

## Women's Law Student Association Networking Event

Thursday September 24th

WLSA members will join College of Law alumnae for a virtual conversation to discuss professional experiences and career paths.

### **Darienn Powers Balin L'17** **Assistant District Attorney, Onondaga County**

Darienn Powers Balin is an Assistant District Attorney serving in the Onondaga County District Attorney's Office Law and Appeals Bureau. Her primary responsibilities include responding to direct appeals and post-conviction motions in local courts, the Appellate Division Fourth Department, and the New York Court of Appeals. Prior to working at the District Attorney's Office, Darienn began her career at the Hiscock Legal Aid Society. There, she spent time in their foreclosures defense and criminal appeals units. A 2017 graduate of Syracuse University College of Law, Darienn received her certificate of advanced study in national security and counterterrorism law while serving as the editor-in-chief of the *Impunity Watch Law Journal*. Outside of the courtroom, she enjoys sewing, board games, and playing with her dogs, Bailey and Sammy. Connect with Darienn via e-mail at darienn.powers@gmail.com.

### **Upnit K. Bhatti L'15** **Managing Associate, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe**

A former Third Circuit clerk, Upnit is a Managing Associate in the Supreme Court and Appellate practice group.

Upnit represents clients in federal and state courts at both the trial and appellate levels. For example, she has been embedded in multiple trials as appellate counsel for Johnson & Johnson to preserve appellate issues. Upnit also works with trial teams in complex commercial matters to draft dispositive motions and develop creative legal strategies. She has presented oral argument in state and federal courts and has co-authored briefs before state and federal trial and appellate courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States. In addition, Upnit maintains an active pro bono practice.

Prior to joining Orrick, Upnit focused on products liability and complex litigation work at Arnold & Porter LLP and a mid-size firm in Upstate New York. This included representing a consumer products company in the defense of thousands of personal injury cases in state and federal courts. She was the primary drafter of several motions and appellate briefs. She was also deeply involved in the firms' pro bono practice and first chaired a trial dealing with First and Eighth Amendment claims.

Outside of the firm, Upnit serves as the Co-Chair of the DC Women's Bar Association's Amicus Committee and Diversity Committee. She is also the Secretary of the Board of her law school's Alumni Association.

Upnit previously clerked for the Honorable Theodore A. McKee of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals and interned for the Honorable Thérèse Wiley Dancks of the Northern District of New York. In law school, Upnit served as the Managing Editor of the *Syracuse Law Review*, and was an arguing member of the American Bar Association's National Appellate Team. She received the Moot Court Honor Society's Executive Director Award and the Syracuse Law Review Distinguished Leadership Award.

### **Lauren Blau L'17** **Associate, Chemtob, Moss, Forman & Beyda, LLP**

Lauren Blau is an Associate at Chemtob, Moss, Forman & Beyda, LLP (New York City) where she practices exclusively matrimonial and family law.

Lauren prides herself on being a problem solver and zealously represents her clients both inside and outside the courtroom. She works diligently to obtain speedy resolutions in her cases but is mindful of the emotional roller coaster her clients are on. Lauren takes the time to carefully listen to her clients to identify their specific needs and finds solutions while offering emotional support and counseling them on their rights and the legal process.

Lauren is passionate about matrimonial and family law and has dedicated her legal training to this field. Lauren graduated from Syracuse University College of Law where she completed a curricular program in Family Law and Social Policy. There Lauren was a Student Attorney for the Children's Rights and Family Law Clinic (2L and 3L) where she represented clients in a variety of Family Court matters. One of Lauren's proudest moments was when she successfully advocated for a father having full custody of his son. Lauren was also a Student Attorney in the Elder Law Clinic (3L) where she honed her skills in estate planning and today counsels her clients about the importance of estate planning post-divorce. Lauren also represented domestic violence victims in obtaining Orders of Protection as a Student Attorney through the Pace Women's Justice Center Family Court Legal Program.

During her 2L summer, Lauren was a judicial intern to the Honorable Kathie E. Davidson, Supervising Judge of the Family Courts of the 9th Judicial District (which includes Westchester). Working in chambers, Lauren learned how judges evaluate cases.

Lauren is currently a member of the New York Women's Bar Association, New York City Bar Association, New York State Bar Association, and New York County Lawyers Association. Lauren also continues to support her alma mater and is an active member of the Board of Directors of the Syracuse Law Alumni Association.

Prior to joining Chemtob Moss Forman & Beyda, Lauren worked at Advocate, LLP, a boutique matrimonial firm in Manhattan that specializes in high asset divorces.

### **Danielle Cima L'01** **Associate General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, Community Bank System, Inc.**

Danielle McCann Cima, Esq. is the Associate General Counsel and Corporate Secretary of Community Bank System, Inc. (NYSE:CBU). Headquartered in DeWitt, N.Y., Community Bank System, Inc. has more than 240 customer facilities across Upstate New York, Northeastern Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Western Massachusetts through its banking subsidiary, Community Bank, N.A. With assets over \$13.0 billion, Community Bank System, Inc. is among the country's 125 largest banking institutions. Prior to Ms. Cima joining Community Bank, she was a member (partner) at Bond, Schoeneck & King, PLLC where she specialized in mergers and acquisitions, securities and general business law. Ms. Cima is a past President of the Central New York Women's Bar Association and the recipient of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York's Doris S. Hoffman Outstanding New Lawyer Award. Ms. Cima was also received the 40 Under Forty Award and the Women in Business Award from the *Central New York Business Journal*.

### **Angela Cruz L'06** **Assistant Unit Chief, Tort Division NYC**

Angela R. Cruz began her career at the Law Department in the Family Court Division where she prosecuted both misdemeanor and felony juvenile delinquency cases. In 2008, Angela transferred to the Tort Division, where she is currently a Senior Counsel in the division's elite Special Litigation Unit. Angela defends the City of New York, its agencies, and employees in high profile and complex personal injury actions, often involving catastrophic injuries and garnering substantial media attention. She handles cases from inception through disposition by motion practice, settlement, or trial. In 2011, Angela's efforts were recognized when she received the Division Chief Award and in December 2014, when she received the Law Department's Edith I. Spivak Special Recognition Award. In 2016, Angela was promoted to Assistant Unit Chief within the Special Litigation Unit.

Prior to joining the Law Department, Angela earned a B.A. and an M. S.W. from Tulane University and a J.D. from Syracuse University College of Law.

### **Staci Dennis-Taylor L'14** **Assistant District Attorney, Onondaga County**

Staci Dennis-Taylor, Esq. is an experienced litigator and mediator. Driven by a dedication to equal justice under the law, Staci takes pride in supporting racial justice and diversity initiatives in her community.

Staci is a lifetime resident of Syracuse and attended local schools, graduating from Corcoran High School in 2003. After high school, Staci attended Hobart and William Smith Colleges and Le Moyne College, graduating magna cum laude in May of 2010 with a B.A. in English. While completing her undergraduate studies, Staci worked as a legal secretary and was inspired to pursue a career in law. She enrolled in Syracuse University College of Law.

Upon graduating from the College of Law in 2014, Staci worked as a Family Court Mediator with New Justice Conflict Resolution Services, Inc., where she mediated custody and visitation disputes.

In 2016, Staci joined the Onondaga County District Attorney's Office as an Assistant District Attorney. She is a member of the Special Victims Bureau and prosecutes cases involving domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual assault.

In 2019, Staci was recognized as one of CNY's "40 Under 40" for her commitment to advocating for vulnerable and underserved members of our community. Staci serves on a number of boards, including the SU College of Law Student Alumni Association and the Onondaga County Bar Association. She is a proud member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. and active in a number of community-focused organizations.

Staci has continued to make Syracuse her home, and lives on the Southside with her husband and four children.

### **Colleen Gibbons L'17** **Deputy Director, Center for Court Innovation**

Colleen Gibbons is the Deputy Director of the Center for Court Innovation's Upstate office. Reporting to the Director of the Syracuse office, Colleen works on a variety of state court initiatives, including supporting the expansion of opioid courts; developing new projects in the criminal, civil and family court systems; and overseeing the office's numerous existing initiatives. In addition, Colleen spends a portion of her time working with the Center's National Technical Assistance team, helping to provide training and technical assistance to jurisdictions across the country on a wide range of justice issues.

Colleen graduated from the College of Law in 2017, having completed curricular programs in disability law and policy and estate planning. In her 1L summer, Colleen interned at the Volunteer Lawyers Project of Onondaga County, where she worked in the Family Clinic and Landlord-Tenant Clinic providing legal assistance and advice to low-income members of the Syracuse community.

In her 2L summer and immediately after graduation, Colleen worked at Bousquet Holstein, PLLC, focusing on not-for-profit and elder law matters.

In her final year at SUCOL, Colleen was president of the Student Bar Association (SBA) and Pro Bono Fellow. She also served a term as president of Syracuse's Women's Law Student Association, and was an active member of many student organizations, including the Disability Law Society, Syracuse Public Interest Network, OutLaw, If/When/How, and the Student Animal Legal Defense Fund.

Colleen completed the Low Income Taxpayer and Disability Law clinics, was a Research Assistant for Professor Mary Helen McNeal, and served as a student mentor for international students enrolled in the LL.M. program in American Law. Colleen also traveled to Santa Monica and Brooklyn as an arguing member of two intercollegiate trial teams, and during her 3L year she, along with her partner Justin Wilson, won the College of Law's Lionel O. Grossman Trial Competition.

Colleen completed her M.S. and Ph.D. in Human and Community Development at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and her B.S. in Exceptional Education at Buffalo State College. Prior to attending SUCOL, Colleen worked at Syracuse University's Falk College as the Project Manager for a National Institutes of Health grant. She also taught elementary school in Oneida, NY for five years.

Colleen is actively involved with the Onondaga County Bar Association's Volunteer Advocate Lawyer for Animals program and is a member of the OCBA's Community Engagement Committee. In addition to serving on the SULAA Board, Colleen is on the boards of the Central New York Women's Bar Association, the Syracuse Cooperative Market, and the ARISE. She loves talking politics and religion, and, less controversially, has two dogs, two cats, and a foster dog waiting for his forever home.

### **Marissa Sharpe Jackson L'19** **Assistant Chief Counsel, U.S. Department of Homeland Security**

Marissa Sharpe Jackson is an Assistant Chief Counsel for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Prior to joining DHS, Ms. Jackson clerked for the Honorable Donine Carrington Martin in the Circuit Court for Charles County, Maryland where she worked on civil, criminal, and domestic dockets. Ms. Jackson graduated from the College of Law and the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications in 2019, having participated in the dual degree JD/MS program. During her time at SUCOL, Ms. Jackson served on the executive boards of the Black Law Student Association and the Journal of International Law and Commerce. Ms. Jackson was also an active member of many student organizations, including the Cold Case Justice Initiative, Advocacy Honor Society, and the Entertainment and Sports Law Society. She is a member of the Georgia Bar.

### **Stephanie A. Jacqueney L'82** **Entertainment Lawyer and Business Affairs Executive**

Stephanie A. Jacqueney is an Entertainment Lawyer and Business Affairs Executive with over 30 years of experience in television and live production. She has worked with companies ranging from start-ups to major corporations.

In addition to her current consulting practice, most recently she did work for the American Broadcasting Companies, Inc. providing legal counsel for television news and programming, production and marketing clients.

She previously served as Vice President, Legal and Business Affairs for Madison Square Garden Sports & Entertainment, LLC where she was the lead production attorney for MSG and its Radio City Entertainment division's live productions, including the Radio City Christmas Spectacular and the New York Spectacular starring the Rockettes, as well as Super Bowl Halftime Shows and numerous other sports and entertainment large scale productions. She was also MSG's public intellectual property attorney and managed MSG's intellectual property portfolio.

Prior to MSG, Stephanie held several positions with Time Warner Inc. including that of Vice President and General Counsel of Manhattan Cable TV, then the largest franchise cable television operator. There Stephanie was responsible for all contracts, intellectual property, lobbying and legislative analysis as well as supervising in-house and outside counsel.

Before going to Manhattan Cable TV, Stephanie was an associate with the law firm of Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft.

In addition to her Syracuse J.D., Stephanie also holds a Masters in Public Administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs as well as a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University.

Stephanie is a member of the Syracuse University College of Law Board of Advisors, the Board of the Alumni Association of Cornell University's College of Human Ecology, a member of the Cornell University Council and a founding member of Cornell University's President's Council of Cornell Women.

She currently serves on the Entertainment Law Committee of the New York City Bar Association and has previously also served on its Copyright and its Arbitration Committees.

She and her husband, Mark Edelstein, reside in New York City. They are the proud parents of triplets one of whom is a Sports Management Major in the Falk School of Sport and Human Dynamics, a second of whom is a Sociology Major in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and the third of whom is a Business Major at the University of Miami Herbert Business School.

### **Linda J. Kostin L'90** **Director of the Appellate Division, Fourth Department Attorneys for Children Program**

Linda J. Kostin has been the Director of the Appellate Division, Fourth Department Attorneys for Children Program since January 2020, having served as the Assistant Director of the Program from 2013 to 2019. Prior to her employment with the Fourth Department, Ms. Kostin was the Pro Bono Coordinator at Volunteer Legal Services Project of Monroe County, Inc. (VLSPP), where she served as Co-Chair of the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) Pro Bono Coordinators Network. Ms. Kostin was a solo practitioner for 10 years, during which time she worked extensively as a law guardian both in Family Court, and in Supreme Court in high-conflict matrimonial matters. Ms. Kostin was honored to receive VLSPP's William E. McKnight Award for pro bono service in the area of family law. She began her career at the law firm now known as Nixon Peabody. Ms. Kostin graduated from Syracuse University College of Law, magna cum laude, and SUNY Geneseo, summa cum laude. She is a member of NYLSBA, the Greater Rochester Association for Women Attorneys (GRAWA), and the Monroe County Bar Association. Ms. Kostin is currently a member of NYLSBA's Committee on Children and the Law, serves on the GRAWA board of directors, and is Co-chair of GRAWA's continuing legal education committee. Through the Fourth Department's pro bono project, Ms. Kostin represents tenants facing eviction in Irondequoit Town Court, and volunteers for VLSPP's Family Law Clinic.

### **Kimberly Lau L'06** **Partner, Warsaw Burstein LLP**

Kimberly C. Lau is Partner and Chair of the Title IX/College Disciplinary Department of the law firm of Warsaw Burstein LLP in New York.

Her experience includes state and federal practice, trials, arbitrations, mediations and appeals in commercial litigation and Title IX/college disciplinary matters. She has represented numerous students and faculty of all genders in nearly 200 cases addressing a broad spectrum of disciplinary matters, including, academic dishonesty, theft, harassment, sexual misconduct, and gender discrimination at major colleges and universities nationwide. She regularly serves in a critical advisory role during student disciplinary proceedings and has litigated disciplinary matters in federal and state courts across the country.

The primary goal of her college disciplinary practice is to advocate for student rights during the disciplinary process in all types of disciplinary matters, whether the student is a complainant or the accused. Accused students seek Ms. Lau's assistance to help them develop an appropriate defense, and safeguard their due process rights before a life-altering decision is made. Meanwhile, complainants requiring support in navigating the disciplinary process look to Ms. Lau's professional advocacy and guidance to ensure that their rights are protected and respected. Additionally, Ms. Lau assists faculty involved in discipline matters to represent their employment rights and interests.

Ms. Lau's affiliations include the New York County Lawyers Association, the New York Women's Bar Association, FACE (Families Advocating for Campus Equality), National Association of Professional Women, and Asian Women in Business.

She regularly teaches continuing legal education programs regarding Title IX enforcement and litigation, and the evolving landscape of Office for Civil Rights' Title IX guidance. Ms. Lau has authored numerous articles on issues affecting how colleges and universities handle sexual assault on campus, the federal privacy statutes impacting student education records, and tips from her extensive experience in this area.

Ms. Lau's expertise in Title IX and college disciplinary matters has been featured on national news outlets, such as, CNN, ABC's Nightline, The Wall Street Journal and VICE News, and she has been quoted in national news media, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *Yahoo News*, *The New York Observer*, and *The Daily Beast*.

Ms. Lau is on the Board of Directors of FACE (Families Advocating for Campus Equality). FACE advocates for due process in college disciplinary tribunals. She regularly engages in lobbying efforts on the topic of our nation's campus disciplinary systems in Washington D.C. with the goal of educating legislators on all perspectives, and effecting change.

### **Janet Moon L'08** **Special Counsel, Bousquet Holstein PLLC**

Janet Moon is Senior Counsel in Bousquet Holstein's Immigration Practice Group, where she focuses her practice on immigration law. She offers her clients thorough legal analysis and responsive service, as she helps them navigate various immigration issues.

Prior to joining Bousquet Holstein, Janet took over the practice of veteran immigration attorney Diane Chappell-Daly. In addition to her immigration practice, Janet has represented criminal defendants through Onondaga County's assigned counsel program and served as Law Clerk for Magistrate Judge Bianchini of the Northern District of New York.

Janet serves on the CNY Board of NYCLU and CNY Women's Bar Association. She regularly volunteers through Onondaga County Volunteer Lawyer's Project and OnPoint for College.

Janet is a native of Connecticut. She attended Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, before moving to the Syracuse area where she attended Syracuse University College of Law and the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

Janet and her husband Alan have embraced Central New York, and made Syracuse their home. They enjoy playing board games and walking their dog, Sailor.

### **Ursula Nicole Simmons L'19** **Assistant Chief Counsel, U.S. Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcements**

Ursula Simmons is a 2016 graduate from the University of Pittsburgh who majored in Political Science and minored in French Language and Literature. Ursula graduated from Syracuse University College of Law in Spring 2019. While at SUCOL Ursula focused her studies on international relations and was an active member of Advocacy Honors Society. In addition, Ursula served on the Black Law Student Association's Northeast Regional Board as Community Service Director and Mock Trial Director during her 2L and 3L years. Currently, Ursula works as an Assistant Chief Counsel for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in Washington DC. Her cases focus on national security and human rights law.

### **C. Cora True-Frost G'01, L'01** **Bond, Schoeneck and King Distinguished Professor, Associate Professor of Law, Syracuse University College of Law**

Associate Professor Cora True-Frost L'01 specializes in international law and constitutional and human rights law. Her primary research interests include the development of international norms, with a particular focus on the role of international organizations and the United Nations Security Council in these processes.

Her scholarship draws on experiences defending individuals accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes, and leading the Nongovernmental Organization Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security at the UN headquarters to advocate to the UN Security Council. She is a co-editor and author of *The First Global Prosecutor: Promise and Constraints* with *Martha Minow* and *Alex Whiting*. The subjects of her published articles and chapters encompass ICC prosecution, terrorism and human rights law, and the UN Security Council and international norms.

Before joining the faculty, Professor True-Frost was a Climenko Fellow and Lecturer in Law at Harvard Law School, where she earned an LL.M., taught first-year legal research and writing, and taught a seminar in International Law. She was also a Safra Foundation Fellow at Harvard University. Professor True-Frost earned a J.D./M.P.A. magna cum laude as one of two Law Fellows at the Syracuse University College of Law and Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. She was Lead Articles Editor of the *Syracuse Law Review* and a member of the Moot Court Honor Society.

Before entering academia, Professor True-Frost founded the Women's Justice Unit at the Judicial Systems Monitoring Programme in East Timor, which continues to serve women today. She also served as Legal Consultant to the Fofana Defense Team at the Special Court for Sierra Leone. She was a Litigation Associate at Cravath, Swaine and Moore LLP and a Summer Associate at White & Case LLP.

In recognition of her excellence in teaching, Professor True-Frost received Syracuse University's L. Douglas Meredith Teaching Recognition Award in 2017. In 2018, the graduating LL.M. class awarded her the Lex Lucet Mundum award for her significant impact on master's degree students. In addition to her research and teaching, Professor True-Frost is the Faculty Director of Impunity Watch and an advisor to the College of Law's Philip A. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition team. She also serves as Faculty Advisor to the National Women's Law Student Association and the Syracuse University Program on Refugee Assistance. In 2015, she was appointed by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo to be a member of the state Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.

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