryl E. Chambers (Presiding Member), Hon. Marsha Steinhardt (past Presiding Member), Hon. Barbara Kapnick (Section Secretary), Hon. James Quinn (County Judges), Hon. Sylvia Hinds-Radix (Supreme Court, NYC).

Second row, from left to right: Hon. Jeanette Rodriguez-Morick (Court of Claims), Hon. Doris Gonzalez (Latino Judges), Hon. Deborah Karalunas (Supreme Court, NYS; past Presiding Member), Patricia Wood (Section Liaison), Hon. Corey Klein (City Court), Hon. Curtis Farber (LGBT Judges), Hon. Robert Mulroy (Family Court), Hon. David Cohen (Civil Court Judges), Hon. Rachel Kretser (past Presiding Member), Hon. Karen Wilutis (District Court), Hon. Michael Sonberg (Lesbian and Gay Judges), Hon. Jonah Triebwasser (Magistrates), Hon. Eileen Bransten (past Presiding Member), Hon. Ruth Shillingford (Judicial Friends), Hon. Timmie Elsner (Housing Court).

Not pictured: Hon. Denise Hartman (Section Treasurer), Alan Klinger.

— such as when judges are unfairly criticized.

Klinger reviewed pertinent rules and the proposed attendance-monitoring policies for judges. While agreeing that independent does not mean unaccountable, council members commented that attendance policies should remain flexible so as not to impair independence or adversely affect morale.

After listening to attendees' comments pertaining to the implementation of judge attendance policies within several judicial districts, Miller urged the section to submit any issues of concern to NYSBA's Executive Committee. It is an opportunity to begin a dialogue about and to seek action on critical

matters, he noted. In turn, these discussions provide the association with the perspective of the judiciary.

The Judicial Section hosts forums for representatives on the Council of Judicial Associations to address issues relating to legislation and court procedure five times a year. This meeting with NYSBA leaders exemplifies how the Judicial Section provides avenues to present its voice and views on matters affecting the judiciary and justice system, including the practical impact of proposed changes in policies and procedures. Miller and representatives of the council and section indicated that they look forward to ongoing discussions and working together.