



LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK

JUSTICE FOR ALL ANNUAL AWARDS CELEBRATION

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2024



Legal Aid
Society

NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK

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WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

James E. Hacker, President, LASNNY Board of Directors

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OPENING REMARKS

Rachel Rossi,
Director of the Office for Access to Justice
U.S. Department of Justice

KEYNOTE

Amy Godine
*The Black Woods: Pursuing Racial Justice
on the Adirondack Frontier*

AWARD PRESENTATIONS

WILLIAM E. BYRON EQUAL JUSTICE AWARD

Dr. Alice Green, *posthumously*,
founder of the Center for Law and Justice

COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD

Brunswick Community Library

PRIVATE ATTORNEY INVOLVEMENT (PAI)

PRO BONO AWARD

Mariah W. Dolce, Esq.

JUSTICE FOR ALL AWARD (INDIVIDUAL)

Melissa C. Bennett, Esq. Partner, Barclay Damon

JUSTICE FOR ALL AWARD (LAW FIRM)

Harding Mazzotti, LLP

RUTH M. MINER LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Honorable Elizabeth A. Garry

OPENING REMARKS

Rachel Rossi



Rachel Rossi was appointed to serve as Director of the Office for Access to Justice in May 2022.

Prior to her appointment, Director Rossi served as Deputy Associate Attorney General in the Office of the Associate Attorney General, Vanita Gupta. In that role, she also served as the inaugural Anti-Hate Coordinator for the Justice Department.

Director Rossi began her career as a public defender in Los Angeles, where she served for almost a decade. She practiced in the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office, the Los Angeles County Alternate Public Defender's Office, and the Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California, where she vigorously defended thousands of low-income clients in state and federal courts.

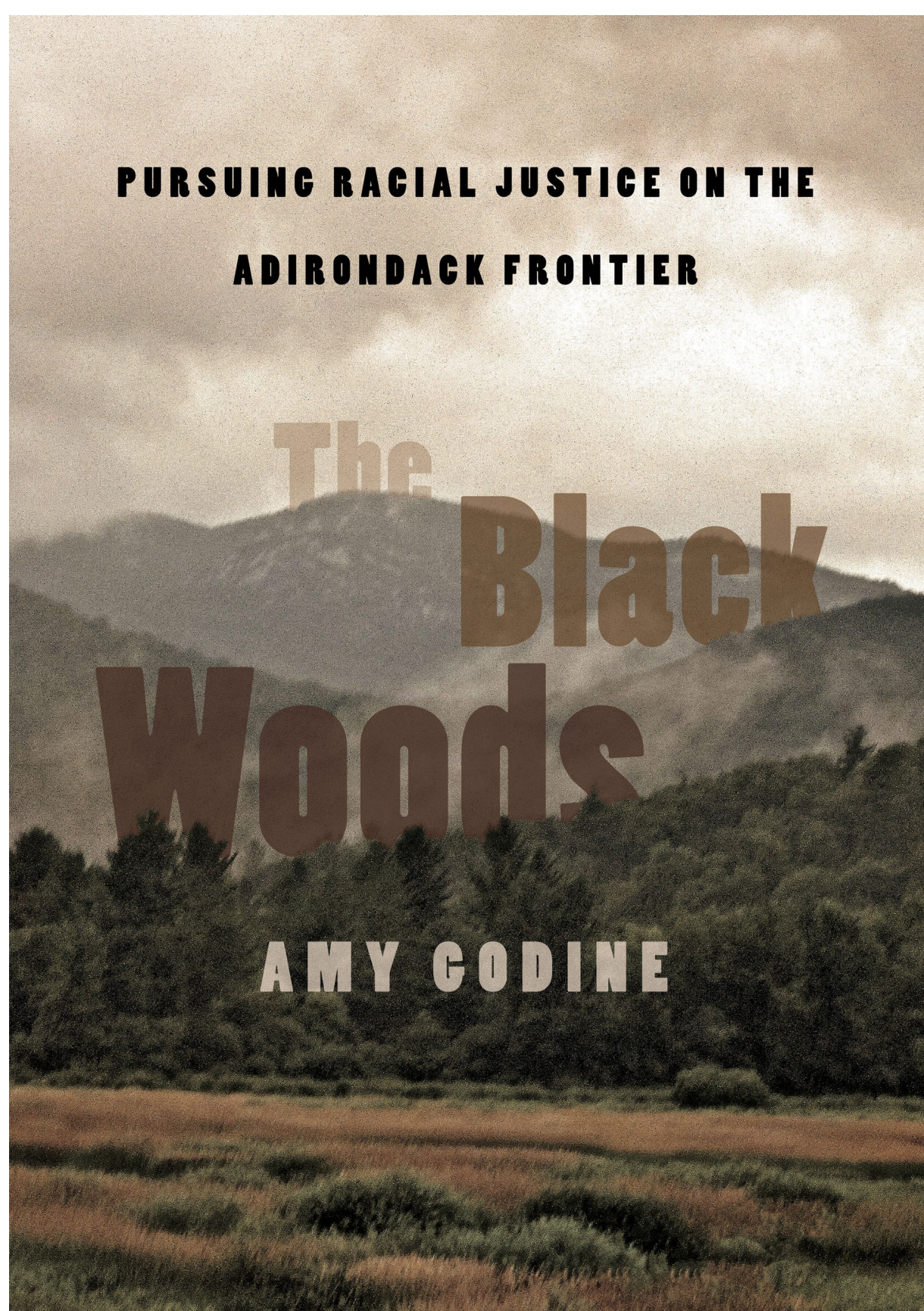
Director Rossi then served as Counsel to Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Richard J. Durbin, where she was the lead staffer on the First Step Act, a major U.S. federal criminal justice reform bill signed into law in 2018 that created comprehensive sentencing and prison reforms. She then transitioned to the role of Counsel to the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, working for then Crime Subcommittee Chair Karen Bass.

Director Rossi received her law degree from Pepperdine University School of Law, and attended Azusa Pacific University, Vanguard University and Bethany University, where she received her bachelor's degree. She grew up in Los Angeles, California, and is the daughter of immigrant parents born in the Dominican Republic and Greece.

KEYNOTE



Amy Godine



Adirondack historian Amy Godine offers a brief summary of her findings on an abolitionist's effort to enfranchise 3000 landless Black New Yorkers with gifts of Adirondack land in the mid-1800s and notes the threads that bind this long-forgotten racial justice initiative to the early and

evolving mission of Legal Aid in New York. Amy will be signing and selling "The Black Woods: Pursuing Racial Justice on the Adirondack Frontier" (Cornell, 2023), at the event.

WILLIAM E. BYRON EQUAL JUSTICE AWARD



DR. ALICE GREEN CENTER FOR LAW AND JUSTICE *(POSTHUMOUSLY)*

Dr. Alice P. Green was a tireless advocate for social justice, civil rights, and community empowerment. As the founder and Executive Director of the Center for Law and Justice in Albany, NY since 1985, Dr. Green dedicated her life to challenging systemic racism, promoting equity, and uplifting marginalized voices. Her work has transformed countless lives and continues

to inspire a new generation of activists and leaders. Dr. Green's unwavering commitment to justice and her profound impact on the community stand as a testament to her extraordinary legacy.

Dr. Green had a doctorate in Criminal Justice and 3 master's degrees – Education, Social Work, and Criminal Justice. She taught classes at the University at Albany, Russell Sage College, and Siena College. Dr. Green was an early Director of the Trinity Institution (now Trinity Alliance) in Albany's South End. She also held positions with the New York Civil Liberties Union and the New York State Defenders Association.

The Center which she founded honors her legacy by continuing to provide community education on civil and criminal justice, legal guidance and advocacy, crisis intervention, and community planning and organizing around these issues of particular concern to poor communities and those of color.

Accepting this award on Dr. Green's behalf is Ta-Sean C. Murdock,

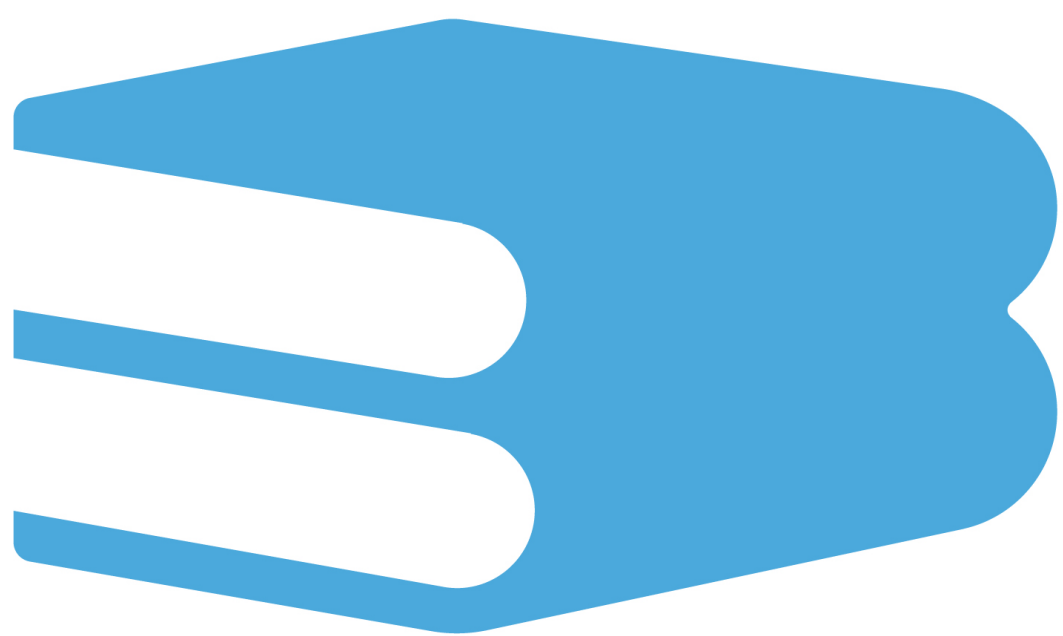
a dedicated advocate for social justice and community empowerment based in Albany, New York. He serves as a key member of the Center for Law and Justice, where he focuses on criminal justice reform, civil rights advocacy, and community outreach. With a commitment to uplifting marginalized voices, Ta-Sean plays a pivotal role in strategic planning and operations, including the development of a comprehensive operations plan that emphasizes education, advocacy, and community services.



COMMUNITY
PARTNER AWARD

**BRUNSWICK
COMMUNITY
LIBRARY**

The Brunswick Community
Library offers access to life-long
learning resources, engaging
activities, and an inclusive
community space for all.



**Brunswick
Community
Library**

JUSTICE FOR ALL AWARD

HARDING MAZZOTTI, LLP

Thirty years ago, Bruce L. Martin, Paul B. Harding and Victor L. Mazzotti joined together to form Harding Mazzotti, LLP. Harding Mazzotti is a New York based personal injury law firm with locations throughout New York, Vermont, and Massachusetts. For three decades, the Heavy Hitters have been dedicated solely to the representation of injured persons.

In 1999, Rosemarie Riddell Bogdan became the 4th partner in the history of the firm. She now heads the firm's mass tort division, taking on some of the largest corporations in the world, to ensure those injured by defective medical devices or defective drugs have a voice.

Our experienced attorneys have secured over \$1 billion in settlements for victims of negligence, and our firm continues to grow to better serve and support our communities. The Harding Mazzotti personal injury team consists of 40+ Attorneys and 120+ support staff, who have served thousands of clients.

At Harding Mazzotti, LLP our motto has always been "When given the choice, choose kindness." This motto is the basis for how we approach every person that contacts Harding & Mazzotti. Whether it's personal injury, car accident, defective drug, medical malpractice, defective medical device, Social Security Disability, Workers' Compensation, or defective product; helping you is what we do.

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JUSTICE FOR ALL AWARD



MELISSA C. BENNETT ESQ.

Melissa Bennett is a partner at Barclay Damon and co-chair of the firm's Public Finance Practice Area. She serves as bond counsel, underwriter's counsel, and borrower's counsel on a variety of general obligation and revenue bond transactions, including financings for school districts, municipalities, colleges/universities, health care providers, and affordable housing projects.

Melissa regularly serves as bond counsel to the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York on its School Districts Revenue Bond Financing Program (providing low-cost financing to public school districts across the state—most recently over \$1 billion to 69 school districts) and on programs financing residential facilities for persons with special needs. Melissa also worked closely with DASNY and various state agencies over four years to structure a financing program for Raise the Age facilities.

Additionally, Melissa regularly serves as bond counsel to NYS Housing Finance Agency on its tax-exempt bond issuances financing affordable multifamily rental housing projects throughout the state, most recently \$300 million for projects in Bronx, Kings, and Ulster counties. Melissa also often serves as bond counsel and underwriter's counsel for NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation bond issuances, which provide financing for clean water and drinking water projects across the state.

Melissa also serves as counsel to several industrial development agencies and local development corporations in connection with straight-lease transactions for economic development projects and tax-exempt and taxable revenue bond issuances and provides day-to-day advice to IDA and LDC clients on compliance and governance.

PRIVATE ATTORNEY
INVOLVEMENT (PAI)
PRO BONO AWARD



MARIAH DOLCE
ESQ.

Mariah is a medical malpractice attorney in the State of New Jersey. She is admitted to practice in the State of New York, and the United States District Court for the North District of New York as well as the State of New Jersey. Her concentration of practice is in the representation of medical facilities and healthcare professionals against claims of medical malpractice and liability. Her other areas of practice include personal injury, labor and employment, and workers' compensation.

In addition to private practice, Mariah's civic involvement includes pro bono services of estate planning, name change applications, and family court matters. She also volunteers as a tutor for the Literacy Volunteers of Rensselaer County, serving individuals of the immigrant and refugee community within the Capital Region, and teaches religious education at her parish.



RUTH M. MINER LEADERSHIP AWARD



THE HONORABLE **ELIZABETH A. GARRY**

**PRESIDING JUSTICE
NYS SUPREME COURT
APPELLATE DIVISION, THIRD DEPT.**

The Honorable Elizabeth A. Garry was appointed as the 16th Presiding Justice of the Third Department on January 1, 2018; she had been appointed to the Third Department effective March 19, 2009. She was first elected to serve as Supreme Court Justice for the Sixth Judicial District – which includes much of Central New York and the Southern Tier – in 2006, and was reelected in 2020. She had previously been twice elected and served as Town Justice in the Town of New Berlin from 2002 through 2006. As Presiding Justice, she also serves on the Administrative Board of the Courts, along with the other Presiding Justices and the Chief Judge of the State. The Board consults with the Chief Judge and Chief Administrative Judge in setting statewide standards, court rules and other policies.

Presiding Justice Garry graduated from Alfred University and Albany Law School, with honors. She began her legal career as Confidential Law Clerk to the Honorable Irad S. Ingraham, Justice of the Supreme Court, from 1990 to 1994. She was thereafter engaged in private practice with the Joyce Law Firm, practicing throughout Central New York for roughly a dozen years before taking the bench full time.

Presiding Justice Garry is a Trustee of Albany Law School. She is a founding Co Chair and current Commissioner of the Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission of the New York Courts. She is also a long-time board member of the International Association of LGBTQ+ Judges and works with its Foundation to support the Judge Paul G. Feinman Scholarship, which is awarded annually to law students who have demonstrated a commitment to the LGBTQ+ community. Presiding Justice Garry is a founding member of the Del-Chen-O Chapter of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, and has served on various other boards, community and cultural organizations and professional associations throughout her career.

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Legal Aid Society

NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York fights for fairness, dignity and justice for vulnerable people and for a society which is inclusive and equitable for all. We transform lives, build community, and empower people by using the law to address individual and systemic wrongs and inequities.

SUPPORT OUR MISSION

The Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, with your support, continues to be on the front line of fighting for fairness, dignity, and justice for our neighbors. We need your support to ensure that we are there to help keep people in their homes, ensure workers' rights are protected and protect the safety of families and children.

Please contact Tammy Gaynor at tgaynor@lasnny.org with any questions, or to make a pledge.

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