

Message from the Chair

By Robert M. Harper

As I write the Fall 2019 Chair's Message, the leaves have changed colors, the temperatures have dipped, and the Holiday Season is only weeks away. Despite those seasonal changes, our Section's members have remained as busy and enthusiastic as ever. I write to provide you with a brief update of our Section's many activities over the past few months.

First, in late October, our Section hosted a joint Fall Meeting with the Elder Law & Special Needs Section. I would like to thank Elder Law & Special Needs Section Chair Tara Pleat, program co-chairs Ellyn Kravitz, Nicole Clouthier, Frank Santoro, and Salvatore DiCostanzo, and speakers Katherine Carpenter, Joanna Feldman, William Keniry, Ian MacLean, Arlene Markarian, Hon. Tanya Kennedy, Hon. Paul Morgan, Anthony Lamberti, Ira Salzman, Professor Ira Bloom, Robert Freedman, Robert Abrams, Ilene Cooper, Joseph LaFerlita, Hon. Rita Mella, Hon. Brandon Sall, Nancy Rudolph, and Daniel Weitz for their contributions in making the Fall Meeting the tremendous success that it was. In addition, I would like to recognize Bar Association staff members Lisa Bataille and Cathy Teeter for the wonderful work that they did in organizing the Fall Meeting. The Fall Meeting could not have gone any better than it did, which reflects very well on the time and hard work that Tara, the program chairs, the speakers, Lisa, and Cathy invested into it. Thank you for your efforts.

Second, I would like to thank Hon. Stacy Pettit of Albany County, Surrogate Sall of Westchester County, and Hon. Acea Mosey of Erie County for hosting our law student fellows this summer; and to recognize our law student fellows, Emma Schwab, Briana Krawczyk, and Erika Panzarino, for their participation in the Section's law school fellowship program (for which our Section provides financial support through the New York Bar Foundation). Considering how few young attorneys practice in our field, and how difficult it is for many junior attorneys who wish to do so to break into trusts and estates practice, our Section is pleased to provide law students with the opportunity, and financial support, to learn about our practice area and to develop related skills. We greatly appreciate the Surrogates' involvement in this important program, and hope that our 2019 summer fellows enjoyed their experiences in our practice area.

Third, I would like to commend my predecessor, Natalia Murphy, for organizing our Section's inaugural Family Governance Symposium, which took place in July. Natalia assembled an impressive group of speak-



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ers to address family governance topics, for which there appears a tremendous appetite among trusts and estates practitioners. The inaugural Family Governance Symposium was a well-attended success, and the Section's officers and I appreciate Natalia's efforts in organizing it.

Fourth, in short order, our Section will renew its efforts (which Professor Bloom has spearheaded) to lobby for the enactment of the New York Trust Code. If enacted into law, the New York Trust Code would

(a) codify New York's trust law (which is, in many respects, case-based at the present time), (b) significantly improve the administration of trusts by providing greater clarity as to what New York law requires, and (c) make New York more competitive for trust administration business with the many states that already have enacted trust codes of their own. In short, if the Legislature enacts it into law, the New York Trust Code would be tremendously beneficial to New York attorneys, their clients, and the public, and our Section will continue to advocate in favor of it.

Finally, difficult as it is to believe that the tenure of our inaugural Trusts and Estates Law Section Rising Star Fellow (Sarah Pickering) is nearly complete, our Section is now seeking applicants for the 2020 Trusts and Estates Law Section Rising Star Fellowship. Intended for attorneys who have three to six years of relevant legal practice, the Rising Star Fellowship is a one-year appointment, which affords the Fellow the following benefits, among others: (a) placement on a Section committee; (b) pairing with a mentor on our Section's Executive Committee; (c) opportunities to speak at a Section event and to write for our Section's *Journal*; and (d) fee waivers for our Section's Annual Meeting, Spring Meeting, and Fall Meeting, and certain related travel expenses. Through the 2020 Rising Star Fellowship, we hope to encourage attorneys who are new to our practice area to become more involved in our Section and, more broadly, trusts and estates practice. We ask that interested, eligible attorneys apply for the 2020 Rising Star Fellowship by November 25, 2019.

As the foregoing shows, our Section's members have remained active in recent months. The Section's officers and I look forward to providing you with further updates of the many ways in which Section members continue to contribute to making our profession better and to the development of trusts and estates law. If you have any ideas about how to contribute, please do not hesitate to let the Section's officers and me know.