

Chai-Lites

by Sharon L. Eiseman

The CHAI-LITES section routinely features news about our busy members coming, going, celebrating, being recognized, speaking, writing, making new career moves, standing up for the oppressed, volunteering, acquiring more new titles and awards than seems possible, and RUNNING and RUNNING ... for office, for the bench and in Race Judicata! This year, this season, however, EVERYTHING IS UPSIDE DOWN DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.

Being UPSIDE DOWN does not mean we have forsaken all of the important goals identified above, but it does mean that our lawyers are working remotely and communicating with their clients that way or via phone, and our members and their colleagues who serve in the Judiciary are also working the same way but are making amazing efforts to create new systems for allowing litigants and their counsel to appear in court. These new ways of appearing include email submissions of agreed orders for execution, and hosting certain hearings virtually that can be conducted in a manner that is fair for all participants and that will provide the relevant evidence and testimony so the judges who are presiding can rule effectively. To them, and to the attorneys and their clients and witnesses, Decalogue extends a message of gratitude for your devotion to keeping the wheels of justice turning in the right direction in spite of the new challenges we all must face and overcome.

AND NOW COMES THE DRUM ROLL FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

First and foremost, it seems appropriate to let you know that Decalogue's Executive Board and the Board of Managers for the 2020-21 bar year were recently sworn in by our very own Cook County Circuit Court Chief Judge Timothy Evans. And while all of our new officers, from our President to our Financial Secretary, make up quite a stellar team of leaders, we are especially honored and thrilled to welcome our new President **Patrick Dankwa John** to his position, not only because he has demonstrated his talent and skills, his drive, his commitment, his compassion, and his continuing new ideas for meaningful services that Decalogue can offer its membership and the profession in general, but because his taking the oath of office made history for Decalogue and possibly will serve as an inspiration for many other Jewish bar associations. How? Because Patrick John is the first African American to lead our august society—which reflects the tearing down of so many barriers. That relevant step also means the opening of many new doors and consideration of new ways to lead, communicate, educate, and make progress. So welcome to Patrick and to all our other Executive Board members, and to members of our new Board of Managers from the Chai-Lites.

The Jury Verdict Reporter of the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin gave special recognition to **Justice Robert E. Gordon** as the trial judge who presided over the most civil jury trials in Illinois. In such cases, which were tracked over a 30-year period, Justice Gordon served as a civil jury trial judge for only nine years to achieve that distinction. No one has ever doubted Justice Gordon's dedication and work ethic, and these impressive statistics bear out those characteristics. Congratulations, our esteemed Board member Justice Gordon!

At its Annual Reception held in March before we all were sent into quarantine, the Women's Bar Association presented to Decalogue Recording Secretary **Judge Megan E. Goldish**, of the Domestic Violence Division of Cook County Circuit Court, its distinguished Mary Heftel Hooten Award, named in honor of one of the WBAI's past presidents who was deeply devoted to the success of the WBAI and to the promotion of women lawyers and women in the judiciary. Judge Goldish now joins the lineup of many elite women bar members and others in the legal profession who have been recognized for their contributions to the betterment of our profession. Work on achieving better gender diversity across the profession remains a necessity, and having champions like Judge Goldish contributes to continued progress on that front and in the equally relevant area of racial diversity.

Even off the bench, Judge Goldish uses her time meaningfully. She recently volunteered during this COVID-19 crisis with Judge Erika Orr to support the organization Save Money Save Life by helping to deliver food packages to those in need. As Judge Orr noted, "The organization is dealing with food insecurity that is exacerbated due to COVID layoffs and the civil unrest during this period."

Hon. **Joel Chupack**, Decalogue Past President, recently presented a timely CLE on “Government Actions Affecting Mortgage Foreclosures and Evictions” as part of Decalogue’s CLE program series. Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on landlord-tenant relations and the downturn in the economy for almost everyone, a program on new orders issued on new protocol for court actions in this area of law was much needed—and Judge Chupack came to the rescue. The audience, which consisted of counsel for both landlords and tenants, left with much valuable guidance on how to litigate—and prepare for litigation—in this area facing new, heightened and still evolving challenges.

Sinai Health System recently announced, with pleasure, the addition of **Mara Ruff** as Vice President of External Affairs. Sinai noted that Ruff “will lead efforts to advance the system’s policy and legislative priorities.” Before taking her position with Sinai, Mara served as director of local government affairs at the Jewish Federation of Chicago. She obviously likes being in charge—and is also known for being good at that—as she was sworn in last month as Decalogue’s First Vice President. Mara is a member of the Chicago Bar Association, the Illinois Hospital Association, and America’s Essential Hospitals. And every time she sees you, she will greet you with enthusiasm and her very engaging smile.

Double congratulations are in order for board member **Carrie Seleman** who was very recently recognized by the JUF as one of the 36 Under 36 to receive a “Double Chai in the Chi” for her impressive dedication to helping those in need in the Jewish community. Besides her work as the President of the Jewish Women International’s Chicago Young Women’s Leadership Network, Carrie serves as a host of One Table Shabbats which translates into offering a warm and inspirational Shabbat experience to individuals who otherwise would not be seated at a table for that experience. And her day job? She works for the Office of the Cook County Public Guardian where she serves as a guardian ad litem for juveniles in the child protection system. Carrie has not wandered far from her passion for helping the most vulnerable populations in our communities: as a law student, she was a volunteer at the Domestic Violence Legal Clinic where she sought orders of protection for domestic violence survivors, and she also volunteered at the Juvenile Expungement Help Desk. Usually we look to older attorneys as role models, but, clearly, we must rethink that concept and begin to recognize that our young members can claim that status and motivate us all to reach higher.

And we have our own “Double Double Chai,” because Carrie had company in the group of 36 Under 36: namely, **Melissa Gold**, a business litigation attorney with Thompson Coburn LLP. In addition to having served as president of Decalogue’s student chapter at the University of Illinois, Melissa was the recipient of our Society’s 2014 Intra-Society Award. Clearly, she is keeping up with her own impressive track record.

Longtime Decalogue board member **Sharon Eiseman** received the ISBA’s Roz Kaplan Government Service Award for her commitment to public service and the promotion of equality for women and minorities in and outside of the profession. This award was created by the ISBA’s Women and the Law Committee to honor the work of its namesake, Rosalyn Kaplan, for her impressive career as a government official. It was this same committee -- and its past leaders -- that nominated Sharon for the award, and for which Sharon served as chair during the 2007-08 bar year.

Samuel Levine has been appointed as secretary of the Illinois Society of Construction Lawyers. He is also editor of the Illinois State Bar Association’s Construction Law Section newsletter, “Building Knowledge.” As if that is not enough extracurricular work for Sam, he serves as the CLE coordinator for the ISBA Commercial Banking Collections and Bankruptcy Section. Those who know Sam are well acquainted with his skill at “juggling” and following through on his many different commitments.

Board member **Charles Krugel**, who is perhaps our most active speaker, writer and quoted member, has continued to be everywhere since the pandemic quarantine began:

Charles was interviewed May 30 on live TV by South Korea’s news service Arirang on its pandemic related show. The discussion concerned May Day (International Workers Day) and the pandemic’s effect on our economy, labor markets and the unemployment rate. The interview can be accessed at <https://www.charlesakrugel.com/charles-krugel-media/thanks-to-south-koreas-arirang-news-for-live-interviewing-on-the-pandemic-on-5-1-20.html>.

Charles was quoted in NextAvenue’s April 8th article “When Your Employer Insists You Go into Work During the Pandemic”. This link will take you there: <https://www.nextavenue.org/employer-insists-go-into-work-pandemic/>.

On June 5, Charles presented a webinar to an audience of 150 people on “COVID-19’s Impact on Employment Handbooks & Policies Going Forward,” sponsored by the City of Chicago’s Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection.

And finally, Charles, along with Decalogue past president **Helen Bloch**, Board member **Max Barack**, and **Gary Savine**, completed a series of seven CLE webinars sponsored by Financial Poise & WestLegalEd that focused on HR, labor, and employment law.

We received **Jeffery M. Leving’s** article published in the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin regarding a legislative initiative for eliminating interest on child support arrearages. Jeffery, a family law attorney and fathers’ rights advocate, supports the legislation Rep. LaShawn K. Ford introduced in the Illinois House of Representatives that would prevent interest from accruing on delayed child support payments. If that becomes law, it would be a good topic for a webinar on that aspect of family law practice, given the impact such a freeze on delayed support payment interest could have on both the recipients and the payors.

Ron Stackler celebrated his 83rd birthday in Malibu, California, where he continues his practice of law as of counsel to Hatton, Petrie & Stackler. Most people would have to travel to Malibu for their birthday observance, but Ron just had to wake up at home and walk out his door for that experience! Is everyone out there trying to suppress his or her or their envy? I certainly am.

Payton Elle Greenberg, granddaughter of Decalogue member **Sharran R. Greenberg**, was called to the Torah on August 29, 2020, on the occasion of her bat mitzvah at North Shore Congregation Israel in Glencoe, Illinois. Mazel tov from Decalogue to Payton, whose family is surely proud of her reaching this important milestone.

Daniel P. Felix was elected secretary for the Independent Trustee Alliance at its recent annual conference. Dan is also co-founder of the Alliance, an international professional association which educates and certifies non-corporate family trustees and financial fiduciaries. A frequent writer and speaker in this field, Dan is the principal of The Professional Trustee, where his practice concentrates exclusively on duties of an active trustee, a successor trustee, and an executor, and advising as to the function of various kinds of powers of attorney.

Madeline Remish, daughter of member **Barbara Boiko**, graduated May 17 from Chicago-Kent College of Law. In this difficult time, reaching the finish line to get such an impressive degree is in itself an impressive achievement. We wish Madeline all the best in her new career and invite her to become a Decalogue member.

As an extracurricular project in which her law firm, Advitam IP, of which she is a co-founder, plays a significant role, **Michele S. Katz** is involved in supporting a scholarship fund in the name of and to memorialize her father, Sidney Katz, deemed an icon in the IP field. Advitam also annually funds a master’s scholarship in innovative sciences at the Hebrew University in Israel. And despite the lack of any spare time, this go-getter was on the event host committee for a program entitled “What Does It Take to Be a Champion?” held on August 19. Featured in the video were several professors from Hebrew University, and the champions featured included an orthopedic surgeon and acclaimed author, an Olympic athlete, and an entrepreneur, from whom one could learn how they rose to the top of their respective fields.

Mazel Tov to Board member **Max Barack** and wife Deborah, on the birth of their daughter Daria Sydney Barack, named for her mother’s grandpa (David Margolin, of blessed memory), and father’s maternal grandfather (Seymour Diamond, of blessed memory). She was born Friday, August 21, at 5:47 p.m., weighing 6 pounds, 9 ounces, 20 inches.

And that’s all there is! If you want to see yourself in the next Chai-Lites section, let us know what you are doing, writing, speaking about, teaching, or creating. We like to help make Decalogue members famous!

Sharon Eiseman is a board member of Decalogue and the Bureau Chief of Land Acquisition at the Illinois Attorney General’s Office.