

NEW YORK CITY LAW DEPARTMENT

Zachary W. Carter, Corporation Counsel

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CORPORATION COUNSEL ZACHARY CARTER NAMES GEORGIA PESTANA TO FIRST-ASSISTANT POSITION; FIRST WOMAN AND PERSON OF HISPANIC HERITAGE TO HOLD NYC LAW DEPARTMENT'S NO. 2 ROLE, REINFORCING THE OFFICE'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

PESTANA WILL BE THE SECOND-IN-COMMAND OF ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST LAW OFFICES; CARTER MAKES OTHER EXECUTIVE STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

(New York, NY) -- Corporation Counsel Zachary W. Carter today formally announced that Georgia M. Pestana has been named First Assistant Corporation Counsel of the New York City Law Department. Pestana is the first woman and the first person of Hispanic heritage to hold the Law Department's No. 2 position. With over 730 lawyers, the Law Department is one of the largest law offices in the country, and Pestana will occupy one of the City's highest municipal legal roles. Carter also named Legal Counsel Chief Stephen E. Louis and Appeals Chief Richard P. Dearing to the office's Executive Staff.

Georgia M. Pestana

Georgia Pestana replaces Jeffrey D. Friedlander, the longest-serving Law Department First Assistant in history, who occupied that position for 20 years -- and who served at the Law Department for 44 years. He retired as of June 30th. Carter has called Friedlander "a living institution." He noted, "Jeff has been a wise counselor, a public servant of unparalleled dedication, and a true friend."

Corporation Counsel Carter praised Pestana's selection. "Georgia's deep familiarity with the Law Department's structure and staff, as well as the missions of its various divisions, has been invaluable to me over the past 15 months--since I became Corporation Counsel," said Carter. "Georgia's excellent reputation and solid working relationships with her colleagues within the office, at City Hall, and in the counsels' offices at City agencies enable her to provide advice and other assistance efficiently and effectively. For particularly complex matters, Georgia is quickly able to marshal a team to examine the problem and develop an appropriate response or solution."

Friedlander also complimented his replacement. "I am thrilled that Georgia will be my successor," he said. "Throughout her career, Georgia has served with dedication and ability. She is admired by her colleagues, respected by her adversaries, and relied on by her clients."

"I'm honored to accept this appointment," said Pestana. "I have also been honored to serve New York City for more than 27 years. Each day has presented new challenges and opportunities, and I am grateful to the many attorneys and other colleagues with whom I have worked -- and from whom I have learned -- over the years. I look forward to serving the City in the First Assistant role and using it to benefit all of New York City."

Pestana, a member of the office's Executive Staff, has been serving as Chief Assistant Corporation Counsel for Employment and Policy Litigation since January. She has been an attorney with New York City since 1987. "Georgia has progressed rapidly through a series of increasingly responsible positions,"

noted Corporation Counsel Carter. In her current capacity, Pestana oversees three divisions: Administrative Law, General Litigation, and Labor & Employment Law. She often works closely with attorneys in other divisions, including Legal Counsel and Contracts & Real Estate, in developing strategies and proposing solutions to address problems confronting agencies and the City.

Pestana served as Executive Assistant Corporation Counsel for Employment and Policy Litigation from January 2013 to December 2014, Chief of the Labor & Employment Law Division from April 2002 to December 2012, and Deputy Chief of the General Litigation Division from July 1996 to April 2002. She previously held other positions in General Litigation and also worked for the New York City Department of Aging.

She graduated from New York University School of Law with a J.D. in 1987 and received her undergraduate degree from Barnard College. She won the Corporation Counsel's Award for Distinguished Legal Service in 2012, the New York County Lawyers' Association Award for Outstanding Public Service in 2006, and the Association of the Bar of the City of New York's Committee on Municipal Affairs Award for Outstanding Achievement in 1991. She has served on the Law Department's Diversity Committee as well as on its Professional Responsibility & Ethics Committee.

Stephen Louis and Richard Dearing

Corporation Counsel Carter also announced the appointments of Stephen Louis and Richard Dearing to the office's Executive Staff.

Louis has been Legal Counsel Division Chief since 1997, having previously served as an attorney within the division. He advises City officials on many municipal law issues and works on City, State and Federal legislation and City agency rules. In addition to his work at the Law Department, Louis was an associate in the real estate unit of Lord Day and Lord, Barrett Smith. He received the Corporation Counsel's Award for Distinguished Service in 2010, the New York County Lawyers' Association Award for Outstanding Public Service in 2002, and the ABCNY Municipal Affairs Committee Award in 1985. He has a J.D. from Columbia Law School and an undergraduate degree from Columbia University.

Dearing joined the Law Department as Appeals Chief in 2014, where he oversees its appellate practice in State and Federal courts, and advises on *amicus* briefs. Prior to joining the Law Department, Dearing worked at the State Attorney General's Office, where he served as Deputy Solicitor General. Dearing is a four-time winner of the National Association of Attorneys General "Best Brief" Award for excellence in brief writing to the U.S. Supreme Court, including one awarded after arriving at the Law Department, and a winner of the 2009 Attorney General's Special Award for Outstanding Service. He served as an associate at Vinson & Elkins and clerked for the Honorable Lee H. Rosenthal, United States District Court, Southern District of Texas. He has a J.D. from Yale Law School and an undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

"Steve and Rich epitomize the talent, dedication, and commitment that one expects to find at the highest levels of public service," Corporation Counsel Carter said. "I look forward to their contributions to our Executive Staff."

Tracing its roots back to the 1600s, the New York City Law Department is one of the oldest and most dynamic legal offices in the world, ranking among New York City's largest law offices and the country's largest public law offices. Led by the Corporation Counsel, the Department's 730-plus attorneys represent the City on a vast array of civil litigation, legislative and legal issues, and in the criminal prosecution of juveniles, encompassing a caseload of 70,000 active or ongoing legal matters each year in 16 legal divisions. The Corporation Counsel heads the Law Department and acts as legal counsel for the Mayor, elected officials, the City, and all its agencies. For more information, visit the Law Department's website at www.nyc.gov/law.

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