

**For Release: Immediate**  
**June 1, 2015**

**Contact: Deborah Auspelmyer**  
Foundation Executive  
dauspelmyer@tnybf.org  
518-487-5650

**THE NEW YORK BAR FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES NEW PRESIDENT  
AND WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

The New York Bar Foundation has elected John H. Gross as president and four new members to its Board of Directors. The Foundation also established a new position of immediate past president. The immediate past president for 2015 – 2016 is Cristine Cioffi. Additionally, David R. Watson, executive director of the New York State Bar Association, will serve as secretary.



**John H. Gross of Hauppauge, President**

Gross is a partner of Ingerman Smith. He is a graduate of Cornell School of Industrial Labor Relations and Cornell Law School. He has been involved in representing public and private schools and school districts, colleges and municipalities in matters involving education law, public sector labor law, employment law and corporate matters as general and labor counsel for more than 40 years. In addition to an active court litigation and appellate practice, Gross frequently litigates before labor and commercial arbitration panels and the New York State Public Employment Relations Board. He is a former president of the Suffolk County Bar Association and a former vice-president of the New York

State Bar Association for the 10th District.

“I welcome the new members of the Board and look forward to working with them in continuing the success of The Foundation,” states Gross. “As president, my number one goal is to generate more revenue for The Foundation’s grant program. Their expertise and commitment to the legal profession and philanthropy is instrumental to the important work of The Foundation and the success of our goals.”



**David R. Watson of Albany, Secretary**

Watson is the executive director of the New York State Bar Association. Previously he was the executive director of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association (CMBA). Immediately prior to joining the CMBA, Watson was a financial advisor with Edward Jones Investments in Chesterton, Indiana. He also served as executive vice president of the Chicago-based Commercial Law League of America (whose members include commercial and bankruptcy attorneys) as well as deputy executive director of Defense Research Institute, a civil defense bar association. Watson is a graduate of Kenyon College and earned his law degree from Case Western Reserve University.



**Cristine Cioffi of Niskayuna, Immediate Past President**

Cioffi is president and partner of Cioffi • Slezak • Wildgrube, where she practices primarily in the fields of estate planning, administration and elder law. She was president of The Foundation from 2012-2015. She served for 10 years as a Schenectady County legislator, including two years as minority leader. She is a past president of the Schenectady County Bar Association. Cioffi is immediate past chair of the Board of Trustees of Ellis Medicine, where she continues to serve on the board, and is a trustee of the Ellis Hospital Foundation. She is a graduate of Middlebury College and Albany Law School.



**Ilene S. Cooper of Uniondale, Board Member**

Cooper is a partner at Farrell Fritz concentrating in trusts and estates. She practices litigation in Surrogate's Courts throughout the metropolitan area. She also has experience in the drafting and execution of wills and trust instruments, powers of attorney, health care proxies and living wills. Cooper also teaches at Touro Law School, where she was named Adjunct Professor of the Year in 2000, 2001 and 2011. She is also a member of the school's Board of Trustees. Cooper is a graduate of Hofstra University Law School, and received her undergraduate degree from Cornell University.

“The New York Bar Foundation’s charitable mission holds great appeal to me. It matches my personal belief in serving the community. I look forward to the opportunity to give back, and to doing so with distinction as a member of the board of directors.”



**Roger Juan Maldonado of New York, Board Member**

Maldonado is a litigation partner at Balber Pickard Maldonado & Van Der Tuin. He serves as the New York City Bar Association designated member of the Board of Directors of the New York Community Trust. Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman appointed him co-chair of the Committee on Non-lawyers and the Justice Gap; as a member of the Commercial Division Advisory Council; and as a member of the Advisory Group to the New York State and Federal Judicial Council. Maldonado is a member of the Departmental Disciplinary Committee for the Appellate Division of the New York State

Supreme Court, First Department; vice president and member of the Board of Directors of United Neighborhood Houses of New York; and a referee for the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct. He is a graduate of Yale Law School and Yale College.

“I consider it a privilege to serve on The New York Bar Foundation’s Board of Directors. I look forward to the opportunity to work with my fellow board members and The Foundation staff on exploring and implementing opportunities for The Foundation to fund and otherwise support efforts to increase access to justice for all residents of New York State.”



**Carla Palumbo of Rochester, Board Member**

Palumbo is the president and CEO of the Legal Aid Society of Rochester. She is a member of the Rochester City Council, and served on Monroe County Legislature for six years. She previously served on The Foundation’s Board of Directors and its Strategic Planning Task Force. She is a graduate of the Syracuse University College of Law.

“I am honored to be asked to serve on the Board of Directors of the New York Bar Foundation. TNYBF does tremendous work towards ensuring access to justice for all through its support of civil legal services and I am pleased to be a part of that process”



**Lauren J. Wachtler of New York, Board Member**

Wachtler is a partner at Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp. She is a commercial and business litigator who represents business clients in state and federal courts, including cases involving the fashion industry, retailers, manufacturers, designers, business torts, and employment-related issues. She is co-chair of her firm’s Fashion Practice Group, a member of the American Bar Association, and the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. Wachtler is a graduate of St. John’s University School of Law and Mount Holyoke College.

“It is a true honor to serve on the Board of The Bar Foundation. I look forward to carrying on the wonderful work of The Bar Foundation in the present, and eager to be a part of its future. As an integral part of our Bar Association, I am

looking forward to working with our Foundation president to implement The Foundation’s goals, and to carry out, in the words of Thomas Aquinas the “Secundum Quid”—the greater responsibility placed on the shoulders of those who have the ability to assume and discharge that greater responsibility.”

The New York Bar Foundation is the charitable arm of the New York State Bar Association. It supports the law-related programs of local legal services agencies, nonprofits, bar associations and other organizations throughout New York State. For more information regarding The New York Bar Foundation, visit [www.tnybf.org](http://www.tnybf.org) or call (518) 487-5651.