VIRTUAL RECEPTION
&
JAMES W. COOPER FELLOWS
ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, September 23, 2020
6:00pm

Sponsored by
Thomaston Savings Bank
WELCOME
Timothy A. Diemand, President

THANK YOU AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Natalie S. Wagner, Executive Director

AWARDS

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD
Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson
Presented by Timothy A. Diemand

LEGAL SERVICES LEADERSHIP AWARD
David A. Pels
in memoriam
Presented by Timothy A. Diemand

ANTHONY M. FITZGERALD
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE
Connecticut Veterans Legal Center
Presented by Daniel A. Schwartz
on behalf of Carmody Torrance Sandak & Hennessey LLP
JAMES W. COOPER FELLOWS
ANNUAL MEETING
Daniel A. Schwartz, Chair

ELECTION OF OFFICERS
Hon. Anne C. Dranginis

CELEBRATION OF THE 25TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
JAMES W. COOPER FELLOWS
Hon. Juliett L. Crawford
CONNECTICUT BAR FOUNDATION
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If you bank at a Leadership Bank, we thank you; if not, we urge you to choose a Leadership Bank to improve access to justice in Connecticut.

As of September 17, 2020
CHIEF JUSTICE RICHARD A. ROBINSON

The Honorable Richard A. Robinson was born December 10, 1957 in Stamford, Connecticut. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Connecticut in 1979 and a Juris Doctor degree from West Virginia University School of Law in 1984. He was admitted to the West Virginia Bar and the Connecticut Bar, and is a member of the U.S. District Court, Northern District of West Virginia and the U.S. District Court, Connecticut.

From 1985 - 1988, Justice Robinson was Staff Counsel for the City of Stamford Law Department. In 1988, he became Assistant Corporation Counsel in Stamford where he remained until his appointment as a Judge of the Superior Court in 2000. He remained a Superior Court Judge for the next seven years during which time he served as Presiding Judge (Civil) for the New Britain Judicial District (May 2003 - September 2006); Presiding Judge (Civil) and Assistant Administrative Judge for the Ansonia/Milford Judicial District (September 2006 - September 2007); and Presiding Judge (Civil) for the Stamford Judicial District (September 2007 - December 2007). He was appointed as a Judge of the Connecticut Appellate Court on December 10, 2007, a Justice of the Supreme Court on December 19, 2013 and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court on May 3, 2018.

Justice Robinson’s career is complimented by an array of public and judicial service. He served as President of the Stamford Branch of the NAACP (1988-1990); General Counsel for the Connecticut Conference of the NAACP (1988 - 2000); President of the Assistant Corporation Counsel’s Union (AFSCME) (1989 - 2000); Commissioner of the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (1997 - 2000); Chair of the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (1999 - 2000); New Haven Inn of Court member (2002 - present); Judicial Education Curriculum Committee member (2002 - 2014); Judicial Education Committee member (2003 - 2014); Faculty at several Judicial Institutes as well as spring and fall lectures (2003 - present); Civil Commission member (2005 - 2014); Court Annexed Mediator (2005 - 2014); Lawyers Assistance Advisory Board member (2007 - present); Bench-Bar Foreclosure Committee (2007 - 2014); Legal Internship Committee (2013 - 2017); Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Competency (2009-present); Chairperson of the Rules Committee (2017-present); Connecticut Bar Association Young Lawyers Section Diversity Award (2010); Connecticut Bar Association’s Henry J. Naruk Judiciary Award for Integrity (2017); NAACP 100 Most Influential Blacks in Connecticut; Connecticut Bar Foundation James W. Cooper Fellows, Life Fellow; Discovering Amistad National Advisory Board; Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities’ Alvin W. Penn Award for Excellence in Leadership (2018); Ebony Magazine Power 100 Award (2018); Quinnipiac School of Law Black Student Association Thurgood Marshall Award (2019); ABOTA Judicial Excellence Award (2019); National Board of Directors of the Conference of Chief Justices (2019 - present); Conference of Chief Justices Civil Justice Committee Chairperson (2019 - present).
David Pels devoted his entire career to providing legal services to low-income people in Connecticut. From 1974 until his retirement in 2019, David represented individuals and families throughout the Greater Hartford area. His specialty and passion were always in the area of housing law; particularly the representation of tenants facing eviction from their homes.

David began his legal career a staff attorney at the Waterbury Legal Aid and Referral Service before joining Neighborhood Legal Services and then Greater Hartford Legal Aid, where he worked for 22 years.

Through David’s work on behalf of individuals, families, tenant associations, and class actions, Connecticut law evolved to strengthen tenant rights by:

- permitting tenants to use the Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act;
- requiring landlords to purchase smoke detectors;
- preventing the ejectment of unnamed tenants in foreclosure cases;
- requiring relocation assistance to tenants displaced by code enforcement;
- strengthening protections against retaliatory evictions;
- enforcing the right to attorney’s fees for prevailing tenants in eviction cases;
- enforcing “good cause” protections for senior and disabled tenants as well as tenants in subsidized housing; and
- promoting procedural protections for tenants in eviction cases.

In addition to work on behalf of his clients, David contributed his time to the greater legal community. As a member of the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA) Pro Bono Committee, David promoted pro bono support and involvement by the private bar and developed training materials and sample pleadings to encourage pro bono participation through CBA programs such as the Law Works for People project. He provided training on housing issues to legal services attorneys, the CBA, state and local government agencies, and non-profit groups. And he was a founding member of the Connecticut Legal Services Staff Association; President of the Neighborhood Legal Services Staff Association, and is a current member of the Greater Hartford Legal Aid Attorneys Union. David was a longtime supporter of the Connecticut Bar Foundation, serving as a James W. Cooper Fellow since 2007 until his death on July 5, 2020, and regularly participating as a judge for the Foundation’s annual Essay Contest.

In 2016, David received the Charles J. Parker Award from the CBA, for his “deep and abiding interest in and dedication to the delivery of legal services to the disadvantaged in Connecticut.” That same year, David was appointed by Governor Malloy to the Connecticut Advisory Committee on Housing Matters, having been a regular attendee at the Committee’s meetings for over twenty years.

Upon his retirement in 2019, friends and colleagues started the David A. Pels Homelessness Prevention Fund at the Connecticut Bar Foundation in David’s honor. The Fund provides emergency grants to individuals facing eviction or subsidy termination.
The Connecticut Veterans Legal Center (CVLC) started the United States’ first medical-legal partnership with federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2009. We work in interdisciplinary teams with mental health and medical clinicians to solve legal problems that affect veteran recovery. CVLC is the only medical-legal partnership to be co-located and staffed on a daily basis at a VA facility. To this end, CVLC provides free legal assistance to veterans who are in recovery from homelessness, mental illness and substance abuse to help them overcome legal barriers to housing, healthcare and income. The CVLC’s vision is for all military veterans in CT to live with adequate means, safe and secure housing, and affordable health care.

CVLC grew out of the volunteer work of Margaret Middleton and Howard Udell. Howard first came to the VA Connecticut’s Errera Community Care Center in 2007 as a volunteer. The Errera Center is a nationally-recognized VA facility providing mental health, substance abuse, housing and employment assistance to indigent veterans. When veterans learned Howard was an attorney, they started asking him for advice about their legal troubles. Soon a line would form by the elevator on days when Howard was coming in. Before long Howard was assisting thirty veterans on his own; he was walking proof of the unmet legal needs of veterans rebuilding their lives.

In 2009, Howard joined with Margaret to incorporate CVLC with seed funding from the Yale Initiative for Public Interest Law. The mission of the organization was, and remains, to help veterans recovering from homelessness and serious mental illness overcome legal barriers to housing, healthcare and income. CVLC now employs fourteen staff members.

To date, CVLC has served more than 4,700 veterans -- helping them to resolve destabilizing legal problems. In 2014, CVLC added the VA’s Newington Facility as a second program delivery location and in 2017 added the CT Department of Veteran’s Affairs as its third site. In April 2015, CVLC proudly accepted the VA’s National Community Partnership Award for its groundbreaking medical-legal partnership with the VA CT’s Errera Community Care Center. In 2017, CVLC was awarded the Community Partnership Award from the CT Psychological Association and the Pro Bono Partner award from Corporate Pro Bono Institute.

CVLC drafted and successfully lobbied for a state bill which grants veterans second chances to avoid jail and overcome mental health and substance abuse issues related to their service. In 2019, CVLC pro bono attorneys from Halloran & Sage were awarded the Hartford County Bar Association 2019 Pro Bono Award for their work with CVLC to provide pro bono representation to low-income veterans facing homelessness. And CVLC’s partnership with Sikorsky Aircraft and Teamsters Local 1150 was recognized with the 2019 Corporate Pro Bono Partner Award from the Pro Bono Institute. In 2020, CVLC launched its national policy initiative – The Veterans Inclusion Project – and will be publishing a legal practice manual on discharge upgrade cases in the near future.
The Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Bar Foundation James W. Cooper Fellows took place on Monday, May 6, 2019, at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville, CT.

During the CBF Annual Reception preceding the Fellows Annual Meeting, the following were presented awards:

**Legal Services Leadership Award**  
Professor Jean Koh Peters presented by Andrea Barton Reeves

**Distinguished Service Award**  
Hon. Anne C. Dranginis presented by Hon. Lynda B. Munro

**Special Recognition Award**  
Quinnipiac School of Law presented Daniel A. Schwartz

**Special Recognition Award**  
Dean Jennifer G. Brown, Quinnipiac School of Law, presented by Brad Saxton, Quinnipiac School of Law

**Anthony M. Fitzgerald Award for Excellence**  
Jamey Bell, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, presented by Ann H. Rubin, Carmody Torrance Sandak & Hennessey

Daniel A. Schwartz, Chair of the Fellows, called the meeting to order. He thanked the Fellows for their on-going support of the programs and the Foundation staff for their assistance. He presented the minutes of the May 10, 2018, Fellows meeting, a copy of which was distributed and is appended. After motion made and seconded, the Fellows approved the minutes of the May 10, 2018, Fellows meeting.

Hon. Juliett L. Crawford presented the Report of the Chair of the Fellows Education and Program Committee (FEPC), a copy of which was distributed and is appended. She asked those present to suggest topics for programs and to send them to her or the CBF staff for consideration at future FEPC meetings.

Hon. Anne C. Dranginis, Chair of the Fellows Nominating Committee for Fellows Officers, presented the report for the Committee of which Francis J. Brady and Frank H. Finch are members. The following slate of officers for 2019-2020 was approved unanimously:
- Chair: Daniel A. Schwartz
- Vice Chair: Hon. Juliett L. Crawford
- Secretary: Hon. Barry A. Armata

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.
Catherine Roraback Circle Fellows

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  Shelley D. Geballe
#Thomas D. Goldberg
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#Hon. Janet C. Hall
  Jed Horwitt
  Leonard M. Isaac
  Ginny O. Kim
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  Peter Arakas
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  Hon. Laura F. Baldini

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  Hon. Stuart David Bear
  Lawrence Berliner
  Audrey B. Blondin
  John L. Bonee, III

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  Hon. William H. Bright, Jr.
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Charles L. Howard  
Paul A. Hudon  
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Hon. Christine E. Keller  
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Susan Tarren Pearlman  
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Thomas D. Ritter  
Hon. Richard A. Robinson  
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Heather O. Berchem
Marie C. Bertrand
Hon. Tejas Bhatt
Patrick M. Birney
As of September 15, 2020
We dedicate the 2020 Reception and Fellows Meeting, in remembrance and appreciation, to the Fellows who have passed away since the 2019 Annual Meeting.

Henry Anderson
Judge Robert Berdon
Judge Ellen Bree Burns
Francis Dineen
Bill Doyle
Judge Antoinette Dupont
Judge Warren Eginton
Tony Fitzgerald
Jim Greenfield
Judge Joseph Koletsky
Betty Leete
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