

Message from the Chair

In January, I was honored and privileged to become the Chair of the Corporate Counsel Section for 2019. I wish to thank my predecessor, Elizabeth Champnoi, for her outstanding 18 months of service as Chair. Not only did she prove to be a strong and steady leader of the Section, along with concurrently being the editor of this publication, but she was thrown into this leadership position prematurely upon the untimely passing of Section Chair Jana Springer Behe. Trust me, the year spent as Chair-elect is one that ramps up as one gets closer to becoming Chair. Jumping in six months early, upon learning of the death of a dear friend, is a feat to be recognized. Thank you, Liz, for your passion, vision and work ethic. I also need to thank Jessica Thaler-Parker for her past work as Vice-Chair, and Naomi Hills, who was Secretary of the Section. Naomi will continue on as an officer in the position of Vice-Chair.

It has been my pleasure to serve on the Section's Executive Committee since 1999, and I was first Chair 14 years ago. Why have I volunteered my time to serve this Section for so many years? An easy answer: it's all about the people — the members of the Executive Committee, the members of the "Big Bar" that we work with, the law students we mentor and find internships for and the members we meet at the CLE programs and other activities.

Who are we? We are 1,500+ members strong, made up of 55% in-house counsel, 33% in private practice, with the remainder law students hoping to end up in an in-house position and others who have a general interest in the in-house corporate practice. Approximately 65% of us practice in New York, though many live or work in surrounding states, and there is a 14% international contingent. We have almost as many members who practice in large law departments or firms as those who practice as one of five or fewer attorneys and just as many who are solo practitioners. From an age breakdown, our members are equally spread among the different age bands. The majority of our members have been in practice for more than 20 years. By gender, men make up approximately 60% of our membership. If we are not you, we can be you.

What are the membership benefits? The subscription to *Inside*, interesting CLE programming for which you receive a discounted registration rate, free lunchtime webinar informational briefings and access to the Section's Committees.

In November the Section put on its semi-annual CLE Ethics for Corporate Counsel, which was well attended and received. In December we conducted a free luncheon webinar entitled "Block Chain and Smart Contracts 101." At the NYS Bar Association Annual Meeting in January,

the Section partnered with the Dispute Resolution Section to produce an afternoon of CLE under the title "ADR in the Boardroom and the Headlines: Not Fake News." The following week, we partnered with the NY Women's County Bar Association in presenting "Breaking Through Bias to Achieve Rainmaking and Leadership Success." Looking ahead,

our Eighth Corporate Counsel Institute will be held on October 17th, at the offices of Kelley, Drye & Warren in midtown Manhattan, with a reception to follow. Please look for the marketing collateral on p.33. We have hosted and will continue to host lunchtime webinar informational briefings and CLEs.

Our committees are always looking for new members. Please reach out to me or our Section's liaison, Sally Bratten, at Sbratten@nysba.org, if you are interested in becoming involved.

I would be remiss if I didn't highlight one of our Section's gemstones, the Kenneth G. Standard Diversity Internship Program. The program, in its 14th year, is named in honor of the NYSBA Past President who has shown a lifetime commitment to initiatives aimed at increasing diversity in the legal profession. The Section works with various New York State law schools to select diverse law students to apply for summer internships in corporate law departments with New York State companies or organizations. Last year, 11 interns from eight law schools were placed in eight corporate organizations. For the first time the Section placed an intern through the New York State Bar Foundation, in memory of Past Chair Jana Springer Behe. Look for an update about this year's program in the fall edition of *Inside*.

If you have any questions/comments for me or want to volunteer to become active in a committee or other activity, please contact me at mitchell.borger@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you. In the meantime, enjoy this spring/summer edition of *Inside*.



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