

# Ilene S. Cooper

Partner

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Ilene Sherwyn Cooper is a partner practicing litigation and estate planning in Surrogate's Courts throughout Metropolitan New York. Before joining Farrell Fritz, she served for ten years as the Chief Law Assistant of the Suffolk County Surrogate's Court. Her responsibilities there included preparing judicial opinions on complex and novel issues; acting as the Trial Assistant to the Surrogate, preparing pretrial memoranda, jury charges, evidentiary rulings and post-trial decisions; and administering the daily operation of the Law Department, supervising staff attorneys, advising department heads and developing court policy. She is a graduate of Cornell University and Hofstra University School of Law.

Ilene is a Fellow of the American College of Trusts and Estates Council (ACTEC). She is a former Chair of the New York State Bar Association's Trusts & Estates Law Section and is currently an Executive Committee Member of the section. Ilene was elected as a Tenth Judicial District Delegate by the Suffolk County Bar Association, effective June 1, 2022. Additionally, she is on the Committee on Legal Education & Admission to the Bar, the Committee on Professional Discipline, and the Nominating Committee. Ilene is a Board Member and Fellow of the New York Bar Foundation, and she is a member of the Grants Committee. Ilene belongs to the New York City Bar Association and is on the association's Estate and Gift Taxation Committee; she is a former member of the Trusts, Estates, and Surrogate's Court Committee. She is a past President of the Suffolk County Bar Association, where she also served on the Board of Directors and in various roles on multiple committees. Ilene is a former Board Member of the Suffolk County Women's Bar Association. She was a member of the New York State Grievance Committee for the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District from 2006-

## PRACTICE AREAS

Estate Litigation

Trusts & Estates

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## EDUCATION

Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University, J.D.

Cornell University, B.S.

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## AFFILIATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

New York State Bar Association, Trusts and Estates Law Section, Former Chair and Member of Executive Committee

New York State Bar Association, Committee on Legal Education & Admission to the Bar and Committee on Professional Discipline, Former Member

New York State Bar Association House of Delegates, Former SCBA Representative

New York State Bar Association, Trust and Estate Administration Section, Former Chair

New York Bar Foundation, Board Member and Fellow

New York Bar Foundation, Grant Committee, Member

American College of Trusts and Estates Council (ACTEC), Fellow

American College of Trusts and Estates Council (ACTEC), Special Committee on Fiduciary Appointments, Former Member

American College of Trusts and Estates Council (ACTEC), Member, Legal Education Committee

New York City Bar Association, Surrogate's Court Committee, Former Member

New York City Bar Association, Estate and Gift Taxation Committee, Member

2013.

Ilene writes a column, “Trusts and Estates Update,” for the New York Law Journal, is the author of “Case Notes,” a quarterly column published in the New York State Bar Association’s Trusts and Estates Law Section Newsletter and is a columnist for the Suffolk County Bar Association’s publication, the Suffolk Lawyer. In 2002, she published a textbook entitled “Wills, Trusts and Estates—Essential Tools for the New York Paralegal,” which serves as a practice tool and guide for paralegals. This book has been updated over the years, and a digital edition has been published (updated edition issued December 2022). Further, Ilene is the editor of the volume on litigation in New York Surrogate’s Courts, published by Warren’s Heaton, and has written several articles for the The New York Bar Journal.

Ilene is currently an adjunct professor of law at Touro Law School, where she teaches trusts and estates. She was previously a visiting professor teaching trusts and estates at Hofstra Law School. Ilene also serves on Touro Law School’s Board of Governors.

Ilene was named a Best Lawyer in America in Litigation – Trusts & Estates annually since 2013, and she received Lawyer of the Year on Long Island in her area of practice in 2019 and 2021. Additionally, Ilene has been named a Super Lawyer in Estates & Trust Litigation annually since 2008; in 2020, she was one of the Top 50 Women in the New York Metro Area, and in 2019 and 2020, she was one of the Top 100 in the region. Ilene was recognized by Long Island Business News as “Who’s Who in Women in Professional Services” in both 2010 and 2013. In 2022, Ilene was selected as a member of the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University inaugural Hall of Fame class. These well-respected alumni were selected and recognized in conjunction with Hofstra Law School’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Ilene is a Board Member of the Suffolk County Child Care Council and a former Board Member of Child Abuse Prevention Services. She is on the Advisory Committee of Friends of Karen and is an appointed member of the Museum of Modern Art’s Friends of Education Committee and a member of Nassau County Museum of Art’s Annual Ball/Journal Committee. In recent years, Ilene has served on the Suffolk County Youth Board and the SYJCC Board.

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## Experience

- Served over ten years as a Principal Court Attorney/Referee for the Surrogate of Suffolk County, Honorable Ernest L. Signorelli

- Drafted proposal to amend Rule 4503(b) of the New York Civil Practice Law and Rules, which was signed into law, calling for the exception to the attorney-client privilege applying to proceedings concerning the validity or construction of wills to be extended to revocable trust contests.
- Responsible for an amendment to EPTLS-3.2, in order to increase the inheritance rights of non-marital children.
- Together with members of the New York State Bar Association's Trusts and Estates Law Section, drafted an amendment to SCPA 2307-a, dealing with attorney-fiduciaries.
- Instrumental in initiating and spearheading an amendment to Surrogate's Court Procedure Act (SCPA) 2211, which provides for discovery prior to the filing of objections in accounting proceedings.
- Drafted legislation, which was signed into law, to provide that abusive parents, whose rights have been terminated, are disqualified from receiving an inheritance from the abused child's estate.

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## Community Work

- Suffolk County Child Care Council, Board of Directors
- Friends of Karen, Advisory Board
- Suffolk County Youth, Board of Directors
- SYJCC, Board of Directors
- Touro Law School, Board of Governors
- The Queensborough Community College Fund, Inc., Fund Board Member
- Museum of Modern Art, Friends of Education Committee
- Nassau County Museum of Art, Annual Ball & Journal Committees
- Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, Member
- Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS), Former Board Member
- Children's Medical Fund Corporate Alliance, Former Member
- The Hills Foundation, Former Member
- Half Hollow Hills Business Advisory Council, Former Member
- West Hollow Middle School, School-Based Management Team
- Suffolk County Coalition Against Domestic Violence Honorary Board, Former Member
- Suffolk County Youth Board Coordination Council, Former Member

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## Recognition

- Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University, Hall of Fame Honoree, 2022
- Best Lawyers in America, Lawyer of the Year, Long Island, 2019, 2021
- Best Lawyers in America, Litigation, Trusts & Estates, 2013-present
- Super Lawyers, New York Metro, Top 100 List, 2019, 2020
- Super Lawyers, New York Metro, Top 50 Women, 2020
- Super Lawyers, New York Metro, Estates & Trust Litigation, 2008-present
- Martindale Hubbell, AV Preeminent Peer Review Rating
- Martindale Hubbell, Top Women Lawyers in the Northeast, Trusts & Estates, Wills & Probate, 2011
- Long Island Business News, Who's Who in Women in Professional Services, 2010, 2013
- Times Beacon Record, Volunteer of the Year, 2010
- The Carol M. Baldwin Breast Cancer Fund, Special Award, 2010
- Long Island Center for Business and Professional Women. Achiever in Law 2007
- Long Island Business News, Top 50 Women Hall of Fame Inductee, 2005