

WHO'S WHO | in Women in Professional Services

By LISA MORRIS JOSEFAK

ILENE SHERWYN COOPER

Farrell Fritz, P.C.

Ilene Sherwyn Cooper is an estate litigator at Farrell Fritz, P.C. and the author of several legislative amendments affecting the laws of inheritance in New York. Sherwyn Cooper has extensive experience administering decedents' estates, drafting and executing wills and trust instruments, powers of attorney, healthcare proxies and living wills.

Sherwyn Cooper believes that a new strategic plan must be developed for law schools and graduates.

"Law schools are in a difficult position today as a result of the changing job market for graduates," she said. "Due primarily to economic pressures confronting the business community, we have seen numerous law firms merge or cease to exist in recent years. Many law firms have streamlined their practice groups and are either not hiring, or are hiring cautiously. As a result, graduates cannot readily find employment – despite what statistics might otherwise say. This, coupled with the high student loan debt these graduates must repay, is resulting in fewer college students applying to law school."

"Some of the best and brightest who previously would have applied to law school are pursuing other careers," she noted.



With admissions applications down, law schools are all vying for a shrinking pool of well qualified candidates, Sherwyn Cooper explained.

"At the same time, law firms want entry level attorneys who can pretty much hit the ground running," she said. "We need to think strategically about how to make graduates more employable while reducing the risk of error when work is performed by an entry-level attorney. One possible solution would be for law schools to require enhanced, mandatory clinical programs for students, somewhat like the internships that medical students are required to pursue."

Sherwyn Cooper has held leadership roles with many state and local

professional and community organizations. This includes serving as chair of the New York State Bar Association's Trust and Estates Law Section, as well as on the association's Committee on Legal Education & Admission to the Bar and Committee on Professional Discipline; as a member of the New York State Bar Association's House of Delegates; as president of the Suffolk County Bar Association and as a Fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Council.

She is also an adjunct professor at Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center. Sherwyn Cooper published the textbook *Wills, Trusts and Estates – Essential Tools for the New York Paralegal*; is a columnist for the *New York Law Journal*; a contributor to the firm's *NY Trusts & Estates Litigation* blog and an editor of *Warren's Heaton on Surrogate's Court Practice*.

Farrell Fritz, P.C. is a full service law firm with more than 85 attorneys in four offices located in Uniondale, Hauppauge, Watermill and New York City. The firm provides legal services to businesses, not-for-profit organizations and individuals in the areas of corporate & banking, including securities, tax law and distressed assets; bankruptcy and creditors' rights; healthcare; real estate, including construction, land use, zoning, municipal, environmental law and tax certiorari; commercial litigation; labor and employment law; and trusts and estates planning, administration, and estate litigation.