

SIWBA Annual Report

June 2015

Installation Ceremony - On June 29, 2015 the new officers of SIWBA were installed in a joyous ceremony held in Surrogate's Court Richmond County. The oath of office was administered by Justice Robert Gigante who hosted the event. Lunch was served to members of the SIWBA, judges, court staff, family, and friends.

On June 19, 2015, the SIWBA once again participated in the annual celebration of Gay Pride in the Staten Island Courts, sponsored by the Gay/Straight Alliance of the NYS Courts. Graciously hosted by Hon. Judith McMahon, Administrative Judge of Richmond County, the program was well attended by many local attorneys and Judges. Attendees also enjoyed a lunch and dessert buffet.

September 2015

Deposition Skills CLE - On October 19, 2015 the SIWBA sponsored a free dinner and CLE on Deposition Skills. The program highlighted basic deposition skills and rules, and included tips and techniques from highly seasoned and accomplished attorney Frank Composto. The CLE was a valuable skill development workshop for both new and experienced attorneys.

October 2015

ACS Breast Cancer Walk - Members of the SIWBA along with family and friends united to form team Legally Pink to join in the fight against breast cancer and to raise awareness in the community. In support of the Making Strides event, team members of Legally Pink made a commitment to raise funds and participate in the October 18, 2015 walk at the Midland Beach Boardwalk. Team Legally Pink raised money that will enable the American Cancer Society to fund research and provide free information and support to those affected by breast cancer. The determination and passion of the members of team Legally Pink made the event a great success.

JALBCA & SIWBA Breast Cancer Awareness Breakfast - On October 20, 2015, the SIWBA joined with JALBCA (Judges and Lawyers Breast Cancer Alert) to host the Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Breakfast. The event seeks to raise awareness and to promote early detection and genetic testing. We were proud to have the support of the Administrative Judge, the Honorable Judith McMahon, as well as that of the Court Staff. We were also very grateful to Judge Barbara Panepinto and Judge Karen Wolff for helping to organize the event. A mammography van was made available to the public for two days.

Membership Mixer - The SIWBA hosted a free membership mixer on October 27th at Li Greci's Staaten. Attendees were treated to a free gift bag and presentation from the event sponsor Northfield Bank. Old and new members had the opportunity to socialize and network while enjoying drinks and appetizers.

November 2015

On November 9, 2015 and January 6, 2016, SIWBA participated in WBASNY's screening of candidates for the vacancies then existing on the New York Court of Appeals, including that of the Chief Judge. The interviews were held at the headquarters of the Bar Association of the City of New York in Manhattan.

Advisory Council Dinner - On November 17, 2015, the SIWBA held its third annual Advisory Council dinner at the scenic Stone House at Clove Lakes Park. The event was hosted by the organization's immediate past president. The board of the SIWBA treated all SIWBA past presidents in attendance to a lovely evening including dinner and drinks. In exchange, former SIWBA presidents shared their wisdom with the board and discussed ideas for the upcoming year.

December 2015

Annual Judges' Reception - On December 9th, the SIWBA held its annual Judicial Reception and Holiday Dinner at the Hilton Garden Inn. Over 200 members of the legal community joined together to celebrate the achievements of the Staten Island judiciary. The SIWBA chose Justice Catherine DiDomenico as its 2015 special honoree for her outstanding commitment to advancing the status of women in the legal community. In the spirit of the holiday season, the SIWBA invited the Staten Island Marine Corps League to the event and requested attendees donate to the League's annual Toys for Tots Drive. A portion of the proceeds from the reception was donated to the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

January 2016

Ice Skating Fun-Raiser - On January 18, 2016, the SIWBA hosted its second Annual Family Friendly "Fun" Raiser at the WWII Veterans War Memorial Ice Skating Rink in Clove Lakes Park. It was a night to celebrate the winter season with fun for the entire family. The weather was perfect and the entire rink was donated to the SIWBA for its use and enjoyment. Hot chocolate, pizza, soft drinks, and snacks were provided by the SIWBA. We were joined by court staff, attorneys, judges, and their families. All the proceeds from the evening were donated to the Seton Foundation for Learning. A great time was had by all!

February 2016

Wine & Wellness Networking Event - On February 12, 2016 the SIWBA hosted its third annual Wine and Wellness Program at the Staten Island Winery. SIWBA members and friends enjoyed an evening of wine tasting, cheese plates, homemade pizza and networking. Attendees were treated to a high-powered presentation by Tonya Kelly entitled "How to Re-boot, Re-Energize, and Live Your Life on Full." The presentation included strategies for getting your energy back and staying motivated. Ms. Kelly also discussed tips for stress management. One lucky member won a CD raffled off by Ms. Kelly.

March 2016

Family Court Practice CLE - On March 23, 2016 the SIWBA sponsored a CLE entitled Family Court Practice CLE - Representing Juveniles In Specialized Family Court Proceedings. The CLE was free for all members and featured panelists Honorable Helene Sacco, Cynthia Lopez, Esq., Lisa Donovan, Esq., Daniel Greenbaum, Esq., Scott Schwartz, Esq., Alison Hamanjan, Esq., Kendal Nested, Esq., and Harry Chiu, Esq. More than fifty members attended the CLE.

April 2016

SIWBA participated and was well represented at the Staten Island Legal Services luncheon on April 15, 2016. The event featured speeches from clients who had been helped by the organization as well as from the honorees, State Senators Diane Savino and Andrew Lanza.

Gender Fairness Program - On April 19, 2016 the SIWBA along with the Staten Island Gender Fairness Committee held its annual gender fairness program at Curtis High School. The event entitled "What Every Teen Should Know: Violence In Relationships; Social Media" provided students and members of the community the opportunity to engage in a thoughtful discussion. The program helped to raise awareness and educate individuals about violence in relationships and how to prevent it. Attendees had the privilege of listening to presentations by Victoria Levin, Assistant District Attorney, Special Victims Bureau, Richmond County, D.A., Stacia Buckner, MFT, Safe Horizon, Staten Island Community Program, and Alison Hamanjan, Court Attorney Referee, Richmond County Family Court.

Annual Meeting - The SIWBA held its Annual Meeting and Elections on April 21, 2016 at Li Greci's Staaten. Members enjoyed dinner at a renowned Staten Island establishment. The event was sponsored by WBASNY preferred provider Envision Strategic Financial LLC. SIWBA members voted for new officers and were updated on events that occurred throughout the year. The SIWBA collected donations for Project Hospitality's Dine Out for Hunger.

SIWBA continues to be a strong participant in the CLARO (Civil Legal Advice and Resource Office) program, which provides legal help to unrepresented persons who are being sued on consumer debt. The attorney volunteers receive CLE credit after completing training and participating in three counseling sessions. SIWBA members Rosemary F. Palladino and Sheila McGinn serve on the Steering Committee, and SIWBA has been instrumental in publicizing the program, as well as having many of our members serve as volunteers.

SIWBA also continues to support the Uncontested Divorce Clinic which began as a project of the WBASNY Access to Justice Issues Committee. The clinic meets at the Supreme Court in Richmond County on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month.