

MESSAGE FROM CHIEF JUDGE JANET DIFIORE

May 23, 2022

Thank you for giving us a few minutes of your time for an update on the latest developments affecting our courts and the justice system.

Today I want to focus on a topic that I know has been on everyone's mind: the senseless, racially-motivated act of violence that took the lives of 10 innocent community members who were simply going about their ordinary Saturday afternoon chores in the City of Buffalo on May 14th.

We grieve for the victims of that deadly attack and we pray for the families and loved ones who are left behind. And we also pray for our nation. We pray that we will come together and demonstrate the strength and decency to put an end to the evils of racism and gun violence.

As we struggle to process such a shocking act of evil, we continue to search for what each of us can do in our personal and professional lives to combat hatred and to foster safe, peaceful and just

communities for our families, our children and grandchildren and future generations.

One thing **must** be clear: in the face of the toxic currents of hate and inhumanity that undeniably exist here, and across the country, not only must our leaders stand against hate, but every one of us must work at every level, personal and professional, to achieve equity, kinship and inclusion for all.

And with that and, frankly, many other thoughts in mind, I want to draw your attention to an upcoming program: “Cultivating Leaders to Stand Against Hate,” scheduled to take place on Tuesday, May 31st, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., in honor of “Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month.”

This program, with its universal call for leadership against hate, was first conceived in response to the rise in violent attacks against Asian-Americans, and it comes at a time when we are yet again stunned by the murderous assault in Buffalo.

The program features a number of distinguished presenters, including keynote speaker Grace Meng, the first and only Asian-American member of Congress from New York State, who will share ideas and strategies for cultivating strong and inclusive leaders.

We thank the Franklin Williams Commission, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and, of course, our colleagues in the Asian-American Judges Association of New York, the South Asian Bar Association of New York, and the Jade Society for sponsoring this program, which had been in the works for many weeks.

I hope that you will consider tuning in and look upon this programming as an opportunity for you to become a more effective leader, and as a statement of solidarity and a demonstration that our court family proactively stands united in rejecting hate and intolerance.

Thank you, once again, for listening, and thank you for all that you are doing to help make our court system a model of fairness and inclusion.

Please stay safe.