

Welcome!

Summer 2023

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If you received this newsletter from a third party or from visiting our website and would like to be added to our alumni mailing list or any other mailing list, please contact:

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716-848-1612.



Mairi K. Stewart Named Global Head of Attorney & Law Firm Operations

We are pleased to announce that **Mairi K. Stewart** has joined Hodgson Russ LLP as our Global Head of Attorney & Law Firm Operations. An experienced attorney and legal operations leader, Mairi comes to the firm with two decades of experience in the legal industry. In this role, she will be working closely with Hodgson Russ leadership overseeing firm operations to build on our platform of exceptional service throughout its nine offices.



“Hodgson Russ has such a strong reputation in the legal community as a team of collaborative, smart and practical lawyers and other professionals,” Mairi said. “I am incredibly excited to be working with them to deliver creative and efficient legal solutions to our clients.”

Having served in multiple roles throughout her legal career, most recently as Head of Legal Operations and Strategic Initiatives at Stikeman Elliott LLP in Toronto, Ontario, Mairi has extensive experience leading cross-functional teams on various projects and initiatives that improve operational efficiency and client experience. She brings a deep understanding of client needs to her role which will be instrumental in supporting the firm’s growth.

In addition to her business roles at Stikeman Elliott, she also practiced as a corporate lawyer at the firm for several years before joining an investment office as a Managing Director and later a Canadian public retailer as General Counsel.

“We are excited to have Mairi Stewart as a member of the Hodgson Russ team,” said Hodgson Russ Managing Partner **Benjamin M. Zuffranieri Jr.** “We are confident Mairi will provide the leadership, strategic direction, and clear communication necessary to continue the success the firm has enjoyed for two decades under her predecessor’s leadership.”

Alumni in the News

Leecia Eve Named Interim Chair of Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center Board of Directors



Former Hodgson Russ LLP Partner **Leecia Eve** has been named Interim Chair of the Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center Board of Directors. With her appointment, she becomes the first woman and the first person of color to serve as Roswell's Board Chair.

Leecia joined Hodgson Russ in December of 1996 and remained with the firm for just over four years. She currently serves as a senior executive with Ichor Strategies and has more than three decades of experience in both government and private industry.

A Buffalo native, Leecia is a graduate of Smith College, Harvard Law, and Harvard's JFK School of Government. She has served on Roswell's Board of Directors since 2018.

[Click here to read Roswell Park's announcement about Leecia.](#)



Hodgson Russ LLP Alumnus Named KeyBank Assistant General Counsel

John F. State, a former partner at Hodgson Russ LLP, has returned to KeyBank as an assistant general counsel. He previously served as legal chief of KeyBank's equipment finance unit before spending nearly 20 years in private practice.

John joined Hodgson Russ as a partner in November of 2004 and stayed with the firm for eight years.



Send Us Your Submissions!



We want to share your accomplishments with all Hodgson Russ Alumni!

Did you get married? Do you have a new addition to your family? Have you opened your own practice/business? Did you get a promotion?

Let us know! Make sure you send us a picture, too!

Send your submissions to our Communications Coordinator, Ann L. Harenda.

Email Ann: aharenda@hodgsonruss.com

[Click here to send Ann an email.](#)

Keeping the Conversation Going

Empowering Underprivileged Women through the Law: A Conversation with Mirna Martinez Santiago and Jodyann Galvin



Mirna Martinez Santiago is the Chief Executive Officer of Girls Rule the Law and a former Senior Associate at Hodgson Russ. **Jodyann Galvin** is a Partner at Hodgson Russ and the leader of the firm's Intellectual Property Litigation Practice.



Jody – Hi Mirna. Great to see you. ***You're the Founder of Girls Rule the Law. What moved you to start an organization from scratch?***

Mirna – To be quite honest, it was from working in the community. I had a full-circle moment. I was born in Honduras and grew up in the projects of the South Bronx. My first time out of the Bronx was going to

school at NYU.

At one point in my career in 2016, I went back to work in the neighborhood where I grew up. Seeing that nothing had changed in 20 years for these girls, I asked myself, "What can I do to change things? What can I do to move the needle?"

I focused on trying to push representation by telling the girls "You can be lawyers; you can be legislators; you can have a voice; you can be heard; you can drive change."

After I started putting on programs, I realized the idea had legs. I decided to make it a 501 (c)(3) corporation. It grew from there.



Jody – ***What is the target group age and demographic you aim to serve?***

Mirna – Our target group is middle and high school girls, typically ages 10 to 18. We go in to the schools and conduct debates or mock trials, hold law days, or even take them to Washington, D.C. We did that last



year and were able to see Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor deliver a speech. Our girls were right there looking up at her. It was very exciting.

By doing that, we can inspire girls earlier to get into the law. Of course, we welcome every girl. But we do try to focus on girls in communities of need because those are girls in

particular who aren't encouraged to be a lawyer, judge, or legislator. Sometimes, girls who live in the suburbs and in certain communities see more women who look like them in positions of power. Whereas the girls in the communities of need in inner cities don't see that as much.

Jody – ***If you could create a wish list for professionals to come and support Girls Rule the Law – what would your top three things be that the profession could bring to your organization?***

Mirna – Well, I guess the top three things that every nonprofit needs boils down to a few basics. First thing of course is money. Because we really cannot feed the kids, take the kids to DC or Albany without money. Second thing is time. We need your time. And third thing is that we need volunteers.

I was telling my team for law day that it was really difficult getting people to go to the Bronx. And that's exactly why we need people to go to the Bronx.

Continued on Page 4 "Girls Rule"

Keeping the Conversation Going (cont'd)

Girls Rule (cont'd)



Often when you ask people to go into an underfunded school in a neighborhood that's in the South Bronx then nobody wants to do it. And that's exactly why we need to do it, otherwise, those kids will not see attorneys and learn from those in the profession.

So my top three needs are definitely volunteers, time and of course money.

Jody – *What was your first experience as a young lawyer in a courtroom and how did you feel?*

Mirna – Oh that's a loaded question, especially for women of color. For a lot of us, we walk into the courtroom and we're told to get back behind the attorney bench because we don't belong there. That's definitely what happened to me. I had to show everyone that I actually belonged there.

It's also part of the work we do at Girls Rule. Helping girls from underserved backgrounds see themselves in the law includes giving them professional clothes and demystifying where we shop. We had a feature on the Girls Rule webpage for a while called "What's In Your Closet?" where professionals talked about the labels they bought and where they bought them. I think this is important to anyone who comes to a profession like the law without role models who dressed the part.

Jody – Yes! I think being direct and honest and showing your own vulnerability is the way to bring young women along in the law.

We actually started at Hodgson Russ at exactly the same time in the Fall of 1998. *What do you recall about that experience and how it affected you or moved you on to the next phase of your career?*

Mirna – I remember the firm really had a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Even back in 1998, they

were talking about how to be more representative of the New York City area and of our clients. When I first got hired, they weren't saying "we're hiring you because you're a Black woman or a Latina woman. They were telling me we're hiring you because you have something of value. I appreciated it. *I've been following the trajectory of Hodgson Russ throughout the years and they've kept the focus on that. Where did that focus come from? And where do you see it going?*

Jody – We celebrate our diverse and inclusive workforce through Black History, Pride, and other celebrations of community and history. We're also having more challenging conversations and doing more work. Our pipeline programs in the community are trying to provide access to the law. For example, Hodgson Russ supports Buffalo Prep and Discover Law. One shows a pathway to success through access to education and one shows the way to law school. I support all of these organizations personally, and I also mentor individually. It's a mantra for me— one on one. Show them the way, and have an impact at the individual level.



So what are you doing when you're not working?

Mirna – I feel like I'm always kind of working, to be quite honest. I'll get up in the middle of the night and come up with an idea for a Girls Rule. I swear, I texted my board chair in the middle of the night.

I also have my son in college. When he's home, I'm focused on him. I cook for him and try to spend more time with him, even if he doesn't want to spend time with mom. We like to travel. I love architecture. I love sightseeing. Anything for me with architecture, with old world style buildings, that's where I want to be.

JG – I also love to travel. My three sons and I have now been to 25 national parks.

Internal News

Hodgson Russ LLP Receives Multiple Top Marks from *Chambers USA Guide 2023*

Hodgson Russ LLP is pleased to announce seven of its practice areas and 13 of its attorneys are recognized in the *Chambers USA 2023 Guide*.

The firm’s **State & Local Tax Practice** received the highest ranking of “Band 1” for New York.

Six other Hodgson Russ practices were recognized by Chambers including:

- **Corporate/Mergers & Acquisitions** – Upstate New York
- **Environment** – Upstate New York
- **Healthcare** – New York
- **Labor & Employment** – Upstate New York
- **Litigation: General Commercial** – Upstate New York
- **Real Estate** – Upstate New York (includes Real Estate Development and Real Estate Leasing)

The Hodgson Russ attorneys recognized for exemplary work and client relations are:



Jane Bello Burke
Health Care
(New York)



Amy J. Fitch
Real Estate
(Upstate New York)



Terrence M. Gilbride
Real Estate
(Upstate New York)



Peter C. Godfrey
Labor & Employment
(Upstate New York)



Michael J. Hecker
Environment
(Upstate New York)



Elizabeth A. Holden
Real Estate
(Upstate New York)



Timothy P. Noonan
Tax: State & Local
(New York)



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Internal News (cont'd)

Chambers (cont'd)



Daniel A. Spitzer
Environment
(Upstate New York)



Sujata Yalamanchili
Real Estate
(Upstate New York)



Jeffrey C. Stravino
Environment
(Upstate New York)



John J. Zak
Corporate/Mergers & Acquisitions
(Upstate New York)



Kevin R. Talbot
Corporate/Mergers & Acquisitions
(Upstate New York)



Attorneys and law firm rankings are based on in-depth, independent research and interviews with clients, fellow attorneys, and corporate counsel.

Often referred to as the “gold standard,” the *Chambers USA Guide* evaluates attorneys and legal practices in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and at a nationwide level with hundreds of practice area-based ranking tables identifying the best practice groups and lawyers working across the United States legal market.

Overall, the London-based *Chambers and Partners* published 35 practice guides in 2023, ranking thousands of practice groups and attorneys.



What's New at the Firm? (cont'd)

Six Attorneys Elected to Hodgson Russ LLP Partnership



Luisa D. Bostick

Labor & Employment, Education

Buffalo Office



Roopa Chakkappan

Healthcare

Buffalo Office



Patrick E. Fitzsimmons

White Collar Criminal Defense, Cybersecurity & Privacy

Buffalo Office



Chelsea N. Latta

Immigration

Buffalo Office



Lindsay A. Menasco

Education, Special Education

Buffalo Office



Sarah Nagel Miller

Business Litigation

Buffalo Office

Palm Beach Managing Partner



James M. Bandoblu Jr. was named Managing Partner of our Palm Beach office effective January 1, 2023.

Jim will foster the office's commitment to exceptional client service and growth consistent with the overall mission of the firm. He will also oversee the professional development of his colleagues and support their continued involvement in the Palm Beach community where they work and live, and look to grow the firm's footprint in Florida.

[Click here to read a Law360 article about Jim.](#)

The Power of Podcasts

Do you subscribe to either of our new podcasts?



State & Local Tax (SALT) Associate **Joe Tantillo** hosts the eponymous "**State Tax Talks with Joe Tantillo**," where he and other SALT attorneys work to un-complicate New York State's tax laws and requirements for listeners.

[Click here to subscribe to "State Tax Talks with Joe Tantillo."](#)



If you're looking for a way to stay on top of the latest developments in the global semiconductor industry, look no further than "**The Semi Interesting Podcast**."

Intellectual Property Partner **Nathaniel Lucek** and his co-host Elizabeth Morris use their in-house experience to offer a unique perspective on legal issues facing the industry.

[Click here to subscribe to "The Semi Interesting Podcast."](#)

*Disclaimer: These podcasts do not offer legal advice.

Spotlight on Hodgson Russ LLP

Hodgson Russ LLP Honored with 2023 New York State Bar Association President’s Pro Bono Service Award



We are proud to announce that Hodgson Russ LLP has received the 2023 New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) President’s Pro Bono Service Award in the Mid-Size Law Firm category. The award is in recognition of the over 1,100 hours of work performed by 37 Hodgson Russ attorneys, three paralegals, and other firm professionals to investigate, prepare, and advocate for 37 Afghan asylum applicants as well as their spouses and children. This is the second time Hodgson Russ has been honored with this award with the first happening in 2015.



Hodgson Russ partners **Joshua Feinstein** and **Kevin M. Kearney** lead the firm’s pro bono efforts, which have received both local and national recognition. In addition to twice receiving the NYSBA President’s Pro Bono Service Award, the Erie County Bar Association has also praised the firm’s outstanding pro bono efforts and Washington, D.C.-based Legal Services Corporation presented awards to Hodgson Russ and Kevin Kearney for their commitment to providing pro bono legal services in New York State. The U.S. District Court for the Western District of New York



also recently presented its Special Service Award to the firm and partner **Hugh M. Russ III**.

“The firm is honored to have been able to assist these individuals and families,” said Hodgson Russ Managing Partner **Benjamin M. Zuffranieri Jr.** “All of the Hodgson Russ professionals involved learned a great deal, and were reminded that service is an integral part of being a lawyer.”

Each year, the NYSBA proudly bestows the President’s Pro Bono Service Awards to recognize outstanding pro bono contributions made by individual attorneys, law students, law firms, corporate counsel, and government offices to convey a message to the profession and the public about the importance of pro bono efforts in achieving equal access to justice. Recipients in the Law Firm category are selected based on the breadth and scope of the law firm’s pro bono involvement and its active and successful promotion of pro bono service by firm attorneys.



A formal ceremony was held May 1 at the NYSBA Headquarters in Albany, New York. **Meghan M. Carrig** accepted the honor on the firm’s behalf.



Attorney Achievements



Managing Partner **Benjamin M. Zuffranieri Jr.** was named to the *Buffalo Business First* 2023 “Power 250” list.

The list annually recognizes the region’s most influential people, both longtime power players and those just beginning to shape the future of Western New York.

Ben was ranked #46 on the list of 250.



Timothy P. Noonan and **Joe Tantillo** were both named 2023 *JD Supra* Readers’ Choice Awards winners!

The awards annually acknowledge top authors and firms for their thought leadership in key topics during the previous year (2022).

Tim and Joe were recognized for the visibility and engagement they attained with readers, specifically their writings about tax topics.



Andrew J. Freedman has been named to The Minority Bar Foundation of Western New York’s Board of Directors.

The Foundation was formed in 2004 to advance education and scholarship in the field of law, working to ensure “continued minority representation in the profession and empower future leaders to help shape the justice system in Western New York and throughout New York State.”



Attorney Achievements (cont'd)



Mohammed A. Alam was named to *City & State's* "Albany 40 Under 40 Rising Stars" list.

Each year, *City & State* selects 40 people who are under the age of 40, who are rising stars in Albany in government, advocacy, media, business, lobbying, and more.

[Click here to read the full article and see Mohammed's spread on pages 16-17!](#)



Fallon E. Martin has been named to the *Buffalo Business First* "Class of 2023: 30 Under 30."

The award identifies young professionals who are achieving excellence early in their careers and making a difference in their communities.