



## *2026 Gala Dinner*

# THE FUTURE OF LEGAL EDUCATION

*Heather Gerken Daniel Abebe Matthew Diller*



*Judith S. Kaye Award*



April 8, 2026

Harvard Club of New York City

## America 250 and the Future of the Nation

Dear friends and supporters,

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence—a document that boldly declared American colonists free from the tyranny of the King of England. On this momentous occasion, the Society is returning to the ideals set forth by the framers of the nation in our founding documents.

We are revisiting the American Revolution as a lawyer’s revolution, establishing the basis of the rule of law as we now know it. New York lawyers were in the thick of it, with pre-revolution cases such as *Cosby v. Van Dam* (1733), *Crown v. John Peter Zenger* (1735), and *Forsey v. Cunningham* (1764) highlighting a growing—and uniquely American—body of independent common law.

Another case of this era *Crown v. Prendergast* (1766) focused on the injustices of the patroon system. Over 70 years later, the injustices would again be the focus of the Anti-Rent War in upstate New York, which became known as New York’s own revolution (Indeed, even the so-called “Calico Indians” who participated in the revolt wore costumes with a nod to their predecessors at the Boston Tea Party).

After the Revolution, New York’s case law continued to develop, with criminal libel actions on political speech, challenges to enslavement, and controversies involving industrialization, to name a few. The State made significant contributions to the development of the United States’ legal framework, including a central role in the creation of the federal Constitution’s Bill of Rights.

Though the profession has changed significantly since the days of the Revolution, the important role of lawyers in protecting the Constitution and the rule of law has not. Lawyers today continue to have their practice rooted in precedent, in history, and in the courageous actions of those that came before.

Together, we can inspire the new generations to uphold the ideals vested in the Declaration of Independence at Constitution, and to ensure that those who were denied these freedoms in 1776 are, and forever will be, granted them today.



Our sincerest gratitude,

A stylized, handwritten signature in gold ink that reads "Allison". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping tail.

**Allison M. Morey**  
Executive Director

## Empowering NYS Students Through Civic Education



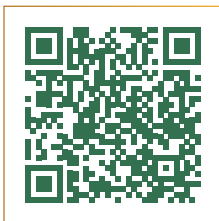
The Historical Society of the New York Courts has been committed to developing civic education resources for teachers and students that showcases the role of New York's courts and empowers students to understand the law and create change in their communities. Since the Society began its educational programming over 15 years ago, our student initiatives have supported educators and students with accessible, flexible, and clear materials and opportunities for judges and lawyers to visit their classrooms.

## Bringing Judges and Lawyers into the Classroom



When students meet directly with judges and lawyers, worlds of possibilities begin to open. The Society's guest speakers visit middle schools and high schools to discuss their journeys to the legal profession and their specialized practice, leaving students inspired and interested in the career opportunities the law can provide.

Over the course of the past year, the Society has begun to develop meaningful relationships with New York City schools, in hopes of growing the program throughout the State. Trustee **Michael W. Leahy**, Young Lawyers Committee member **Natasha Delille**, and Society supporter **Christopher St. Jeanos** met with high school business law students, discussing contract law, the role of insurance, and litigation. Trustee **Hon. Barry Kamins** reprised his prior talk on *12 Angry Men* and jury service to a new crop of students, while Trustee **Hon. Judy H. Kim** and **Hon. Robert Rosenthal** provided a similar talk about criminal trials and their role as judges, breaking down the facts of the justice system from the fictional portrayals in popular media. Trustee **Hon. Lillian Wan** served on a law and government panel for a high school's career day, describing her background, career path, and the work of a judge. Students come away from these presentations with greater appreciation of the law and understanding of the role that they play as individual citizens in our shared government.



### Get Involved!

Are you interested in inspiring students with classroom visits? Scan the QR code to let us know, and we will be in touch when we have an opportunity that aligns with your preferences!

*"The Society's efforts to bring legal professionals into the classroom play a vital role in helping students understand the relevance of law and civic engagement in their lives. The presentations by the participating attorneys were both informative and inspiring... Their willingness to share their expertise and real-world experiences offered our students a unique opportunity to learn beyond the textbook and develop a greater appreciation for the legal profession and its impact on society."*

-A Participating High School Teacher

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# Program

## WELCOME REMARKS

**Alan Levine**

*Senior Counsel, Cooley LLP  
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## THE FUTURE OF LEGAL EDUCATION

**Robert J. Giuffra, Jr.**

*Co-Chair & Partner, Sullivan & Cromwell LLP  
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## — IN CONVERSATION WITH —

**Heather Gerken**

*President, Ford Foundation and former Dean and  
Sterling Professor Emeritus of Law, Yale Law School*

**Daniel Abebe**

*Dean and Lucy G. Moses Professor of Law, Columbia Law School*

**Matthew Diller**

*Dean Emeritus, Professor of Law, and Co-Senior Counsel,  
John D. Feerick Center for Social Justice, Fordham School of Law*

## — PROGRAM BREAK —

## PRESENTATION OF THE JUDITH S. KAYE AWARD

**Alan Levine**

## — PRESENTED TO —

**Hon. Debra Ann Livingston**

*Chief Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit*

## — IN CONVERSATION WITH —

**Jonathan Lippman**

*Former Chief Judge of New York State and the New York Court of Appeals  
President, Historical Society of the New York Courts*

## CLOSING REMARKS

**Allison M. Morey**

*Executive Director, Historical Society of the New York Courts*

## Heather Gerken



Heather Gerken is the 11th president of the Ford Foundation. A nationally recognized expert on democracy, federalism, and elections, Gerken has spent her career working on bipartisan efforts to protect the rule of law.

Gerken has devoted much of her career to strengthening U.S. election systems and protecting the rule of law. She has served as a trustee of the Campaign Legal Center, a commissioner on the Bipartisan Policy Center’s Commission on Political Reform, and most recently as a member of the American Bar Association’s Task Force for American Democracy, a bipartisan group of leaders in law, public administration, and politics dedicated to strengthening public trust in elections and supporting the rule of law. In 2013, her proposal for a “Democracy Index”—a national ranking of election systems—was adopted by the Pew Charitable Trusts, which went on to create the nation’s first Election Performance Index.

Before joining the Ford Foundation, Gerken served for eight years as dean of Yale Law School, the first woman to hold the position in the school’s 200-year history. As dean, she led her peers across legal education in expanding access to law school for veterans, low-income students, and first-generation college students, while launching innovative programs to strengthen academic freedom and free speech on campus.

In addition to leading Yale Law School, Gerken founded and worked directly with the country’s most innovative clinic in local government law, the San Francisco Affirmative Litigation Project (SFALP), which partners students with city attorneys to litigate on behalf of the City of San Francisco.

Before her tenure at Yale, Gerken was a professor at Harvard Law School and practiced law at Jenner & Block, where she litigated voting rights cases and helped secure a major housing desegregation settlement.

A native of Massachusetts, Gerken graduated *summa cum laude* from Princeton University in 1991 and from the University of Michigan Law School in 1994 as a Darrow Scholar. After law school, she clerked for Judge Stephen Reinhardt of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and Justice David Souter of the U.S. Supreme Court. She later served as an appellate lawyer in Washington, D.C., before joining the Harvard Law School faculty in 2000. Gerken joined Yale Law School in 2006 and became the inaugural J. Skelly Wright Professor of Law in 2008. She served as Dean of Yale Law School from 2017 to 2025 and was named Sterling Professor Emeritus of Law—the university’s highest academic honor—upon her departure.

## Daniel Abebe



Daniel Abebe is Dean and Lucy G. Moses Professor of Law at Columbia Law School. He became the 16th dean of Columbia Law School on August 1, 2024.

Dean Abebe's scholarship centers on the relationship between the constitutional law of U.S. foreign affairs and public international law. His research has been published in leading academic journals, such as *International Studies Quarterly*, *The University of Chicago Law Review*, *The Supreme Court Review*, and the *Stanford*, *Chicago*, *Virginia*, and *University of Pennsylvania* journals of international law, and he has presented

at conferences and symposia around the world. Dean Abebe has taught Property, Foreign Relations Law, Conflict of Laws, Public International Law, and Legal Issues in International Transactions.

Before joining Columbia Law School, Dean Abebe served as vice provost for academic affairs and governance at the University of Chicago, where he was responsible for stewarding critical aspects of university-wide academic life as well as important strategic assignments, such as articulating and affirming the principles of free expression and institutional neutrality. He was the Harold J. and Marion F. Green Professor of Law at the University of Chicago Law School and served as deputy dean from 2016 to 2018, prior to his tenure in the Office of the Provost from 2018 to 2024.

Dean Abebe is an elected member of the American Law Institute, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Higher Learning Commission, and a member of the Board of the Knight First Amendment Institute. He previously served as a member of the Board of Governors for Argonne National Laboratory, and as chair of the Board of Directors of Chapin Hall and the Board of Directors of the University of Chicago Charter School. He clerked for Judge Damon J. Keith of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit, and he worked at the New York office of Cravath, Swaine & Moore.

## Matthew Diller



Matthew Diller is one of the nation's leading voices on access-to-justice issues and a prominent scholar of social welfare law and policy. He is also an expert in legal education, having served as dean in two major law schools. In July 2025, Diller joined the John D. Feerick Center for Social Justice as Co-Senior Counsel, along with the Center's founder, John D. Feerick.

Diller served as dean of Fordham Law from 2015-2024. Under his leadership, the Law School launched an array of new programs and centers focused on advancing legal scholarship and undertook a series of landmark initiatives focused on transforming the student experience. Prior to being appointed dean of Fordham Law, Diller served as dean of the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law from 2009 to 2015. He began his teaching career at Fordham Law in 1993 and was named the Cooper Family Professor of Law and co-director of the Louis Stein Center for Law and Ethics. From 2003 to 2008, he served as the associate dean for academic affairs. Diller has taught a range of law school classes, including Professional Responsibility, Civil Procedure, Administrative Law, Social Welfare Law, and Public Interest Law.

Diller worked as a staff attorney in the civil appeals and law reform unit of The Legal Aid Society from 1986 to 1993 and was a law clerk to the Honorable Walter R. Mansfield of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. He earned his A.B. and J.D. degrees, both *magna cum laude*, from Harvard University,

Diller has lectured and written extensively on the legal dimensions of social welfare policy and on the U.S. constitutional system. His articles have appeared in many leading law reviews and other legal publications. He is widely cited as an expert by the media, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Bloomberg*, and *National Law Journal*.

In addition to his work as an academic leader and scholar, Diller is a member of the New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice and is chair of the commission's Committee on Law School Involvement. He is chair of the New York City Bar Association's Taskforce on the Independence of Lawyers and Judges and has also served as vice president and a member of the executive committee of the Association. Diller has served on the boards of The Legal Aid Society of New York, Legal Services NYC, the National Center for Law and Economic Justice, and Volunteers of Legal Service. He is a member of the American Law Institute and is a fellow of the American Bar Foundation.

## Robert J. Giuffra, Jr., *Moderator*



Robert Giuffra is Co-Chair of Sullivan & Cromwell and a senior partner of the Firm's Litigation Group. He has served on Sullivan & Cromwell's Management Committee since 2007. A fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and of International Academy of Trial Lawyers, Bob focuses on "bet-the-company," commercial, securities, white-collar criminal, products liability, banking, insurance, employment and tax litigation.

A graduate of Princeton University and Yale Law School, Bob has served in all three branches of the U.S. government. He was a law clerk to Chief Justice William Rehnquist of the U.S. Supreme Court and Judge Ralph Winter of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. From 1995 to 1996, he was Chief Counsel to the U.S. Senate Banking Committee. In 2017, Chief Justice John Roberts appointed him to the Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure of the U.S. Courts. A native New Yorker, he has served on New York's Permanent Commission on Access to Justice, the State Commission on Public Integrity, the State Ethics Commission, the State-Federal Judicial Council, the Commercial Division Advisory Council, the Southern District Magistrate Judge Selection Panel, and the Commission on Attorney Discipline. He has also served as President of the Federal Bar Council. He is the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Historical Society of the New York Courts, Chair of the American Swiss Foundation and was a trustee of the American Ballet Theatre.

## Hon. Debra Ann Livingston



Judge Debra Ann Livingston was appointed United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit on May 17, 2007, entered on duty June 1, 2007, and became Chief Judge on September 1, 2020. She received her B.A., *magna cum laude*, in 1980 from Princeton University, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. She received her J.D., *magna cum laude*, in 1984 from Harvard Law School, where she was an editor on the *Harvard Law Review*. Following law school, she served as a law clerk to Judge J. Edward Lumbard of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

Judge Livingston was an Assistant United States Attorney in the Southern District of New York from 1986 to 1991, where she served as a Deputy Chief of Appeals in the Criminal Division. She was an associate with the New York law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison from 1985 to 1986 and again from 1991 to 1992, when she elected to pursue an academic career. Judge Livingston was a member of the University of Michigan's Law School faculty from 1992 until 1994 and was there awarded the L. Hart Wright Award for excellence in teaching.

Judge Livingston joined the Columbia Law School faculty in 1994 and has taught there since. At the time of her appointment to the Second Circuit, she was the Paul J. Kellner Professor of Law at Columbia, where she also served as Vice Dean. Judge Livingston is a co-author of the casebook, *Comprehensive Criminal Procedure*, and has published numerous academic articles on legal topics. She has taught courses in evidence, criminal law and procedure, and national security and terrorism. Judge Livingston has served on the Judicial Conference's Advisory Committee on the Federal Rules of Evidence and, from October 2017 to October 2020, she chaired the Advisory Committee. From 1994 to 2003, Judge Livingston was a Commissioner on New York City's Civilian Complaint Review Board. Judge Livingston is a recipient of Columbia's Wien Prize for Social Responsibility. She received the Learned Hand Medal for excellence in jurisprudence of the Federal Bar Council in 2021. In 2025, she received the Stanley Fuld Award, the highest honor of the New York State Bar Association's Commercial and Federal Litigation Section, and the Edward Weinfeld Award from the New York County Lawyers Association.

## Hon. Jonathan Lippman, *Moderator*



The Honorable Jonathan Lippman, former Chief Judge of New York and Chief Judge of the New York Court of Appeals, is Of Counsel in the New York office of Latham & Watkins in its Litigation & Trial Department.

Judge Lippman served as Chief Judge from February 2009 through December 2015. He previously served as the Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, First Department and as the longest-tenured Chief Administrative Judge in state history.

As the state's Chief Judge, he authored major decisions addressing constitutional, statutory and common law issues, championed equal access to justice issues and developed permanent funding streams for civil legal services. Chief Judge Lippman made New York the first state to require 50 hours of law-related pro bono work prior to bar admission and established programs to help alleviate the crisis in civil legal services. He strengthened the state's indigent criminal defense system, addressed the systemic causes of wrongful convictions, created Human Trafficking Courts, and led efforts to reform juvenile justice, bail and pre-trial justice systems. Judge Lippman championed the state's commercial division, reformed the attorney disciplinary system, adopted the Uniform Bar Exam, and succeeded in the creation of a salary commission for judges.

Judge Lippman serves as Chair of the Independent Commission on New York City Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform, which issued its latest report last year on the Path Forward to Closing the Rikers Island Jail Facilities. At the request of Governor Hochul, Judge Lippman, supported by Latham & Watkins, conducted a review and investigation of antisemitism and discrimination at CUNY and issued his report and recommendations, serving as a blueprint for combatting antisemitism, discrimination and hate at universities in New York and around the country.

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## Looking Back...

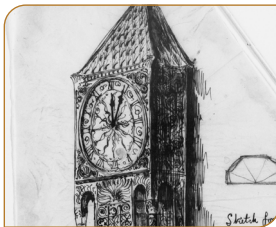
### RECENT PUBLIC PROGRAMS



#### **Remember, Reclaim, Rise: A Century of Black History**

*February 25, 2026 • Westchester County Supreme Court*

Co-presented with the **9th Judicial District Equal Justice in the Courts Committee**, this program featured a clip from the recently released *How Emeline Got Free* audiostory podcast, based on the experiences of the young enslaved woman at the center of the *Lemmon Slave Case*, along with an engaging discussion with director **Mustapha Khan** and scholar **Hon. Albert M. Rosenblatt**, who brought Emeline's story to life.



#### **Albany's Most Acclaimed Architect: Henry Hobson Richardson**

*November 17, 2025 • New York Court of Appeals*

Presented by the **New York Court of Appeals** and co-sponsored by the Society, this program brought together experts **Jay Wickersham**, **Chris Milford**, and **Hope Mayo** for a discussion about Richardson's architectural career in the state's capital.



#### **Rising to the Bench: Asian American Perspectives from the Judiciary**

*November 17, 2025 • Twentieth Century Club, Buffalo, NY*

Presented by the **Asian American Judges Association of New York** and the **Bar Association of Erie County** and co-sponsored by the Society, this roundtable conversation with **Judges Meredith Vacca**, **Lillian Wan**, **Kris Singh**, **Zainab Chaudhry**, and **Frances Wang** featured discussion about their journeys, insights, and experiences as Asian Americans in the judiciary.



#### **Remembering Willowbrook: Ensuring Justice, Dignity & Inclusion for Individuals with Intellectual & Development Disabilities**

*October 27, 2025 • Appellate Division, First Department Courthouse*

The Society joined the **Appellate Division, First Department** for this program that revisited Willowbrook over 50 years later. The panelists, including family members, attorneys, and service providers, shared their experiences, including their first-hand accounts of the abuses endured and the legal fight that led to the landmark consent decree.

## RECENTLY RELEASED PODCASTS



### How Emeline Got Free: The Story of the Woman at the Center of the Landmark Lemmon Slave Trial of 1852

*Starring Sheila Morris as Emeline*

This audio drama tells the story of the *Lemmon Slave Case* from the perspective of **Emeline Thompson**, the eldest of the eight enslaved women and children whose freedom was at stake at this 1852 trial. Using surviving narratives of enslaved people, case documents, and newspaper accounts, Emeline's story comes to life with a soundscape that transports listeners to 1850s New York City.



### Abolitionism & Advocacy in New York

*From the New Rule of Law Series*

This series dives into the careers, cases, and courage of pioneers in the law—those who advocated for equality, fought discrimination, and paved the way for those that followed. In the premiere episode, **Prof. Paula C. Johnson** joins scholars **Dr. Sarah L.H. Gronningsater** and **Hon. Albert M. Rosenblatt** for a discussion about abolition in New York.

## ...and Forward

## COMING SOON! PUBLIC PROGRAMS



### Highlighting *The Sewing Girl's Tale*

*October 28, 2026 • New York City Bar Association*

Author and historian **John Wood Sweet** wrote *The Sewing Girl's Tale* about the true-life story of Lanah Sawyer, a young woman who was raped in the 1790s. She sued, and she won. Panelists **Roberta A. Kaplan**, **Prof. Kate Mogulescu**, and **Hon. Michelle Weber** will discuss how far the law has come since Lanah's case, and what remains to be done.

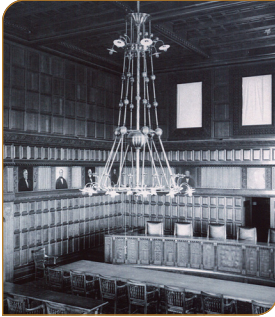


### New York's Own Revolution: The Anti-Rent War of the Hudson Valley & Its Relevance Today

*May 5, 2026 • Berne, NY*

The Society is heading to upstate for this program in partnership with the **Appellate Division, Third Department** that will feature the story of New York's own revolution in the 1800s with a screening of *Calico Rebellion* and a panel discussion to follow.

## SOON TO BE RELEASED PUBLICATIONS & PODCASTS



### **Judicial Notice 20**

*Summer 2026*

**Judicial Notice 20** revisits the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and how its promise of freedom has been realized, or not, 250 years later. Articles feature pioneering figures such as Revolutionary War hero **John Laurance**, legal scholar **John Norton Pomeroy**, and forward-thinking attorney **Louis Marshall** as well as New York's *Plessy v. Ferguson*—*People ex rel. King v. Gallagher*—and Chief Judge **Rowan D. Wilson's** analysis of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's court packing plan and his commitment to separation of powers.



### **Art in Troubled Times: The Depression-Era Murals of the New York County Courthouse**

*by Robert C. Meade, Jr.*

This article presents the definitive story of the iconic courthouses' murals. Developed during the Great Depression under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration, the murals showcase the ideals of justice and fairness as well as the story of New York's legal legacy. *Preview the full article online now!*



### **Oral History Interview with John D. Feerick**

*The transcript and video will be available on our website soon!*

This winter, **Robert J. Reilly** interviewed long serving Fordham Professor of Law (and Law School Dean) **John D. Feerick**. The two discussed Feerick's upbringing with immigrant parents, career at Fordham, and his interest in presidential succession and disability that led to the creation of the 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.



### **Elizabeth Street Garden**

*Podcast coming soon!*

Host **Adrian Untermyer** sits down with New York City Council Member **Christopher Marte** for a conversation about saving Elizabeth Street Garden and finding solutions to community problems that balance historic preservation and development. This conversation shows that economic growth and landmarked heritage can, and should, coexist.

*If you missed any of the Society's recent events or podcasts, watch them online: on the website, YouTube, and Facebook! Join our mailing list to receive invitations to all upcoming Society events!*



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