

2020 National Leadership Forum



Thursday // October 22, 2020

Hosted by the New York Chapter

TheWomensCoalition.com

PROGRAM AGENDA

5:30 pm

Welcome and Introduction

5:35 pm

Awards Presentation

Leadership Award

LaDonna Lusher

Virginia & Ambinder LLP

Mehtap Cevher Conti

Hogan Lovells

Inspiration Award

Justice Tanya R. Kennedy

Appellate Division, First Department
of the State of New York

6:00 pm

Keynote Presentation

Susan Herman

President, ACLU and the Ruth Bader Ginsburg
Professor of Law at Brooklyn Law School

6:40 pm

Closing Remarks and Open Networking



LEADERSHIP AWARD

LaDonna Lusher

Partner, Virginia & Ambinder LLP

LaDonna's practice focuses exclusively in the areas of employment and discrimination law. She has represented thousands of workers in employment related matters, including complex class actions to recover unpaid wages and benefits, employment discrimination matters, sexual harassment, retaliation and employee termination and discipline. LaDonna has litigated numerous high profile matters that have been reported in Bloomberg Businessweek, the New York Law Journal, Law 360, Labor Press and other similar publications, and she has provided testimony on employees' rights in the workplace at hearings held before the Department of Labor and the New York City Commission for Human Rights. LaDonna is also an experienced appellate attorney having successfully argued cases before the New York Court of Appeals, the New York Supreme Court Appellate Division, and obtained favorable decisions from the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

Prior to joining Virginia & Ambinder, LLP, LaDonna clerked for the Honorable Timothy E. Meredith of the Court of Special Appeals in Annapolis, Maryland. LaDonna has

authored several articles on employee rights, including an article on the rights of unpaid interns that was published in U.S. News & World Report. LaDonna also has been a panelist at multiple symposiums where she lectured on unpaid wages, overtime laws and class actions. LaDonna serves as the Board Chair to TakeRoot Justice, a non-profit whose legal work seeks to dismantle racial, economic and social oppression in New York City. LaDonna also provides counseling and assistance to several other not-for profits, including Make the Road New York, the National Mobilization Against Sweatshops, the Chinese Staff and Workers' Association and Catholic Migration Services. Super Lawyers has repeatedly recognized LaDonna as a Top Woman Attorney. LaDonna has also been named in Best Lawyers' Women of Influence awards.

LaDonna is admitted to practice law in New York State Courts, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York, the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York and the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.



LEADERSHIP AWARD

Mehtap Cevher Conti
Partner, Hogan Lovells

Mehtap Cevher Conti concentrates her practice on asset finance, particularly in the aviation and transportation industries. Her broad-based experience includes working with clients on secured debt, export credit agency supported transactions, revolving credit facilities, leveraged leases, operating leases, and portfolio acquisitions as well as asset-backed structured financings, securitizations for commercial and investment banks, insurance companies, financial institutions, aircraft operating lessors, and airlines. She also advises clients on the purchase and lease financing of corporate aircraft and helicopters. Mehtap frequently handles finance

transactions that involve multiple global jurisdictions. She is a native of Turkey and is fluent in Turkish.

Prior to joining Hogan Lovells, Mehtap was in private practice, where she focused on global transportation finance. She has been recognized in *The Legal 500 US for Finance: Asset Finance and Leasing*.

Mehtap has served on the Board of the Coalition of Women's Initiatives since 2016 in various roles, including Secretary, Treasurer, and Vice President. Currently, she is serving as the President.



INSPIRATION AWARD

Justice Tanya R. Kennedy
Appellate Division, First Department
of the State of New York

Hon. Tanya R. Kennedy was appointed as an Associate Justice of the Appellate Division, First Department by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in July 2020. Prior to her appointment, Justice Kennedy served as a Justice of the Supreme Court, New York County, commencing in January 2016, after election in November 2015. She was elected to Civil Court in November 2005 and thereafter served in Criminal Court (January 2006-September 2008), Civil Court (September 2008-December 2009), Family Court (January 2010-December 2010), as Acting Supreme Court Justice (January 2011-December 2012) and as Supervising Judge of Civil Court, New York County (January 2014-December 2015). She is also a former Adjunct Professor at Fordham University School of Law, where she taught a Juvenile Justice seminar for ten years.

Justice Kennedy is a member of the Board of Directors of the New York City Bar Association and past chair of the organization's Special Committee to Encourage Judicial Service. She is also an Executive Committee member of the Women in Law Section of the New York State Bar Association; member of the Committee on Pattern Jury Instructions of the Association of Supreme Court Justices of the State of New York; member of the Board of

Overseers of the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, where she received her law degree; and an Advisory Board Member of Penn State Law.

Justice Kennedy is the Past President of the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ). During Justice Kennedy's term as NAWJ President, the organization convened cutting-edge legal education for the bench, bar and community to address cybersecurity and the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, the dark web and virtual currencies, e-discovery, bail reform, the opioid crisis, mental wellness, dementia in the courtroom, engaging millennials and building a personal brand. After organizing a Legislative Caucus on Capitol Hill focusing on ensuring a healthy work environment free of sexual harassment, Justice Kennedy led NAWJ in trademarking "#WETOO IN THE LEGAL WORKPLACE." She also established the ADA Compliance Policy, Law School Outreach, LGBTQ and Technology Committees as NAWJ President to further the organization's mission to ensure equal access to justice for all.

Justice Kennedy is a Bronx native and proud Harlem resident who enjoys the arts, reading, travel and fashion.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Susan Herman

**President, ACLU and
the Ruth Bader Ginsburg
Professor of Law at
Brooklyn Law School**

Susan N. Herman was elected President of the American Civil Liberties Union in October 2008, after having served on the ACLU National Board of Directors, as a member of the Executive Committee, and as General Counsel. Herman is the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Professor of Law at Brooklyn Law School, where she teaches courses in Constitutional Law and Criminal Procedure, and seminars on Law and Literature, and Terrorism and Civil Liberties.

She writes extensively on constitutional and criminal procedure topics for scholarly and other publications, ranging from law reviews and books to periodicals and on-line publications. Her most recent book, *Taking Liberties: The War on Terror and the Erosion of American Democracy*, (Oxford University Press 2011; 2014 paperback), is the winner of the 2012 Roy C. Palmer Civil Liberties Prize.

Herman has also discussed constitutional law issues on radio, television, and in print media, and has been a frequent speaker at academic conferences and at numerous law schools, colleges, universities,

and high schools. She has received awards from groups as disparate as the Japanese-American Bar Association, the United Sikhs, and the Theatre of the Oppressed NYC.

Herman has also participated in Supreme Court litigation, writing and collaborating on amicus curiae briefs for the ACLU on a range of constitutional criminal procedure issues, most recently in *Riley v. California*, 134 S. Ct. 2473 (2014), where the Supreme Court accepted the argument that cell phones cannot be searched “incident to arrest” without a search warrant.

Herman received a B.A. from Barnard College as a philosophy major, and a J.D. from New York University School of Law, where she was a Note and Comment Editor on the *N.Y.U. Law Review*. Before entering teaching, Professor Herman was Pro Se Law Clerk for the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and Staff Attorney and then Associate Director of Prisoners’ Legal Services of New York.

COALITION AWARDS

The Leadership Award

The Leadership Award is given to a delegate of the Coalition of Women's Initiatives in Law that demonstrates commitment and dedication to the Coalition in addition to the criteria set forth below:

- Demonstrates an excellence in lawyering and achievement in the nominee's legal practice
- Serves in leadership roles within the New York Chapter
- Serves as an example to all Chapter members in furthering the goals and initiatives of the Chapter

The Inspiration Award

The Inspiration Award is given to a female attorney that serves as an inspiration to other female attorneys and meets the criteria set forth below:

- Demonstrates an excellence in lawyering and achievement in the nominee's legal practice
- Believes in and understands the importance and value of gender parity in the legal profession and consistently advocates for this belief
- Acknowledges and encourages the full talents, capabilities, skills and rights of women in the profession
- Encourages women in the profession to accept opportunities and challenges and to expand their circle of influence

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There's more!

For the first time, the Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C. Metro Chapters of the Coalition are collaborating to offer a two-part National Coalition Leadership Forum! The New York Chapter of the Coalition congratulates all recipients of the Chicago Chapter's 2020 awards, to be recognized at the second part of the National Leadership Forum on **November 5**. [Register here](#) and we look forward to seeing you there!

CHARITABLE GIVING

In furtherance of our philanthropic endeavors, the New York Chapter encourages attendees to make an optional donation to the [ACLU](#) or the [Food Bank of Greater NYC](#). Thank you for your generosity!





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