



## **Four women attorneys of Forchelli, Curto, Deegan, Schwartz, Mineo, Cohn & Terrana LLP: Kathleen Deegan Dickson, Judy Lynn Simoncic, Andrea Tsoukalas and Kathryn Sammon Burns**

May 21, 2012 - Spotlights

Kathleen Deegan Dickson, Partner

Deegan Dickson concentrates her practice in the areas of real estate development matters, and, in particular, land use and zoning law. Kathleen has an extensive track record of success with and before municipal boards and agencies on significant projects throughout Long Island.

Perhaps more importantly, she has a reputation for effectiveness and integrity in the pre-hearing meetings and outreach to municipal planning staffs and civic groups that are now a must in Long Island's current development climate. She is former counsel to the City of Glen Cove Planning and Zoning Boards, and currently represents many developers, property owners, corporations and private individuals in all types of matters involving real property transactions, zoning and land use.

She is a member of the American and the New York State Bar Associations, as well as the Nassau County Women's Bar Association, WEDLI (Women Economic Developers of Long Island), the Nassau County Catholic Lawyer's Guild and the New York Democratic Lawyers Council. Ms. Deegan Dickson also serves on the Advisory Council of the North Shore University Hospital at Glen Cove, and the Board of Tomorrow's Hope Foundation and All Saints Regional School.

She was named one of Long Island's 50 Most Influential Women by the Long Island Business News and a New York Super Lawyer. Most recently, she was honored by the John J. Byrne Community Center at its inaugural "Long Island Outstanding Advocate for Children and Youth Awards.

During the last few years of your career; which professional accomplishment, honor or achievement was most meaningful and why?

The nature of real estate development has changed dramatically over the last several years, especially here on Long Island, with the new recognition that growth and expansion must be sustainable in order to make sense. This renewed focus has led us to work with our clients and local government officials to develop innovative and creative projects which enhance the communities in which they are located. In 2010, I was invited to join other Long Island leaders to participate in The Energeia Partnership at Molloy College. The Energeia Partnership is a two year leadership academy dedicated to identifying and addressing the issues challenging the Long Island region. The Energeia Partnership recruits proven leaders in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors of Long Island and provides them with information, a solid network and the support necessary to encourage a collaborative, regional effort for change and improvement of the quality of life for all Long Islanders. This January, I completed the program and 'graduated' with the Class of 2010. As a 'graduate,' I have made a commitment to serve as a steward of Long Island to promote the program's common good.

How do you contribute to your company and/or industry?

As 1 of 3 female partners in the firm, I have taken an active role in mentoring young women (associates and paralegals) in the firm. I also attend many events with the younger attorneys and stress the importance of this function which promotes and enhances long-term business relationships. Also, how attending these events can provide a younger attorney with the opportunity to enhance networking skills. Currently, I am also a member of the firm's Marketing Committee, which develops and implements the Firm's strategic marketing plans. This committee is very instrumental in shaping the external presence of the Forchelli, Curto, Deegan, Schwartz, Mineo, Cohn & Terrana-one of the largest firms on Long Island.

Judy Lynn Simoncic, Partner

Simoncic concentrates her practice in the areas of zoning, land use, environmental, municipal, and real estate law. She represents national franchises, Fortune 500 companies, national corporations, large real estate development companies as well as individual real estate developers in the development of both residential and commercial properties throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

She regularly appears on behalf of her clients before municipal boards on a diversity of zoning applications such as variances, special use permits, change of zones, site plan approval, and major and minor subdivisions. She has secured zoning approvals for senior housing projects, retail and office complexes, multiple dwelling projects, planned unit developments, assisted living facilities, equestrian facilities, public storage facilities, fitness clubs, public utility facilities, restaurant franchises, among others.

Simoncic is a board of directors member of Options for Community Living, Inc., a member of the Hauppauge Industrial Association and the Long Island Real Estate Group. In 2010, she was selected by the Long Island Business News as a "Who's Who in Women in Professional Services."

During the last few years of your career; which professional accomplishment, honor or achievement was most meaningful and why?

In the fall of 2011, I received the honor of being selected to be a board of directors of Options for Community Living, Inc. Options for Community Living, Inc. is a non-for profit organization that is committed to assisting individuals and families with special needs to develop their fullest potential for independent living. Residential and support services prepare participants for the demands and responsibilities of community life and promote housing permanency, health, safety and welfare. The organization provides quality short and long term housing for people who are homeless, isolated or coping with illness. The agency manages more than 150 housing units across Long Island. Options has been building paths of hope for some of Long Island's neediest people since 1982. This spring, Options for Community Living, Inc. will celebrate its 30th year of service to Long Islanders with a Gala for which I am the event chair. As someone who grew up in Long Island I am proud to give back to the community and be associated with an organization that allows the neediest Long Island residents to live independent and productive lives. To learn more about Options and the good work that they do, visit their website at [www.optionscl.org](http://www.optionscl.org).

Andrea Tsoukalas, Partner

Andrea Tsoukalas joined the firm in 2005 and became Partner in 2011. She concentrates her practice in zoning, land use, environmental and municipal law matters. Ms. Tsoukalas represents a

wide variety of clients including national corporate chains, local developers and small business owners in the development of commercial and residential properties. Ms. Tsoukalas also has substantial experience in appellate practice and civil litigation. She litigates contract and real estate claims, corporate and partnership disputes, and regulatory claims arising out of building and zoning code violations.

Tsoukalas is general counsel to the Long Island Gasoline Retailers Association, a nationally recognized non-profit trade association with over 600 members. She also serves as counsel to the Village of Kensington Board of Trustees, Zoning Board of Appeals and Architectural Review Board. She is also an Associate Member of the Long Island Builders Institute (LIBI). LIBI is an association of building industry professionals who are dedicated to making Long Island a better place to live and work.

During the last 10 years of your career; which professional accomplishment, honor or achievement was most meaningful and why?

My proudest achievement in my career was being promoted partner in January, 2011. I was the youngest attorney to achieve that status at our firm. Also, this year, I was recognized by Long Island Business News as a Class of 2012 "40 Under 40" member for my leadership in business, mentoring, and commitment to the Long Island community. I was honored both by the firm's nomination and by the award.

Which project, deal or transaction was the "game changer" in the advancement of your career during the last 10 years?

I am general counsel to the Long Island Gasoline Retailers Association (LIGRA), a nationally recognized non-profit trade association with over 700 members. In September, 2009 LIGRA and four other trade associations retained our firm to challenge the constitutionality of a new fee schedule which would have dramatically increased tobacco registration fees from a \$100 flat fee to a graduated scale of \$1,000, \$2,500, and \$5,000 based on the gross sales of all products sold by the retailer. The Plaintiffs in this action comprised of retail, fuel, and food businesses in New York State that collectively represent nearly 10,000 retailers state-wide. Tobacco products are vital to these retailers because they are a major draw of customers and retail revenue. It was estimated at the time that 40% of retailers could be forced out of the tobacco business due to this dramatic increase in fees. I played an integral role in obtaining two injunctions of state-wide effect which stayed the implementation of the 2009 fee schedule for two years. The lawsuit was the impetus for the state Legislature to ultimately roll back the fee hike to \$300 per location. It was a victory for all small business owners in New York state.

Kathryn Sammon Burns, Associate

Burns concentrates her practice in real estate and banking litigation, residential and commercial foreclosures, workouts, and debtor and creditor rights. Ms. Burns is admitted to the New York State Bar and is a member of the New York State Bar Association and the Nassau County Bar Association. Ms. Burns was the featured LI Columnist in New York Real Estate Journal with her article, "How New Residential Foreclosure Laws Affect Commercial Lending." Ms. Burns has also been published in the Nassau Lawyer, with her article "The Slow Road to Economic Recovery," co-authored with James C. Ricca, and in The Suffolk Lawyer, with her article "Amended Foreclosure Procedures: How to comply with changing rules."

Which project, deal or transaction was the "game changer" in the advancement of your career

during the last 10 years?

There was no one game changing moment, but about one year after I was admitted, there was a three month span where my career path crystallized and I experienced the satisfaction of being successful and recognized in what turned out to be my chosen field-real estate litigation and commercial mortgage foreclosures. During that period, everything came together. I litigated and was successful in a range of cases, including: a contested commercial foreclosure action, resulting in a full payoff to our client; a challenge to a bank's mortgage lien, where I persuaded the court to vacate a fraudulently filed mortgage satisfaction; a challenge to our client's first mortgage lien priority where I successfully negotiated a resolution in our client's favor; and a lender liability claim that I successfully defended in federal court.

Who or what has been the strongest influence on your career and why?

My family has been the strongest influence on my career. My parents constantly instilled in me that I was strong, taught me to be proud, and gave me confidence to believe I could do or be anything. I was brought up in a family of athletes and to further engrain their message of strength, I was introduced to sports at an early age. From my family and through my athletic endeavors I obtained many skills, such as leadership, perseverance, teamwork, and competitiveness, which attributes have greatly assisted me in my field, whether in litigation or negotiations.

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