



NEW YORK CITY LAW DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CORPORATION COUNSEL

Michael A. Cardozo, Corporation Counsel

Press Release

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For Immediate Release

**NEW YORK CITY LAW DEPARTMENT CREATES NEW LEGAL DIVISION
AND ANNOUNCES SEVERAL PROMOTIONS REFLECTING
DIVERSITY AND LONGSTANDING PUBLIC SERVICE COMMITMENT OF STAFF**

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New York, May 13, 2002 -- The New York City Law Department has created a new Labor and Employment Division and announced several promotions that reflect the diversity and longstanding public service commitment of its staff.

Corporation Counsel Michael A. Cardozo noted that a large increase in the volume of labor and employment cases led to the creation of the new division. "This will enable us to handle cases more effectively and provide better legal service for New York City and our clients," he noted. (Two other departments, Tax and Condemnation, and Bankruptcy, will merge into one -- Tax and Bankruptcy Litigation -- thus keeping the number of divisions even at 17.)

Cardozo also announced promotions in other key practice areas, including Affirmative Litigation, Commercial and Real Estate Litigation, Family Court, Special Federal Litigation, Tax and Bankruptcy Litigation, and Workers' Compensation. "These are very well-deserved promotions," he said. "I'm pleased to work with such talented, hardworking leaders -- both in the public service arena and in the legal world."

Many of the promotions parallel the Law Division's focus on diversity and spirit of public service, Cardozo noted. They included of the appointment of the office's first Hispanic division head (in the newly created Labor and Employment Law Division), the appointment of the office's first female African-American division head (in Special Federal Litigation), the appointment of a third woman to the Law Department's Executive Staff (to the position of Special Assistant) and the fact that seven of the eight people named have served the Department for more than 10 years. The new promotions include:

- **Gail Donoghue, Special Assistant, Executive Staff** -- Prior to her promotion to the Department's Executive Staff, Gail Donoghue was the First Chief of the Special Federal Litigation Division. She joined the Law Department in 1987 after working as a litigation associate at Warshaw Burstein Cohen Schlesinger & Kuh and after a two-year stint teaching at Pace Law School. For the past six years, she has been a faculty member of the PLI Conference on Section 1983 Litigation, and this year she joins the faculty of the Georgetown Conference on Civil Rights. In 1995, she received a Special Recognition Award from the Corporation Counsel. Donoghue is a cum laude graduate of Pace University and holds an LL.M. in taxation from New York University School of Law. Donoghue is a native New Yorker who currently lives in Manhattan. Donoghue joins Administrative Assistant Linda G. Howard and Executive Assistant Emerita Edith I. Spivak (who has been with the Law Department since the 1930s) on the Executive Staff.
- **Rita D. Dumain, Chief, Tax and Bankruptcy Litigation** -- Dumain became Chief of this new division, which resulted from the mergers of the Bankruptcy, and Tax and Condemnation Divisions. Dumain joined the Law Department in 1988 from the Insolvency Department of Otterbourg, Steindler, Houston & Rosen, where she represented secured creditors in bankruptcy matters. She received The Association of the Bar of the City of New York Municipal Affairs Committee's Outstanding Achievement Award in 1991 for her work for the City. Dumain

graduated from Brooklyn Law School in 1983. She is the daughter of immigrants and worked in the family's drycleaning business even after she started her professional career. She was born, raised and educated in Brooklyn and still resides there.

- **Muriel Goode-Trufant, Chief, Special Federal Litigation** -- Prior to her promotion, Goode-Trufant served as Deputy Chief of the Division since its creation in 1998. Goode-Trufant joined the Law Department in 1991, serving in a variety of capacities in General Litigation Division until 1998. Prior to that, she was an associate attorney at the firm of Cohen, Shapiro, Polisher, Shiekman and Cohen in Philadelphia, where she practiced litigation and corporate law. Goode-Trufant is a graduate of the Temple University School of Law and the University of Pennsylvania. She served as a Commentator at the Practising Law Institute's 2001 Course on Section 1983 Civil Rights Litigation and for five years as a mentor for Constitution Works. She is married to a pastor in Brooklyn and is the "proud mother" of two daughters. Her father, W. Wilson Goode, served as mayor of Philadelphia from 1984 to 1992. Goode-Trufant is the Department's first female African-American division head.
- **Georgia Pestana, Chief, Labor and Employment Law** -- Pestana was an assistant Corporation Counsel in General Litigation from 1987-1991 and Deputy General Counsel at the Department for the Aging from 1991-1992. She returned to the Law Department in 1992 as Managing Attorney in General Litigation and became a Deputy Chief in General Litigation in 1996. Pestana graduated from Barnard College in 1984 and from New York University's School of Law in 1987. She received The Association of the Bar of the City of New York Municipal Affairs Committee's Outstanding Achievement Award in 1991 for her service to the City. Pestana lives on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and grew up in West New York, N.J. Of Cuban descent, she is the Law Department's first Hispanic division chief.
- **Gail Rubin, Chief, Affirmative Litigation** -- Rubin assumed this position after serving as a Senior Litigator in Affirmative Litigation for four years. She also served as Deputy Chief of Affirmative Litigation for seven years, and in that capacity, she litigated cases involving civil RICO, civil rights and federal and state funding issues. Rubin joined the Law Department in 1986 after three years in private practice with the law firm of Jenner & Block in Chicago. She graduated from the University of Chicago Law School in 1982 and from Oberlin College in 1977 with a BA in History. She clerked for the Hon. Walter J. Cummings on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago. Rubin was raised on Long Island and lives in Forest Hills, N.Y.
- **Eric Rundbaken, Chief, Commercial and Real Estate Litigation** -- Prior to his promotion, Rundbaken was a Staff Attorney, Assistant Chief and Senior Counsel in the division from 1987 to 1999. He served as a senior insurance counsel in the Affirmative Litigation Division's Insurance Law Unit from 1999 to 2002, where he represented the City in insurance coverage actions and advising agencies on insurance issues. Following Sept. 11, he has been working to obtain insurance for the World Trade Center Debris Removal Project. Prior to joining the Law Department, Rundbaken worked at Bronx Legal Services, the Civil Division of Legal Aid and in private practice as counsel to Wresien & Mazzarelli. He graduated Columbia with a law degree in 1971, Dickinson College in 1968 and Stuyvesant High School in 1964. He is married to a social worker and has two children. Rundbaken is a native Manhattanite.
- **Deborah Seidenberg, Chief, Family Court Division** -- Promoted from the First Deputy Chief of Criminal Operations of the Family Court Division, Seidenberg joined the New York City Law Department in 1997. Prior to that, she worked in private practice, focusing primarily on criminal defense and appellate work. Previously, Seidenberg was an Assistant DA in the Bronx District Attorney's Office, where she served as the Deputy Bureau Chief/Acting Bureau Chief of the Sex Crimes and Juvenile Offense Bureau. Seidenberg has lectured for the American Prosecutors Research Institute, was involved in a task force to help facilitate changes in the foster-care system and drafted legislation aimed at improving laws affecting victims of sex crimes and child abuse. She graduated from Albany Law School, earning a JD in May 1983. Seidenberg was raised in Brooklyn and lives in Riverdale, N.Y.
- **John Sweeney, Chief, Workers' Compensation** -- Sweeney joined the Law Department in 1989 and has served as the Division's Deputy Chief since 1994. The Division has nearly one hundred employees and administers approximately 18,000 new workers' compensation claims per year. Sweeney graduated from New York Law School in 1988. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Organ Performance and a Master's degree in Music Theory from the Manhattan School of Music. Prior to joining the Law Department, Sweeney was a professional organist.

The New York City Law Department is one of the oldest, largest and most dynamic law offices in the world, ranking among the top three largest law offices in New York City and the top three largest public law offices in the country. Tracing its roots back to the 1600's, the Department's 650-plus lawyers handle more than

100,000 cases and transactions each year in 17 separate 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. The Department's attorneys represent the City on a vast array of civil litigation, legislative and legal issues and in the criminal prosecution of juveniles. Its web site can be accessed through the City government home page at www.nyc.gov or via direct link at www.nyc.gov/html/law/home.html.

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