

ISSUE NO. 09  
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# Newsletter

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## FROM YOUR CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

Dear Coalition Members in  
New York, DC, and Chicago,

We know you're receiving our first  
2020 Newsletter as we are living  
through a truly unprecedented time.  
As the Covid-19 pandemic continues  
spread, most of us have transitioned to  
working remotely, and many of us are  
dealing with Covid-19 related concerns  
and issues, while also taking care of  
our kids and families or otherwise  
trying to adjust to a whole new reality  
on work and personal fronts.

In this uncertain time, as your Chapter  
presidents we'd like you to know that  
we are unified in our support of all  
of you as our members, as the core  
founding mission of our organization.  
Our National Board and local chapters  
are currently working to make relevant  
remote programming available to you,  
including an upcoming webinar with  
Dr. Arin Reeves, and a mindfulness/  
meditation program with Dana Cruz.  
Stay tuned for additional details on  
these and other programs. We also  
would like all of our members to

remember, perhaps now more than  
ever, that this organization consists of  
a growing, uniquely responsive and  
supportive network of amazing women  
at all levels and areas of practice who  
come from diverse backgrounds and  
experiences in law firms, companies  
and government. So please don't  
hesitate to reach out to any of us, or  
to any of your Board members or  
your leadership, to network, lend a  
hand, ask for a hand or just to share a  
virtual drink or a cup of tea at the end  
of a tiring day. We are here for you.

In the meantime, please enjoy our  
Q1 Newsletter, which features an  
introduction from our own Mehtap  
Cevher Conti, the President of  
the New York Chapter, includes  
a feature on maintaining mental  
strength through times of change  
from Paula Davis Laack, and shares  
some exciting member news.

Stay healthy and safe.

**Mehtap** (New York), **Marjorie &  
Nicole** (DC) and **Sonya** (Chicago)

# FROM THE NEW YORK CHAPTER PRESIDENT



**Mehtap Cevher Conti**  
*Hogan Lovells*

I am honored to be serving as the President of the NY Chapter for 2020 and delighted to be working with a terrific group of women who serve alongside me as our other officers and board members. I have been involved with the NY Chapter since its inception in 2016 and have had the privilege to serve in a few different leadership roles. Personally, the most rewarding aspect of being active with the Coalition has been the amazing group of women I have met and formed meaningful relationships with. I met women who are experts in many different practice areas and in different stages in their career. I would not have had the opportunity to meet or interact with most of these women but for the Coalition. Moreover, the experience I have gained in the various leadership roles with the NY Chapter and the National

Board has given me the strength and courage to pursue leadership positions outside of the Coalition.

This is a dynamic time for the NY Chapter and a time for growth. I am energized by the terrific programs we have planned for 2020. We started the year with a program in the first week of January showcasing financial fitness in collaboration with the Financial Gym. This was followed by a Happy Hour in February where our members enjoyed networking over delicious bites and tasty drinks. Our other focus has been the launch of our Mentoring Circles. Cassandra Porsch, one of the new co-chairs for our Programming Committee, has led this new effort where we bring together women from different types of jobs (different sizes of law firms, in-house and government) and with different levels of experience to have an opportunity to network on a much more personal level (about 6 members per circle). Some of our Mentoring Circles have completed their first two meetings, and the feedback has been very positive.

We have an event planned in celebration of International Women's Day hosted by our

member firm Seyfarth Shaw, which will highlight equal pay in the workplace and examine how women in law can empower each other to demand their own worth. Elizabeth Schero, our current vice president and former co-chair of our Programming Committee, has put together an amazing panel: Roxana McKinney, financial coach and founder of Women Wealth & Worth, LaDonna Lusher, partner at Virginia & Ambinder and Annette Tyman, partner and co-chair of the equal pay practice group in the Labor & Employment Practice Group at Seyfarth Shaw. This event was originally scheduled as a live panel in March, but we are reformatting it as a webinar due to the current health precautions in effect in New York City as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. Our April program is on another equally timely topic: cryptocurrencies. Michelle Gitlitz, Global Head of Crowell & Moring's Blockchain and Digital Assets practice, will lead the discussion for this event, and similar to our Equal Pay event, this panel is being reformatted as a webinar.

As the health and safety of our members is very important to us, we are monitoring federal

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and local government safety recommendations in respect of the coronavirus and we will reformat any other future programs as webinars or take other necessary action. In this time of disruption and social distancing, we are as dedicated as ever to create opportunities to continue to connect our members and friends.

Our May event is currently scheduled to be hosted by our member firm Warshaw Burstein and will focus on empowering speech and powerful networking. We will have a training led by famous speech coach Eduardo Placer followed by a speed-networking exercise, where we can put our newly acquired skills to use. Our annual summer reception will, once again, be hosted by our member firm Virginia & Ambinder at the beautiful rooftop of their office building with the stunning views of the NY harbor. This June we will also have NY State Senator Alessandra Biaggi as a special guest, which is very exciting. Our third annual Leadership Forum will be in October and we are delighted that Susan Herman, President of the ACLU, one of

Crain's Most Powerful Women of 2019, and constitutional law scholar at Brooklyn Law School will be our keynote speaker. We are also working on an event featuring women's path to corporate boards and a networking and charitable event in collaboration with Kendra Scott for July and September. We will conclude the year with our Annual Meeting and Holiday Party in December at Corkbuzz at Union Square, which is owned and operated by one of the few women master sommeliers in the world.

A special shout-out to our current/out-going co-chairs of our Programming Committee, Amy Gallup Klann and LaDonna Lusher, for their tireless efforts in putting together such a terrific program for 2020.

I am also energized by the growth prospects of 2020 as a result of all the effort Jean Rose, our immediate past president and the current chair of our Membership Committee, has put into increasing our membership, both with new law firm members as well as individual members from in-house or government

roles. We are working together with Jean to continue to grow our membership with the goal of welcoming many more women into the folds of our NY Chapter.

I will end by going back to the beginning. The Coalition was founded in 2008 by a group of women in Chicago who believed in joining forces across different organizations to benefit the collective whole. Today, across our three chapters, we have over 120 firm and corporate members. As our name so aptly describes, the Coalition is a place for all women lawyers, from different practice areas, different size law firms, different size companies, different roles within the government and different levels of experience, to join forces to help us navigate many issues facing women lawyers today and advance each and all of our careers. It is this inclusive nature of the Coalition that makes it a unique and tremendous resource for all of our members. It is this inclusive nature of the Coalition that makes me even more dedicated to our mission.

## How to Preserve Your Mental Strength When Everything is Uncertain

By: Paula Davis-Laack, JD, MAPP



I don't think this is quite how most people expected the new decade to unfold. Last week feels like years ago, and each and every day brings unexpected news and challenges. My daughter, Lucy, will be celebrating her 4th birthday in a few weeks and my nearly 70-year-old parents are spending their winter in Florida. I'm worried about them, the health of my business, my own sanity, my neighbors and people who I don't even know, hoping everyone in my world and beyond finds a measure of safety and peace in these next weeks and months.

Research tells us that counterproductive thinking tends to be heightened during four circumstances: (1) when there is vague and ambiguous information; (2) something that you value is at stake; (3) when you're run down, stressed out, tired and depleted; and when you're doing something for the first time. All four of those factors are now present in the way we live and work. As a result, anxiety and uncertainty are off the charts, but there are ways you can preserve your mental strength during these trying times.

### Limit Catastrophizing.

Catastrophizing is worst-case scenario thinking. A stress-producing event happens and in less than a minute you've got yourself living in a van down by

the river. This style of thinking is problematic because it stops you from taking purposeful action – you stay stuck spinning your cognitive wheels. Cognitive behavioral scientists developed the following five-step process to help you minimize this style of thinking as follows:

1. Write down the stress-producing event factually.
2. Then write the worst-case scenario. I call it a "brain dump." It's already in your head and you won't be able to balance your thinking until you capture all of your unvarnished worst-case thoughts.
3. Think about how you can maximize any potential upside. Positive emotions may seem misplaced in this process, but they are strongly linked to resilience and help to calm the anxiety you are likely feeling with this thinking style.
4. List what is most likely – this is your more balanced approach. The trick is not to list all of the positives, it's to be more even-handed in your assessment of the situation.
5. Write your plan of action – what specific action steps are you in control of and what can you do next?

### Look for the Helpers.

Mr. Rodgers used to talk about how when he was scared by something on the news as a boy, his mom would ask him to "look for the helpers." She wanted to reassure him that there were good people everywhere, even in the toughest of circumstances. On your own, or with your kids, talk about all of the ways people are helping during this crisis.

### Reframe Stress in Real Time.

This is one of my favorite stress-relief skills, taught to me by one of my professors, Dr. Karen Reivich. When your mental strength is low, it's important to be able to reframe counterproductive thoughts in real time. You can do that in two different ways:

Create a contingency plan: If x happens, then I will do y (SOUNDS LIKE: "If my kid's school gets cancelled, then I will create a structured plan for each day at home.")

Leverage optimism: Another way to look at this situation is... (SOUNDS LIKE: "Another way to look at this is now that all of my workshops got postponed, I'll have more time to write my book.")

**Savor Something.** There are three different types of savoring: reminiscing by thinking about a past event, savoring the present, and anticipatory savoring –

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thinking about something good that is yet to come. My beloved golden retriever, Sadie, passed away almost two years ago. I keep a picture of her in a field of flowers on the wall in the kitchen. Lucy and I were baking banana bread together on Sunday and she said, "Mommy, I miss Sadie, but I think she's happy – she's in the flowers." Tears came to my eyes, but we had a very sweet conversation about how much we loved our Sadie Bear. It felt really good to re-live her memory in such a trying time.

**Clarify Your Values.** The older I get, the more importance I place on values. I knew I had them, but I never really thought about them until I left my law practice and started my business. My three core values are kindness, courage and love, and they inform every decision I make. Kindness

comes easy to me, but I have to practice courage in a much more effortful way. What are your core values? What about your family's? Brene Brown has a [great list](#) you can use to get started.

**Don't Expect Immediate Results.** Mentally strong people know that immediate results aren't always possible, and that's especially true now. Healthcare experts tell us that it's likely going to get worse before it gets better, and even once we turn a corner, it may take weeks or months to return to a new normal.

**Remember Hope.** Virtually all of the people I have interviewed or coached about their burnout experiences talk about feeling a sense of hopelessness with their situation. When you don't feel like you can change the outcome of your circumstances, it's hard to keep putting one foot in front

of the other. While hope may be initially thought of as an emotion, it's actually a thinking style. The [three components](#) of hope are having a realistic goal, thinking about the obstacles you might encounter so you can plan for multiple pathways, and agency – believing in yourself and believing you can reach your goal from wherever you are right now.

As we seek to preserve many of our tangible resources in the coming weeks and months, let's make sure to add our mental health to that list. This is a test for all of us, but it's one I know we can pass together.

*Paula Davis-Laack ([stressandresilience.com](#)) is the CEO of the Stress and Resilience Institute, and she is writing a book about burnout prevention to be published by the Wharton School Press in early 2021.*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS: WEBINARS

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For more information and to register for these events, please visit the Coalition website [here](#).

**Beyond Inclusion: Bullies, Mean Girls & Other Manipulators at Work**

April 2, 2020 - Webinar

*Chicago/DC/New York Chapters*

**Focusing on Gratitude to Combat Stress in Unprecedented Times: A Virtual Mindfulness Event**

April 7, 2020 - Webinar

*Hosted by the Chicago Chapter*

**Cryptocurrency**

April 22, 2020 - Webinar

*Hosted by the New York Chapter*

**Eldercare: Taking Care of Aging Parents While Balancing Work and Home**

Save the Date: April 30, 2020 - Webinar

*Hosted by the Chicago Chapter*

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# New York Chapter

## MEMBER UPDATES:

**Elizabeth Schrero of Seyfarth Shaw LLP** was recognized in August 2019 as one of the Best Lawyers in America for real estate litigation, and was named Best Lawyer in Real Estate Litigation in the New York area in The New York Times and Wall Street Journal's "2020 Best Lawyers" magazine supplement.

**LaDonna Lusher of Virginia & Ambinder LLP** was named one of the 2019 Super Lawyers.

**Penny Williams** has accepted an offer to join Collibra, Inc. as their Associate General Counsel, Head of Commercial.

**Lauren Emerson of Leason Ellis** has been elevated to partnership effective January 2020, and is was scheduled to speak at the following events:

- March 19, 2020: *Legal FAQ For Authors* at Book Lovers Con
- April 2, 2020: *Honey Badger Don't Care...But the Courts Might*

**Lauren Emerson and Karin Segall of Leason Ellis** were recognized in the 2020 World Trademark Review 1000 rankings as among the top trademark attorneys in New York.

**Lori Cooper of Leason Ellis** co-authored Advertising Q&A: US, Practical Law, Thomson Reuters (Published 2020, law stated as at December 31, 2019.)

**Caroline G. Harris of Goldman Harris** was profiled in *CityLaw* (Center for New York City – New York Law School, 10/28/19), and was published in *Airspace and Development Rights, Real Estate Titles Chapter 22* (New York State Bar Association, 2019) with Michael J. Berey. **Caroline** was also recognized in the following:

- *Best Lawyers U.S. News and World Report 2020* for Zoning and Land Use

- *Best Lawyers U.S. News and World Report Best Law Firms 2020* for Goldman Harris LLC – Zoning and Land Use
- *Super Lawyers: Best Lawyers for 2020*, New York City Land Use and Zoning Law
- Recognized as Top Land Use/Zoning Attorney in *NY Metro: Top Women* in the 2019 *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal's* "2020 Best Lawyers" magazine supplement.

**Monique Chase of Vedder Price** was selected to the National Black Lawyers Top 40 under 40.

**Blythe Lovinger of Vedder Price** has been selected by her peers for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America from 2018 to 2020, and was included in New York Super Lawyers in 2018 and 2019.

**Sophie Jacobi-Parisi of Warshaw Burstein** recently gave a presentation entitled, *When International Couples Divorce, What Happens with the Kids?*, to the New York City Bar Association in November 2019. Sophie has also been recognized annually with *Super Lawyers*, *New York Metro* since 2014, and with *Best Lawyers* since 2013. She was quoted in a recent *USA Today* article entitled "Why so many married couples are sleeping in separate beds" (2/2020).

**Kimberly C. Lau of Warshaw Burstein** is chair of the firm's Title IX/College Discipline Group, was recognized with *Super Lawyers* as the New York Metro Rising Star every year since 2014. In 2019 Kimberly was named to Crain's 2020 List of Notable Women in Law, and was named one of Crain's 40 Under 40 for 2019. Kimberly's expert analysis article *New Title IX rules would Protect Due Process* will appear in the May 2020 edition of *Law360*.

# Washington, DC Chapter

## MEMBER UPDATES:

**Alexandra Busch, Associate Attorney at Cozen O'Connor**, has co-authored a number of alerts around COVID-19, and was named a D.C. Construction Litigation Super Lawyers Rising Star for 2020.

**Marjorie Just** was recently named the Family Law Group's Practice Group Leader at Offit Kurman.

# Chicago Chapter

## MEMBER UPDATES:

**Malaika Tyson, Ph.D. of McAndrews, Held & Malloy** was elected to Shareholder in March of 2020. Malaika, a registered patent attorney, works with companies in a variety of industries to develop integrated approaches to the strategic management of intellectual property.

*The Best Lawyers in America* awarded **Anne Larson, partner at Ogletree Deakins**, "Best Lawyer" honors in 2020 for commercial litigation. Super Lawyers also named Anne a "Top 50 Women Illinois Lawyer" and a "Top 100 Illinois Lawyer" in 2020. Anne has received "Top 50" Honors for the last eight years and "Top 100" honors for the last seven years.

**Tanvi Patel, of Neal Gerber Eisenberg**, has been promoted to partner in the firm's Intellectual Property group. A registered patent attorney, Tanvi has extensive experience across a broad spectrum of intellectual property law.

**Stephanie Jones, a partner at Gordon & Rees**, was recently promoted to Assistant Managing Partner of the Chicago Office. She also recently authored an article entitled "Intergenerational Communication and the Practice of Law: Why It's Critical to Understand, Accept, and Adapt to Our Generationally Diverse Workforce" in the *Raising the Bar* newsletter.

**Elizabeth Babbitt Taft of Stettinius & Hollister LLP** was the subject of a three-page profile in *Leading Lawyers Magazine, Emerging Lawyers Edition* (2020).

**Deborah Gersh of Ropes & Gray** was recently quoted in the article "If you get coronavirus, how much can your employer

and public health officials reveal about your identity?" (*The Chicago Tribune*, 3/17/20). Deborah was also named to Law360's prestigious Health Care Editorial Advisory Board, and was recognized for Health Care Law by *The Best Lawyers in America* (2020).

**Jennifer Romig of Ropes & Gray** co-authored an article entitled "Diagnosing Sales Tax Rules for Digital Health Products," (*Law360* 3/2/20), and served as a speaker on a Ropes & Gray podcast entitled "State Taxation of Digital Health Products" (1/9/2020).

**Jessica Lingertat of Gould & Ratner LLP** led a panel at first annual Women in Real Estate Summit, hosted by RE Journals, and was elected to the firm's Management Committee.

**Linsey Cohen of Gould & Ratner LLP** was named Real Estate Practice chair.

**Amy Blumenthal of Gould & Ratner LLP** was named 2020 Illinois Super Lawyer.

**Emily Wessel Farr of Gould & Ratner LLP** was named 2020 Illinois Rising Star.

**Vanessa Tiradentes of Gould & Ratner LLP** was named 2020 Illinois Rising Star.

**Karin O'Connell of Gould & Ratner LLP** hosted and spoke at an ABA SEER Reception, co-sponsored by Pioneer Engineering & Environmental Services.

### Questions or Comments?

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### Website

[TheWomensCoalition.com](http://TheWomensCoalition.com)

