

Celebrating the Tenure of Susan Kohlmann, 2022-2024 NYC Bar Association President

News

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Jenner & Block commemorates the remarkable achievements and lasting impact that Partner Susan Kohlmann, President of the New York City Bar Association from 2022 to 2024, brought to the Bar, the firm, the New York legal community, and the international rule of law and justice across the globe.

Founded in 1870 in response to growing public concern over corruption in the New York City justice system, the Bar has championed justice and fairness; diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; and education and innovation within law. Susan's election added to the legacy of women who have broken barriers in the legal field. During her tenure, the Bar spearheaded several transformative initiatives in areas including:

- **Innovation:** The Task Force on Digital Technologies focused on developing emerging technologies across legal practice and policy, issuing a report to the Uniform Commercial Code that supported enhancing a New York version of emerging technology amendments to ensure the city keeps pace with rapidly evolving technological advancements.
- **Education:** The Civic Education Task Force, co-chaired by Partner Dawn Smalls, focused on increasing public understanding of how government works and the principles that enable the American system to thrive, holding programs on securing democracy for tomorrow and activating a Bar civic volunteer corps to boost civic education nationwide.
- **Rule of Law:** The Task Force on National Security and the Rule of Law sponsored programs on topics such as election protection, debating ethics standards, and hot speech on campus and in the profession. Members explored how the law shapes speech and political expression given the repercussions faced by many for voicing opinion in times of turbulence. Task force Chair Marcy L. Kahn stated that Susan formed a working group to discuss how the Bar might address the Israel-Hamas war and its fallout in the United States, noting: "It was because [Susan] cared so deeply about the project, and about the City Bar as an institutional home for lawyers of all backgrounds, that we were able to ... address the pain and conflicting emotions being experienced by our members during this tumultuous time and that our program was heralded as a success."

Under Susan's tenure, the Bar filed numerous reports, statements, and amicus briefs advocating across issues and continued to increase opportunities for underrepresented groups within the legal profession, reflecting the mantra of its Office for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging that "we must make the City Bar a place where we can air our differences, celebrate them, and hopefully learn to really listen to one another." Her efforts strengthened the Bar and the firm's collective influence and impact as pillars of justice and ethics in New York City and beyond, making a lasting impact on both the legal community and broader society, paving the road for the next 150 years ahead.

As Susan stated in a Bar blog, "As officers of the court and stewards of the legal profession, we lawyers have a special obligation to stand up for the rule of law and defend our democracy ... when the next chapter of the New York City Bar Association's history is written, let it show that we met the moment."



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