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OATH COMMISSIONER AND CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE JONI KLETTER INTRODUCES MEMBERS OF THE FIRST-EVER ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CREATIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Local and National Thought Leaders to Advise City on Restorative Practices and Reimagine How to Address Disputes Outside of Traditional Justice System.

Today, the NYC Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (“OATH”) announced the appointment of the inaugural members of the newly created Advisory Committee on Creative Conflict Resolution. The Committee members are leaders and practitioners in their respective conflict resolution related fields; including, mediation, negotiation, restorative practices, dispute systems design, group facilitation, community-based programming, organizational development, change management and more.

The creation of the Advisory Committee follows the issuance of [Executive Order 63](#) which was signed by Mayor Bill de Blasio in February and formally established the Center for Creative Conflict Resolution (“the Center”) within OATH, designating it as the City government’s central alternative dispute resolution (“ADR”) resource, and creating the Advisory Committee. In addition, the Executive Order directed all agencies to appoint an ADR Coordinator and consult with the Center to incorporate ADR processes and restorative principles into their workplaces and where applicable into their public-facing work.

The Advisory Committee on Creative Conflict Resolution will serve as an independent sounding board for the Center as it supports executive leadership at City agencies in the development of new, creative ADR and restorative-based programs for their workplaces and in their mission-driven, public-facing work. With their expertise and knowledge of industry best practices and emerging trends, these committee members will assist the Center by making recommendations on potential policy and legislative initiatives, educating the public about restorative practices and the Center’s work, and on creating opportunities to work collaboratively with community-based and non-governmental organizations in an effort to expand the use of ADR and restorative practices throughout New York City. In addition to assisting with strategic planning, the Committee will also assist in connecting the Center to other national and international ADR and restorative practices leaders.

“The pandemic has shown us the City’s strength lies in the relationships we have with one another,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “With the launch of the Center for Creative Conflict Resolution and its advisory board, city agencies will use restorative practices and principles in our approach to building our City back, better and fairer than ever.”

“I am thrilled to have a committee of experts who will inform our important work as we expand the use of restorative practices and mediation within the workplaces of our city agencies and in the mission-driven work that they do each day as they serve New Yorkers,” said **OATH Commissioner and Chief Administrative Law Judge Joni Kletter**. “These leading voices will help ensure that our Center’s work and the work that they do with our City agencies is purposeful, diligently pursued and grounded in best practice while we keep New York City a leader of using and embracing transformative approaches in governing.”

“OATH’s Center for Creative Conflict Resolution has proven its worth as an invaluable tool for our City’s neighborhoods. This advisory committee, comprised of the most impactful leaders in the conflict resolution field, will build upon the Center’s groundbreaking work, providing wisdom and resources for business operators and residents,” said **Kapil Longani, Counsel to the Mayor**. “I applaud Commissioner Kletter for her leadership and commitment to this Administration’s vision of fairness and equity for all New Yorkers.”

“The pandemic and racial reckoning in our country over the past year has shifted workplace dynamics and the way in which the public interfaces with government, putting much of the status quo into question. Times of challenge can also be seen as opportunities to make things right. Executive Order 63 places the Center in the forefront of promoting the use of ADR processes and restorative approaches throughout the City and opens up new and exciting possibilities for addressing neighborhood and business disputes, improving government and community relationships, resolving workplace conflicts and responding positively to the needs of NYC residents. Our Center team is excited to work with the new Advisory Committee to explore these possibilities,” said **Hon. Ray Kramer, Executive Director of OATH’s Center for Creative Conflict Resolution**.

“We welcome the creation of the Center for Creative Conflict Resolution’s Advisory Committee and congratulate OATH on attracting this stellar group of experts to guide the exciting work of incorporating restorative justice principles and practices into city work,” said **Deborah Lauter, Executive Director of the NYC Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes**. “We believe that restorative justice can play an important role in reducing hate violence and in helping victims’ heal. We look forward to working with the Center as it moves forward with this exciting initiative.”

“I applaud OATH’s groundbreaking efforts to make available innovative approaches designed to prevent, manage and respond to conflicts that inevitably occur in a huge and diverse environment like New York City. Led by committed and experienced staff and Advisory Committee members, OATH’s Center for Creative Conflict Resolution is uniquely positioned to serve as a hub for all kinds of conflicts and to transform how people proceed when they experience them. Rather than avoiding or erupting when conflicts occur, people will be able to seek or refer others to a variety of fora. Depending on circumstances, they can find mediation, facilitated dialogue, restorative practices, conflict coaching and related processes that empower individuals to participate in user-friendly approaches as a means of first resort.” **Maria R. Volpe, Ph.D.**, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Dispute Resolution Program at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

“I have seen in my own experience at the Red Hook Community Court how restorative practices and creative approaches to problem-solving have led to overwhelmingly positive results while still fulfilling the court’s mission. It’s exciting to see restorative practices being championed and elevated on this scale. This dispute resolution process, where people are treated with dignity and respect and given a voice, will continue the Center’s leading role in building trust in justice in our communities,” said **Criminal Court Judge Alex M. Calabrese**, presiding judge for the Red Hook Community Justice Center.

Advisory Committee on Creative Conflict Resolution

Chair, Hon. Ray Kramer

Judge Ray Kramer founded and currently serves as the Executive Director of OATH’s Center for Creative Conflict Resolution (“the Center”) and the Director of the Administrative Judicial Institute at OATH, the mission of which is to provide ongoing educational programs, training and workshops to New York City and State administrative law judges and hearing officers, as well as some legal practitioners. Judge Kramer has worked to expand the Center’s work from workplace mediation to include such dynamic practice areas as training, executive coaching, strategic conflict consultation, group facilitation, restorative practices and dispute systems design. He also helped lead the development and administration of MEND NYC, the first public-facing initiative offered by the Center which provides free mediation and conflict resolution services to address neighborhood disputes that impact New Yorkers and their quality of life.

Judge Kramer is an experienced mediator and an adjunct professor of law at New York University Law School, where he co-teaches the Mediation and Advanced Mediation: Dispute Systems Design Clinics. He is also an adjunct professor at New York University’s School of Professional Studies, where he teaches Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management in the Human Resources Master’s Degree program, and New York University’s

Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, where he teaches Negotiation. He also teaches Dispute Resolution during summer sessions at the University of International Relations in Beijing, China.

Karen Dean, Executive Ombudsman, Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service

Karen Jane Dean is the Executive Ombudsman for the Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service and provides guidance to government agencies on conflict management systems and implementing ombudsman offices. Ms. Dean has conducted presentations for conferences hosted by the American Bar Association, Federal Dispute Resolution, International Ombudsman Association, and the EEOC. Between 2018-2020, she served as Chair, Conflict Management Consortium –a Federal interagency working group. In August 2017, Ms. Dean received the 2017 Leadership in Action Award presented by the Partnership for Public Service and the Leadership Alumni Committee for creating and implementing the Office of the Ombudsman at the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Kenneth Cloke, Director, Center for Dispute Resolution

Kenneth Cloke has over 40 years of experience as a mediator, arbitrator, facilitator, coach, consultant and trainer, specializing in communication, negotiation, and resolving complex multi-party disputes, including marital, divorce, family, community, grievance and workplace disputes, collective bargaining negotiations, organizational and school conflicts, sexual harassment, discrimination, and public policy disputes. He is an internationally recognized author in the field of alternative dispute resolution with nine books published and has served as an adjunct professor at numerous private colleges throughout the country including but not limited to Pepperdine University, Southern Methodist University, Harvard Law School and Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He is the founder and first President of Mediators Beyond Borders. He served as an Administrative Law Judge for the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board and the Public Employment Relations Board and a Judge *Pro Tem* for the Superior Court of Los Angeles.

Genesis Fisher, President of ACR-GNY, Lawyer, Workplace conflict resolution professional, University Instructor

Genesis Fisher is the founder and Principal Attorney of Fisher Law Practice, P.C. which provides onsite conflict resolution to help businesses and NGOs navigate conflict in constructive and positive ways. She is also the President of the Board of Directors for the Association for Conflict Resolution, Greater New York. She has been an Adjunct Professor since 2014 and taught over a dozen courses from *Advanced Legal Methods* (legal writing) to *Negotiation, Counseling and Interviewing* to a *Sociology Practicum on Conflict Resolution*. Ms. Fisher currently teaches the *Fall Mediation Clinic* at New York Law School and *Mediation* at Rutgers Law School. She is a Certified Mediator, a FINRA Arbitrator and a member of the Eastern District of New York Mediation Panel.

Keith Hickman, Executive Director of Collective Impact - International Institute of Restorative Practices

Keith Hickman is the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) Executive Director of Collective Impact. In this role, he works with partner organizations, both domestically and globally, to pursue the IIRP mission of positively impacting social health. Keith builds alliances with state education departments and national collaboratives. He served as an advisor to the Maryland Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices, is a partner scholar on the CASEL Equity Work Group and is a member of the Research Development and Design Team for the California Safe, Healthy, Responsive Schools Network. He has worked with school districts and community-based agencies to develop large-scale programs in major cities across the country. In 2000, he helped found the Youth Justice Project at the Harlem Community Justice Center, one of four community justice centers under the Center of Court Innovation, which inspired other restorative justice programs in the Bronx, mid-town Manhattan and Red Hook, Brooklyn.

Kay Pranis, National leader in Restorative Justice, Trainer, Consultant

Kay Pranis is a national leader in restorative justice, specializing in peacemaking Circles. She served as the Restorative Justice Planner for the Minnesota Department of Corrections from 1994 to 2003. Before that, she worked six years as the director of research services at the Citizen's Council on Crime and Justice. She has written and presented papers on peacemaking Circles and restorative justice in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Japan. Since 1998, Kay has conducted Circle trainings in a diverse range of communities—including schools, prisons, workplaces and churches in both rural towns and large cities.

Ei Ei Samai, Founder of Samai Group

Ei Ei Samai is the founder of the Samai Group, which grows agility, resilience, and belonging in social impact groups through a dynamic combination of consulting, coaching, facilitating, and training. With over 20 years of experience in social impact, Ei Ei brings grounded expertise in shaping bold conversations in areas such as educational equity, social and environmental justice, diversity and inclusion, trust architecture, collective impact, strategy planning, program and service design, family and community engagement, collaborative partnerships, knowledge management, and organizational culture. In addition to holding a Master of Science in Organizational Management and Transformative Leadership, she is certified in advanced facilitation, experiential training, community mediation, conflict transformation, restorative justice, ecological model of leadership, regenerative human systems design, and in Neuroscience of Conversations® by the late Judith Glaser. In 2019, she was chosen as a Courage Catalyst in the first cohort of Brené Brown's Dare to Lead™ Facilitator Training.

Dr. Sarah Sayeed, Chair & Executive Director, NYC Civic Engagement Commission

Dr. Sayeed is the Chair & Executive Director of the NYC Civic Engagement Commission which was established by referendum in November of 2018. Prior to that post, she was Senior Advisor to the Mayor's Office Community Assistance Unit, where she led constituency engagement for ethnically diverse Muslim communities and advanced Mayoral initiatives including Thrive NYC, housing, universal Pre-K, and neighborhood policing. The Commission runs a citywide participatory budgeting program with guidance from a participatory budgeting advisory committee and partners with community-based organizations and civic leaders to increase awareness of City services and assist New York City agencies in developing civic engagement initiatives.

Deanna Van Buren, Executive Director, Designing Justice + Designing Spaces

Ms. Van Buren is one of the national leaders researching, formulating, and advocating for restorative justice centers, a radical transformation of the criminal justice system. She is the design director and executive director of Designing Justice + Designing Spaces, an architecture and real estate development firm innovating in the built environment to end mass incarceration. Recent work with her practice includes *Restore*, a multi-use hub for restorative justice and restorative economics, the Pop-Up Village, a mobile site activation tool, and The Hope Re-entry Campus. Deanna is a recent awardee of the Berkeley-Rupp Professorship Prize, The Royal Society of Arts Bicentenary Medal and the Women in Architecture Awards Honoring Pioneering Professionals.

**Daniel Weitz, Esq., Director of Professional Services, Unified Court System and NYU Law School
Mediation & DSD Clinic professor**

Dan Weitz is the Director of the Division of Professional and Court Services for the New York State Unified Court System (UCS). Dan oversees the statewide offices of alternative dispute resolution, continuing legal education, language access, grants and contracts, records management, legal information, among other program areas. From 1998-2016, Dan served as Statewide ADR Coordinator, overseeing a statewide program of court-annexed ADR initiatives involving mediation, arbitration, neutral evaluation, parenting coordination and collaborative law. He also directed the Community Dispute Resolution Centers Program. Dan serves on UCS Advisory Committees on Language Access, ADR, and Access for People with Disabilities. Dan previously served as Co-Counsel to the Board of Governors of the New York State Attorney-Client Fee Dispute Resolution Program. He is a past Chair of the New York City Bar Association ADR Committee and past Co-Chair of the ABA Dispute Resolution Section, Court ADR Committee.

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