

# NJ Commission on Professionalism in the Law to honor 3 distinguished attorneys, dozens more

Top honors from the New Jersey Commission on Professionalism in the Law will go to a prominent civil attorney, an advocate for the economically disadvantaged and a retired state Superior Court assignment judge.

The commission's most prestigious awards honor individuals who uphold the profession's highest ideals and have significant career achievements. Joseph LaSala, a partner at McElroy, Deutsch, Mulvaney & Carpenter, will receive the Daniel J. O'Hern Award. Colleen M. Cunningham, a team leader at Legal Services of Northwest New Jersey, will be recognized with the Charles J. Hollenbeck Award. The Lighthouse Award will be given to Retired Assignment Judge Peter F. Bariso Jr., of Chasan Lamparello Mallon & Cappuzzo.

The annual awards will be presented during a luncheon on July 12. Dozens of attorneys representing bar associations across the state will also be honored with Professional Lawyer of the Year Awards, given to those who are respected by colleagues for their character, competence and exemplary professional behavior.

Here are the top honorees:



Joseph LaSala



Colleen M. Cunningham



Hon. Peter F. Bariso Jr., AJSC (ret.)

## O'Hern Award

The O'Hern Award is presented to an attorney who exhibits integrity, competence, high ethical standards, career achievement and service to the bar and community.

LaSala is a seasoned civil attorney of more than 40 years, who has extensive experience in practice areas ranging from product liability actions and multi-party toxic tort litigation to corporate dissolutions and environmental coverage matters. In 2017, he was awarded the New Jersey State Bar Foundation's Medal of Honor in recognition of his exemplary contributions to improving the justice system and serving the greater New Jersey legal community. He was also honored by the Essex County Bar Association in 2008 with a lifetime achievement award.

"Joseph LaSala is an exceptional attorney who has exceeded all professionalism standards. It is hard to imagine anyone who has contributed more to the profession, the community, and to legal organizations across the State of New Jersey," said G. Glenn Troublefield, president of the Essex County Bar Association and treasurer of the New Jersey State Bar Association. "He is the lawyer everyone turns to for his judgement, leadership, and assistance. Whenever he is asked, he has willingly given his time, insight, and wisdom, taking part in bettering a number of organizations and communities."

## Hollenbeck Award

The Hollenbeck Award recognizes an attorney who is employed by a governmental agency or nonprofit organization that serves the needs of the legal community and has served with diligence, competence and dedication to the profession.

Cunningham serves clients as an attorney with Legal Services of Northwest New Jersey, a nonprofit law firm that provides free legal aid for people with economic disadvantages. For more than 20 years she has represented individuals in criminal, civil and family law and has extensive experience in life planning and guardianship matters.

She "works tirelessly to serve the underserved residents of Sussex County in vital legal matters. Without (her) knowledge and expertise, it is likely that her clients could possibly fall victim to the legal system or not seek legal remedies for which they are entitled," according to the Sussex County Bar Association, which nominated her for the award.

## Lighthouse Award

The Lighthouse Award honors an attorney or judge whose professional community-based efforts serve as an inspiration to colleagues.

Assignment Judge Bariso, a retired Superior Court judge of 16 years, including serving as assignment judge in Hudson County immediately prior to retiring, has decades of experience

consulting on complex litigation matters affecting both private and public sector clients. The former assignment judge is a frequent lecturer on civil litigation issues for the New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education, earning the NJICLE Alfred C. Clapp Award for Excellence in Continuing Legal Education in 2015. He also volunteers with programs that help develop strong, ethical and confident young lawyers, according to Hudson County Bar Association President Maria P. Vallejo.

"The value and import of the work Judge Bariso performed during his tenure as the Assignment Judge of Hudson County is undisputed in the eyes of the Hudson County Bar Association," according to Vallejo. "His continued dedication to professionalism prior to and after his retirement from the bench is just as noteworthy and valuable."

Visit [njsba.com](http://njsba.com) to register for the luncheon and view a full list of the award recipients.

## The Bar Report update

As of July 1, "The Bar Report" will be digital only and will no longer be published in the print edition of the *New Jersey Law Journal*. It will appear digitally every Monday on the *New Jersey Law Journal's* website at [law.com/njljournal](http://law.com/njljournal). Readers can still access the terrific coverage of the New Jersey State Bar Association—the voice of New Jersey legal professionals—by visiting the *Law Journal's* homepage and its "people and community" tab. It will also be sent electronically to all NJSBA members each week. An archive is also available at [njsba.com](http://njsba.com). ■

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# NJSBA endorses Supreme Court Working Group's recommendations for *pro bono* assignments; recommends abolishing *Madden* assignments

The New Jersey State Bar Association recently supported the findings in a report from the state Supreme Court Working Group on Attorney Pro Bono Assignments Report as being in line with its own recommendations to address *Madden* assignments. The Association submitted comments further asking the Court to abolish *Madden* in favor of the implementation of publicly funded compensated counsel to provide effective representation for indigent litigants facing consequences of magnitude.

"It is unfair to litigants who are unable to afford their own counsel but are constitutionally entitled to effective representation, and places attorneys in the untenable position of potentially violating their professional obligation to provide competent counsel by forcing them to provide representation in matters outside the scope of their expertise," said NJSBA President Timothy F. McGoughran in a letter to the Court. "Indeed 17 county and affinity bar associations have adopted resolutions calling for the end of the *Madden* assignment system, as it presents an obstacle to equality, a barrier to justice and a disservice to all."

Among the recommendations of the working group are:

- Legislation to expand the charge of the state Office of the Public Defender (OPD) to handle domestic violence contempt hearings, parole revocation hearings, guardianship cases for people receiving New Jersey Division of Developmental Disability services, state Division of Child Protection and Permanency

administrative matters, and civil commitments. The NJSBA supports this recommendation because the



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OPD is best positioned with appropriate knowledge and expertise to provide representation in these areas.

- Funding for the provision of effective representation to indigent people in all cases where there is a right to counsel. Both the OPD and Legal Services of New Jersey should receive funding. The NJSBA urged all necessary actions be taken to ensure OPD has the staff and resources it needs to operate under an expanded mandate and supports funding for legal service organizations to handle specialty cases.
- Calling on county governments to fund public defenders in areas the Legislature has not funded, especially for domestic violence contempt hearings. The NJSBA supports an overall recommendation to publicly fund effective counsel for these matters, noting that a statewide funding mechanism will ensure uniformity and consistency.
- Continuing the assignment of parole revocation hearings under *Madden* to allow assignments based on the county of commitment rather than the county of detention. The NJSBA has long supported this to alleviate the disparate impact on

south Jersey attorneys where there are fewer of them representing litigants where the prisons are located.

- Tracking methods for case types that are presently handled under *Madden* for proper statistical analysis. The NJSBA supports this recommendation in furtherance of making the right to counsel fully accessible, transparent and consistent.
- Narrowing the exemption categories for *Madden* assignments. The NJSBA recommends this as a good step on an interim basis and until representation is fully funded.
- Creating an attorney registration system to track an attorney's practice area, preference or expertise. The NJSBA supports this as an interim solution and supports the provision of a hyperlink on the registration page for attorneys to more easily report their *pro bono* work and be informed of the existence of *pro bono* opportunities.

The Association did not support the Working Group's recommendation to create a pool of volunteers to answer questions from *Madden* attorneys. The NJSBA cautioned that this merely shifted the state's burden to provide effective counsel to a smaller group of volunteer attorneys.

Overall, the Association recommended that the Supreme Court adopt

its own recommendations made by the NJSBA's Right to Counsel Committee in its report, Achieving Effective Representation in Right to Counsel Matters. Both the report and the letter commenting on the Working Group's report may be found at [njsba.com](http://njsba.com).

*This is a status report provided by the New Jersey State Bar Association on recently passed and pending legislation, regulations, gubernatorial nominations and/or appointments of interest to lawyers, as well as the involvement of the NJSBA as amicus in appellate court matters. To learn more, visit [njsba.com](http://njsba.com).*

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Information in the *Bar Report* is compiled by the New Jersey State Bar Association, which welcomes tips and story ideas from its readers and members. Contact Thomas Nobile at [tnobile@njsba.com](mailto:tnobile@njsba.com) or 732-937-7527.

NJSBA



**WEDNESDAY, JULY 26 | 6:30 P.M.**  
**TD BANK BALLPARK, BRIDGEWATER**

Join the New Jersey State Bar Association to watch the **SOMERSET PATRIOTS**, a New York Yankees Double-A Affiliate, take on the **BOWIE BAYSOX**, a Baltimore Orioles Double-A Affiliate, at the TD Bank Ballpark.

Register today to secure your spot for a night of baseball, networking in a Diamond Club suite that includes food, beverages and a chance to win some cool prizes.

**This event is open to NJSBA members and their guests.**  
**Space is limited to the first 45 registrants.**

**\$25/person • Register NOW at [njsba.com](http://njsba.com)**

**Attendees will receive a bobblehead doll of Yankees top prospect, Anthony Volpe.**