

Court Attorneys Association of the City of New York Newsletter - June 2021

Annual General Membership Meeting and Election of Officers Wednesday, June 30, 2021 at 1 p.m.

Dear Member,

Notwithstanding our outstanding productivity these past 15 months, and the fact that our jobs are perfectly suited to work remotely, all staff was required to return to their respective courthouses on May 24th. I want to thank you again for all your hard work, commitment, and dedication to your job during these difficult and trying times. The work you have done these past 15 months has been truly exceptional.

From day one, you rose to the challenge of working from home despite the difficulties of not having all necessary equipment and tools you have at work. Whether you conferenced cases, held hearings, trials or drafted decisions, etc. - you have clearly proven that working from home works - that we can be productive and that we can produce the same quality of the work while working remotely.

I want to acknowledge and recognize our Family Court Referees who were working in person since June 2020. You were the first ones in our union to return to the courthouses in 2020. You returned to work having to use mass transportation when COVID numbers were still high and the vaccine was not available, and when few, if any, safety protocols were in place in your courthouses. Most importantly, you continued to manage your heavy caseload, conference cases, hold hearings and trials, and serve the public from the courthouses. Similarly, some of our Supreme Court and Surrogate's Court Attorneys/Referees also came in to work to conference cases, hold hearings, and trials, etc. on a rotational basis throughout the year. Thank you for your sacrifice.

While returning to work in person on May 24th, 2021 was definitely an adjustment, it was great seeing and speaking with many of you during the week of May 24th when I visited your respective courthouses.

Throughout the year, the union had many meetings with the Coalition, the OCA, and various courts to address issues which arose, including the 2% contractual raise, layoffs, and working conditions. Thankfully, there were no layoffs, we resolved many of the working conditions, and on May 26th, we received our 2% contractual raises retroactive to April 1, 2020.

The Association is currently preparing for upcoming contract negotiations. Rest assured, we will be revisiting the issue of telecommuting. If you have any suggestions or comments about upcoming contract negotiations, please forward them to your delegate.

Reimbursement Programs

Don't forget to submit your forms for the following reimbursements programs:

Earlier today, the Board of Trustees extended the claims filing deadline for the Pilot Medical Reimbursement Program.

1) **Pilot Medical Reimbursement Program**, a one-time benefit, offers active members a reimbursement of up to \$500, and retired members up to \$250, for otherwise unreimbursed medical, dental, optical and/or prescription drug costs which have been incurred by you, your spouse and/or dependents from July 1, 2020 - **August 31, 2021**. Said claims must be postmarked **no later than October 31, 2021**.

2) **Dues Reimbursement Program**- a one-time \$250.00 union dues reimbursement to all eligible members who have paid dues for at least 12 consecutive months, provided the member had a membership application on file with the union as of April 15, 2021. Once you have completed 12 consecutive months of union dues membership payments, you may submit your application for reimbursement. The filing deadline to submit this application is **no later than April 15, 2022**.

3) **Pandemic Stipend Program**- a one-time \$100.00 pandemic stipend reimbursement to all eligible members who have paid dues for at least 5 consecutive months, provided the member had a membership application on file with the union as of April 15, 2021. Once you have completed 12 consecutive months of union dues membership payments, you may submit your application for reimbursement. The filing deadline to submit this application is **no later than April 15, 2022**.

All the forms for the above programs are available on our website- www.caanyc.org, or at www.asonet.com, the website of Administrator Services Only, Inc. (ASO), our Welfare Fund Benefits Administrator.

Finally, I want to thank you, the members, many of whom I have spoken with throughout the year. I appreciate all your comments, suggestions, and feedback. I also want to thank the Executive Board members who have been working tirelessly on your behalf and will continue to do so. A special thank you to our Secretary, Janice Purvis, for making the first time we conduct our elections via a secure online platform effortless.

I wish you a safe and wonderful summer.

Best,

Jeanette Mercedes

Our Members

Retirees:

We wish a happy and healthy retirement to the following Court Attorneys/Referees : John D'Alessandro, Kevin Egan, Kevin Elford, Carol Gardner, Steven Liebman, Emily Martinez, Kevin Quarantino, Charles Rabin, Marilyn Sugarman, Rosina Taffuri, and Williams Torres. Thank you for all your hard work, dedication, and commitment.

A special thank you to Carol Gardner, past secretary and delegate, for your commitment, service, and contribution to our Association especially during these unprecedented and difficult times.

Congratulations:

Congratulations to Janet McFarland who was appointed as an Interim Civil Court Judge this year and is now serving in Family Court.

Congratulations to Hemalee Patel who became General Counsel for the Board of Elections this year.

Congratulations to Erica Gomez on receiving the special "2020 Covid-19 Pro Bono Surrogate's Court Initiative Award".

Congratulations to Yacine Barry-Wun, and her husband, Herman Wun, on the birth of their second son, Thierno Jiyin Wun, on March 7, 2021.

Congratulations to Mary Wang, and her husband, Robert, on the birth of their son, Leo Ace Wong, on November 7, 2020.

Congratulations to Kelly Perez, and her husband, Kris, on the birth of their second son, Everett Julius Perez, on November 9, 2020.

Congratulations to Ian Guthoff on his new job working for a NYC environmental law firm.

Good Luck:

Cassandra Johnson- We wish you the best of luck in running for Civil Court Judge.

Farewell:

Congratulations to Martin Popovic, our long time delegate, who will be leaving our Association and going to work for Justice Ben Barbato. Good luck in your endeavors. Thank you for your service to our Association, and exceptional work as a Court Attorney Referee. We appreciate your hard work, dedication, and commitment.