Advancing justice

Administrative Judge Marguerite Grays leads Queens Supreme at a crucial time for the court system

By David Brand
Queens Daily Eagle

Justice Marguerite Grays made history in June when she became the first African American woman to serve as administrative judge in Queens Supreme Court, Civil Term. Her appointment, nearly ten months after her predeces sor retired, comes at a crucial time for the legal system in one of the nation’s largest counties.

New safety protocols are in place to stop the spread of COVID-19. Judges, attorneys and everyday residents have questions about the gradual reopening plan and the resumption of cases. And the Civil Term building on Sutphin Boulevard has reopened for some in-person proceedings after adapting to transformational changes, particularly the expansion of remote services, during the months-long courthouse shutdown.

Community gardens could play key role in NYC’s outdoor learning plan — if the city lets them

By David Brand
Queens Daily Eagle

For months, Clarisa James carefully tended her organization’s plot of land in Springfield Gardens, working with colleagues to clear weeds as she waited for the state to allow visitors to return.

James, the director of the tech education nonprofit DIVAS for Social Justice, had planned to use the space to host students from schools in and around Springfield Gardens, including P.S. 52 four blocks away. After COVID regulations closed gardens to outside visitors, she found creative ways to engage young people at the plot she dubbed the Garden of Resilience, like using a 3D camera to allow kids to help design planting beds and a gallery wall.

Nonprofit leader Clarisa James said her organization’s Garden of Resilience in Springfield Gardens could provide space for outdoor learning under the city’s new school reopening plan.

Photo courtesy of James

THEUSPS DEACTIVATED FOUR OUT of 48 mail sorting machines serving all of Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island last month, Queens Chronicle reported.

“WE DON’T KNOW WHAT THE MAIL volume is going to be (during the election),” Tom Mckean, President of the Brooklyn American Postal Workers Union Local 25, told the Chronicle. “I’m an optimist. I talked to postal officials when they were proposing to take the machines out, I asked them what happens if the mail volume returned to pre-COVID levels, and they’d already made a decision at that time to take those machines out regardless.”

THE OFFICE OF THE QUEENS BOR ough President is hosting a virtual ceremony to honor the legacy of former borough presi dent Claire Shulman, who died last week at the age of 94.

“In A BOROUGH KNOWN FOR ITS trailblazers, few have led a life of dedicated public service as robust and as effective as Claire Shulman,” said Acting Borough Presi dent Sharon Lee. “She transformed the landscape of the City’s largest borough, and so much of what we see and enjoy today are the results of her extraordinary vision and decisions made over 18 years ago.”

SOTHEBY’S WILL HOLD ITS FIRST HIP Hop-centered auction in September, auctioning off Biggie Smalls’ iconic “King of New York” crown and 22 of Tupac Shakur’s love letters. A portion of the proceeds will go towards the Queens Public Library Foundation.

A 37-YEAR-OLD MARTIAL ARTS TEACHER from Woodside was sentenced to seven years in prison for raping a 12-year-old student. “This defendant was supposed to teach this younger how to defend herself, not he was the one from whom she needed protection,” said District Attorney Melinda Katz. “He mani pulated a child too young to consent to sex. My Office will not tolerate adults who abuse their positions of trust to victimize children.”

THE NORTHERN BALLET AND AMER Ican Ballet Theatre partnered to create videos of dancers performing choreography submitted by students. “Blended” is the third in the series and features choreography from Camilla C. from M S 3580 in Jamaica.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH will be spraying for mosquitoes in Auburndale, Bay side, Bay Terrace, Beechhurst, College Point, Douglass Manor, Douglaston, Little Neck, Malba and Whitestone tomorrow starting at 8 p.m.
Community gardens could play key role in NYC’s outdoor learning plan — if the city lets them

Continued from page 1

With a new school year approaching, James saw another opportunity for the Garden of Resilience and more than 500 other community plots around New York City.

“If there are so many issues with ventilation systems in schools, why don’t we partner with them and say we’ll make space available to you,” James said.

On Monday, Mayor Bill de Blasio and Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza announced that schools will be allowed to hold classes outdoors. That decision has only galvanized James’ effort to host local students in the Garden of Resilience.

Traditional parks are scarce in many communities of color, but spaces like the Garden of Resilience can fill the need for outdoor learning space, she said in an essay on her website laureltnyc.com.

The plan announced Monday will enable schools to hold classes in on-campus yards and to seek outdoor space in off-campus parks.

“In more affluent communities where there is access to green space this is possible,” James said. “Access to green spaces in Black and Brown communities is limited.”

Typically cultivated in once-vacant lots, the gardens are concentrated in predominantly low- and middle-income Black and Latino communities of Northern Manhattan, Central Brooklyn and the South Bronx. The neighborhoods often lack public parks.

“The Garden of Resilience is a blank slate,” she said. “To protect our community let’s open up our parks and gardens to be learning spaces as our children navigate our new normal.”

For weeks, principals and education advocates have urged the city to sign off on outdoor learning, pointing to evidence that suggests COVID-19 does not spread outside as easily as it does indoors. De Blasio acknowledged that effort in his announcement Monday.

“We want to give schools the option to do as much outdoors as they can,” he said. “In certain cases, we can make space available in local parks. It really depends on the circumstance of each school.”

So far, however, the city has opened to give community gardens the go-ahead to host classes, though the sites may welcome some members of the public at their discretion.

“Due to the relatively small size of community gardens and limitations of social distancing, public events and gatherings inside gardens remain prohibited at this time,” said Parks Department spokesperson Dan Kastanis.

“NYC Parks and licensed garden groups will review all event requests for feasibility when community gardens can safely reopen to public events.”

But James already has a plan.

She said the garden could provide a space for classes “that range from English to Science” as well as room for socially distanced physical activity.

“The garden would also offer the opportunity to learn about civic engagement and food justice in Southeast Queens. She has even laser-cut QR codes into treated wood to allow students to use mobile devices to unlock educational material. James, whose garden is located at 179-18 145th Drive, is the not the only Queens nonprofit leader willing to host classes in her group’s garden.

Milan Taylor, the director of the Rockaway Youth Task Force, said his organization’s community garden in Averne could also host classes if nearby schools and parents support the plan. RTYF recently sorted out bureaucratic obstacles to expand their thriving garden to adjacent plots of land.

“If principals and school leadership, most important, are okay with that idea, we’re on board to support local schools with whatever resources they need to stay open in a smart and healthy way,” Taylor said. “Anything to help the community.”

Atlas Park blood drive aims to replenish city's depleted reservoir

By David Brand

A blood drive Friday at Glendale’s Atlas Park mall is the latest effort by the New York Blood Center to replenish the city’s depleted emergency reservoir.

The drive takes place at the Shops at Atlas Park from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. NYBC intends to collect blood from 50 people. Previous blood drives at the Shops at Atlas Park have collected 722 donations so far this year.

Blood donation centers have remained opened throughout the COVID-19 crisis, but social distancing orders and the perceived risk of contraction have prevented many New Yorkers from giving blood.

The number of blood drives citywide have decreased by two-thirds this year, according to NYBC.

The organization says staff are taking “extra precautions to help prevent the person-to-person spread of COVID-19.”

“As always, people are not eligible to donate if they’re experiencing a cold, sore throat, respiratory infection or flu-like symptoms,” NYBC said.

A fresh supply is always needed: Red blood cells have a shelf life of 42 days and platelets only five, according to a joint letter to the Centers for Disease Control and Infection from the American Red Cross and America’s Blood Centers.

Friday’s blood drive takes place from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. at 8000 Cooper Avenue in Glendale.

Additional information on donor eligibility and COVID-19 precautions is available on the NYBC website.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Community gardens are particularly concentrated in predominantly low-income communities of color like Northern Manhattan, the Bronx and Central Brooklyn.

Image via Parks Department

James laser-cut QR codes into pieces of wood to allow students to learn via mobile devices.

Photo courtesy of James

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PUBLISHERS:
Michael Nussbaum • J.D. Hasty

MANAGING EDITOR:
David Brand

LEGAL ADVERTISING MANAGER:
Kat Ramus

ADVERTISING MANAGER:
Jonathan Sperling

DIGITAL EDITOR:
Gina Ong

PUBLISHERS:
Michael Nussbaum | J.D. Hasty

MANAGING EDITOR:
David Brand

ADVERTISING MANAGER:
Kat Ramus

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Gina Ong

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The world is settling into a new normal for everyday life amid the coronavirus pandemic: online school classes, intermittent Zoom outages, museums that will only allow about a quarter of their usual visitors.

More than 800,000 people worldwide have perished from the virus and more than 23.5 million have contracted it, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University — figures experts say underestimate the true toll due to limited testing, missed mild cases and other factors.

Older people and those with underlying health conditions appear to be the most vulnerable. However, there’s uncertainty about long-term effects and what impact millions of school children around the globe returning to classrooms might have on the virus’ spread.

A significant red flag emerged in Hong Kong, where scientists say they have the first evidence of someone being reinfected with the virus that causes COVID-19. The case raises alarm bells, suggesting that surviving an infection does not provide lifelong immunity.

World Health Organization

Just in time for back-to-school, the World Health Organization has updated its guidance for mask-wearing by children, notably saying those 6 to 11 years old should wear them to fight the coronavirus, but that it depends on local factors and other criteria.

Kids under 6 years old should not wear masks, WHO says, while those over 12 should wear them just like adults should, notably in cases where physical distancing cannot be ensured and in areas of high transmission rates.

The recommendations expanded upon previous WHO guidance that children under the age of 12 were not considered as likely to spread the virus as much as adults. Children in general do face less severe symptoms than adults, with the elderly the most vulnerable to severe infection.

Zoom Outages

The popular video conferencing tool, Zoom, experienced partial outages during the first day of school for thousands of students who are relying on the technology to connect with educators.

Technical issues occurred across the U.S., with the most reports on the East Coast, as well as in Europe, according to downdetector.com, which monitors self-reported outages. The disruptions lasted about 90 minutes, according to the company.

Grade schools, high schools and universities are relying on Zoom and competing technologies like Microsoft Teams to learn remotely, and reduce the chance of infection during the pandemic.

Zoom Video Communications became a familiar tool to millions of new users after the spread of COVID-19 made face-to-face meetings risky. It now has about 300 million users.

Mississippi

An entire fourth grade class in Mississippi has been quarantined after a student and more than half of a school’s fourth grade teachers tested positive for coronavirus, just a few weeks after beginning the school year.

Lafayette County School District Superintendent Adam Pugh said the district notified the families of more than 200 fourth grade students at Lafayette Upper Elementary School to quarantine for two weeks.

“We don’t have enough staff to cover our entire fourth grade class in-person, so we had to send everybody home, to do virtual lessons,” he said.

New York

Museums across New York and in some parts of the state outside of New York City are being allowed to reopen as coronavirus restrictions are cautiously eased.

Under guidelines announced by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, museums must keep visitors to no more than 25 percent occupancy and must use timed ticketing. New York City museums that will open over the next few weeks include the Metropolitan Museum of Art on Aug. 29 and the American Museum of Natural History on Sept. 9.

Cuomo said gyms and fitness centers could open at 25 percent capacity starting Monday, but New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said the city’s gyms would stay closed until at least Sept. 2.

Cultural institutions and gyms across the state have been closed since March when nonessential businesses were forced to shut down to stop the virus’ spread. New York was the epicenter of the U.S. outbreak during the spring but has so far succeeded in staving off a second wave of infections.

Hong Kong man reinfected

Scientists say they have the first evidence of someone being reinfected with the virus that causes COVID-19. Genetic tests revealed that a 33-year-old man returning to Hong Kong from a trip to Spain in mid-August had a different strain of the coronavirus than the one he’d previously been infected with in March, said Dr. Kelvin Kei-Wang To, the microbiologist who led the work.

The man had mild symptoms the first time and none the second time; his more recent infection was detected through screening and testing at the Hong Kong airport.

“It shows that some people do not have lifelong immunity” to the virus if they’ve already had it, To said. “We don’t know how many people can get reinfected. There are probably more out there.”

Mexico

Millions of Mexican school children returned to classes using a system that cobbles together online classes, instruction broadcast on television and radio programming but no in-person classes as of yet.

The Mexican government enlisted the country’s largest private television companies to dedicate channels to school programming around the clock. Education officials developed schedules giving students at each level multiple opportunities to watch their classes.

Education Secretary Esteban Moctezuma said officials decided to rely on television because it has a far greater penetration that the internet.

Connecticut

A spike in coronavirus cases in Danbury, Connecticut, has led Western Connecticut State University to temporarily move all classes online and bar students from returning to residence halls for at least two weeks.

New 900 students were expected to begin moving into dorms on Sunday, but school President John Clark announced the new restrictions on Saturday. About 60 students who moved in early are being told to stay on campus for the next two weeks, and commuting students must stay off campus.

By Leah Margaret Willingham

Associated Press

The world is settling into a new normal for everyday life amid the coronavirus pandemic: online school classes, intermittent Zoom outages, museums that will only allow about a quarter of their usual visitors.

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World Health Organization

Just in time for back-to-school, the World Health Organization has updated its guidance for mask-wear-
Struggling small businesses are at risk from Postal Service delays

By Ednilson Bernardes

Thousands of baby chicks shipped to small poultry farmers through the U.S. Postal Service have arrived at their destinations dead in recent weeks. This was just one of the disturbing results of changes to how the Postal Service operates, which have led to widespread delays in mail delivery and concerns among Democrats about the USPS's ability to deliver mail-in ballots during the 2020 elections. There have also been reports of delayed lifesaving medications, rotting meat and spoiled fruits.

I have studied the supply chain industry for over 15 years. One thing people outside the field don’t often recognize is the critical role the USPS plays in America’s logistics infrastructure, especially for small businesses and in rural areas, as the only service that delivers to nearly every U.S. address, six days a week. My research shows how it can continue to do so.

Dead critters

The dead chicks show just how important the Postal Service is to small businesses and their supply chains. Hatcheries typically ship the birds to farmers by USPS, the only service that allows people to send live animals. However, newborns can survive only 72 hours without food or water, which translates into a tight delivery window. Upon arrival at the regional destination, the cargo goes to a local mail processing facility for sorting and then aboard a delivery truck for distribution.

Recent changes to operations—such as reduced overtime and prohibiting extra trips, moves intended to address USPS's severe fiscal problems—have slowed down the processing and distribution of packages, leading to buildup and causing delays. The consequences are particularly grievous for live animals, such as chicks, crickets and other small critters delivered by the USPS. It also causes losses to perishable goods such as meat and flowers.

But beyond organics, small businesses, pharmacies and online businesses also rely on dependable deliveries to keep their supply chains humming or to ensure consumers get orders on time.

In the past, it’s rarely been a problem. And USPS has a very good track record. Data from ShipMatrix, a delivery analytics company, shows that the Postal Service delivered 95 percent of packages on time in May—before the delays began—while it has maintained for many years.

An internal document released by House Democrats, however, shows that on-time delivery dropped under 85 percent in July.

Role in the supply chain

To appreciate the importance of a reliable post office, we can look at the percentage of retailers that rely on it for package delivery. Nearly 20 percent of the top 1,000 retailers fulfill at least some of their e-commerce orders through the Postal Service. The USPS is even more important for small- and medium-sized businesses because of its widespread reach and affordable flat rates. For instance, more than 90 percent of U.S. Etsy sellers rely on the USPS.

Delays can mean a loss of business or costly refunds. Their customers can easily find alternative sellers online, and larger retailers like Walmart and Costco can offer faster delivery alternatives—so the ability to get products fast and reliably is vital for small retailers with narrow margins.

The Postal Service is particularly vital for businesses in rural or isolated regions trying to participate in the growing e-commerce economy. Unlike UPS or FedEx, the Postal Service has the infrastructure to reach all corners of the country, six days a week—which is mandated by law. In fact, nearly half of all U.S. ZIP codes represent rural areas, which USPS is able to serve cost-effectively to sellers and customers.

UPS and FedEx themselves also rely on the USPS to deliver packages the “last mile”—the term for the final stage in the delivery process—especially in rural areas, because it isn’t profitable for them to operate in regions with low population densities. This means delays at the Postal Service can have ripple effects across the delivery system.

Without a reliable Postal Service, small businesses may need to resort to pricier FedEx and UPS options. This means higher costs that could severely hamper their ability to operate and compete on top of the impact of the pandemic and economic lockdowns.

How to stay reliable

While Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said the USPS is reversing recent changes that caused the delays until after the elections, something will have to be done to deal with the Postal Service’s dire financial state. It’s losing billions of dollars a year due to a mixture of declining snail-mail volumes, a legal requirement to fund pensions for 75 years and other factors. Political gridlock means a bailout is unlikely.

In my view, DeJoy’s changes were overly drastic in a too-short time, but I believe some cost-cutting over a longer period of time will be necessary to repair its balance sheet. But that doesn’t mean the USPS can’t continue to play its critical role. My own research on supply chains suggests that the USPS can both address its budget shortfall and remain the only genuinely nationwide provider of low-cost, last-mile delivery for small businesses and isolated regions.

The Postal Service is still operating with older, pre-digital technologies, and urgent upgrade to its delivery and last-mile systems—such as utilizing artificial intelligence to improve delivery routing and facility management—are necessary to ensure it can compete effectively against as well as cooperate with rivals like UPS, FedEx and even Amazon in the growing e-commerce economy. This would help reverse its recent declines in revenue.

However, if the focus is merely on cutting costs without modernization, small businesses and rural America will have to prepare for a future in which they might not be able to rely on USPS as they have for 245 years.

Ednilson Bernardes is a professor of supply chain management at West Virginia University.

Daily Eagle of Brooklyn and Queens welcomes opinions, both pro and con, on all subjects affecting our daily lives. We also welcome responses to the published articles and opinions, which should be sent to opinions@brooklyneagle.com (Brooklyn) and opinions@queenspublicmedia.com (Queens).
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Defense wins championships. And so do red-hot goaltenders.

The New York Islanders are featuring both on their path toward the Long Island/Brooklyn-based franchise’s first Stanley Cup title since 1983.

Semyon Varlamov made 29 saves en route to his second straight playoff shutout as the Islanders blanked the Philadelphia Flyers 4-0 Monday in the opening game of the best-of-seven Eastern Conference semifinals at the NHL’s bubble site in Toronto.

“We play well defensively, the guys played unbelievably today in front of me,” Varlamov said in his first appearance since closing out the Washington Capitals in the opening round with a 21-save, 4-0 shutout last Thursday.

“It feels good to get back-to-back shutouts, but at this point, it’s not about shutouts,” he added. “It’s playoff hockey, so for me the most important thing is to get the win and get ready for the next game. I’m not really focusing on it right now, of course I am excited about it, I’m not going to lie, but it is what it is.”

Varlamov boasts a gaudy 8-2 record with a 1.50 goals-against average in 10 starts since the Isles showed up in Toronto last month on the outside looking in at a potential playoff spot.

He backstopped New York past Florida in four games in the qualifying round and led the Isles to a five-game ousting of Washington in the best-of-seven East quarterfinals.

The 32-year-old Russian, who signed a four-year free-agent pact with the Isles last summer, has a sparkling .941 save percentage and a pair of shutouts during this postseason, and will be back between the pipes for Game 2 vs. Philadelphia on Wednesday afternoon at 3 p.m.

“He’s playing fantastic,” veteran defenseman Andy Greene said of Varlamov after providing the goalie with all the offense he’d need in Monday’s opener, lighting the lamp at 6:06 of the first period with his first playoff goal since April 16, 2010.

“(Varlamov’s) making the hard saves look easy and in our breakaways, we know he’s there for us.”

And his defense has been there for him as well.

The Isles have already matched a franchise record in the bubble by yielding 30 shots or less in nine consecutive games.

They’ve allowed two goals or fewer in all but two of their first 10 games in Toronto, frustrating opponents by blocking shots and clearing the defensive zone in front of Varlamov, who will ride a 136-minute, 20-second shutout streak into Game 2.

The Islanders have used tenacious defense and great goaltending from Semyon Varlamov to go a perfect 4-0 vs. Philadelphia thus far this season.

“We just tried to go into this game and establish our game,” Islanders head coach Barry Trotz said after New York beat Philadelphia for the fourth time in as many meetings this season.

“We play the right way as much as possible and see what their game is about.”

The top-seeded Flyers stayed within one score through the first 40 minutes, out-shooting the Isles 15-7 in the second period, but New York finally pulled away for good in the third.

Jean-Gabriel Pageau made it 2-0 at 2:54 of the period, team captain Anders Lee struck six minutes later and Devon Toews sealed the deal on an unassisted tally with 7:49 remaining.

“The second period we kind of got away from our game a little bit, and they took it to us,” Greene admitted. “We saw how the first and third periods went, and that’s more of what we need out of our game.”

“We’re playing the right way as much as possible and that leads to our success,” added Lee.

Carter Hart made 26 saves for Philadelphia, which knocked off Montreal in six games in the opening round.

Three wins away from their first trip to the conference finals since 1993, Varlamov and the Isles aren’t getting caught up in their impressive start to these Stanley Cup playoffs.

“We know how important the first game of each series is,” said Varlamov, who improved to 5-0 for his career playoff opener.

“We play well defensively, the guys played unbelievably today in front of me, Varlamov said in his first appearance since closing out the Washington Capitals in the opening round with a 21-save, 4-0 shutout last Thursday.

“IT’S IMPORTANT TO WIN THE FIRST ONE AND THEN HAVE A GOOD START AND WE DID THAT AGAIN TODAY. IT’S GOING TO BE A LONG SERIES ... WE’LL HAVE TO MOVE ON FROM THIS GAME AND GET READY FOR THE NEXT ONE.”

Isle Have Another:

Game 3 is scheduled for Thursday night at 7 p.m., the first of two potential back-to-backs in this series as Games 5 and 6, if necessary, are slated to be played on Aug. 31 and Sept. 1. ... Greene, acquired at the trade deadline, became just the 10th player in NHL history to go at least a decade between playoff goals. The 37-year-old blueliner and Pageau, who was also picked up by general manager Lou Lamoriello at the deadline, have been instrumental in the Isles’ playoff drive thus far. ... Cal Clutterbuck, who sat out last week’s Game 5 clincher against the Capitals with an undisclosed injury, had one shot on goal and two hits in 13 1/2 minutes of ice time vs. Philadelphia in Game 1.
Our World In Pictures

WISCONSIN — Smoke and flame: Police stood near a burning garbage truck during protests in Kenosha on Monday. Police officers shot Jacob Blake, a Black man, multiple times in the back a day earlier.

Photo: Morry Gash/AP

LOUISIANA — Getting prepared: Jerry Parria used steel cable and metal anchors to tie down four tombs belonging to his grandparents and uncles near Lafitte, as residents along the coast prepared for two tropical storms Monday.

Photo: Chris Granger/The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate via AP

HAITI — Severe flooding: A girl waded to her flooded home on Monday, a day after the arrival of Tropical Storm Laura in Port-au-Prince.

Photo: Dieu Nalio Chery/AP

MEXICO — Empty schoolyard: A schoolyard sat empty at the Benito Juarez school, closed amid the coronavirus, in Mexico City on Monday.

Photo: Fernando Llano/AP
NORTH CAROLINA — Convention day: A member of the Georgia delegation carried their delegation placard on the first day of the Republican National Convention on Monday in Charlotte.

Photo: Chris Carlson/AP Pool

MEXICO — Back in the ring: Mexican Lucha Libre wrestlers performed in Mexico City on Saturday in an exhibition fight to promote upcoming live streaming events.

Photo: Fernando Llano/AP

LOS ANGELES — Somber vigil: Léoh Hallu-Ghermay listened to a song during a candlelight vigil for Elijah McClain in Los Angeles on Monday. Colorado police officers killed McClain as he walked home to his apartment in August 2019.

Photo: Jae C. Hong/AP

CHILE — New gig: Denisse Leal and Mario Díaz disinfected a subway car in Santiago on Monday. The pandemic left the couple with no way to earn a living, so now they disinfect subway cars in exchange for a tip.

Photo: Esteban Felix/AP
Administrative Judge Marguerite Grays leads Queens Supreme at a crucial time for the court system

Continued from page 1

The new technology implemented when COVID-19 forced building closures and case suspensions in mid-March will remain a fixture of the Queens legal justice system. It’s an evolving aspect of the courts that Grays plans to adjust and perfect.

“I he pandemic of course brought things to the court system that we have never ever faced or ever thought we’d have to face as we try to administer justice,” Grays said. “It’s been a day-to-day operation and we’re trying to make sure we can provide access to justice to the public as we are charged to do.”

She said she plans to prioritize improving the use of technology during her tenure and maintaining lines of communication between the bench and bar. As she talked Monday, Grays was getting ready to send a notice about the shift from one remote technology, Skype for Business, to another, Microsoft Teams. She said the software will better serve parties.

“We’ve all learned to pivot depending on the challenge we’re facing at any individual time,” she said. “The technology component has continued to allow us to move cases along and conduct conferences. Technology has been very helpful to ensuring access to justice.”

Queens is experiencing a reprieve from the most devastating effects of the coronavirus, which killed thousands of residents and sickened tens of thousands more while forcing hundreds of thousands of people out of work. But as COVID-19 surges elsewhere in the country, public health experts predict a resurgence in New York City, likely in the fall.

Grays said its her mission to protect court personnel, attorneys and litigants if and when COVID-19 spikes again in Queens.

“Safety is my number one priority so that we don’t cause anyone illness,” she said. That again relates to her other goals of improving technology and communication.

“One of the things I find helpful is if we can get information to the public, it takes away a lot of the mystery and confusion and concerns,” Grays said. “More open dialogue to practitioners in Queens so that the court is more user-friendly.”

From Springfield Gardens to Queens Supreme

On her way to the top of the Queens legal system, Grays absorbed wisdom and guidance from a number of individuals — not least of all, the other judges she worked with as law clerk, justice and deputy justice in Civil Term.

“Albert Grant in Civil Court taught me to listen to people and attention to detail when you’re drafting decisions,” she said. Former Supreme Court Justice Jocelyn Smith demonstrated “patience and judicial temperament” and the meaning of the phrase “temper justice with mercy,” she said.

Justice Frederick Sampson modeled another motto: “Never judge a schoolhouse by its bricks.”

“Grays began her career handling landlord-tenant cases at Queens Legal Services, an organization that provides counsel, social work support and advocacy for low-income New Yorkers. QLS is based at 8900 Sutphin Boulevard, “directly across the street” from the building as the Queens Daily Eagle office.

Grays began her career handling landlord-tenant cases at Queens Legal Services, an organization that provides counsel, social work support and advocacy for low-income New Yorkers. QLS is based at 8900 Sutphin Boulevard, “directly across the street” from the Civil and Supreme Court buildings, Grays noted (it’s also the same building as the Queens Daily Eagle office).

She did spend some time off Sutphin, clerking for Sampson in Long Island City and working at a union office in Manhattan.

Soon, however, she found her way back to the Jamaica court network, serving as a clerk for a few other judges before her election to the Civil Court bench in 2000. Grays was first elected to the Supreme Court bench in 2003 and again in 2017.

Over her career, she has built a reputation for fairness, consistency and respect among her colleagues and the attorneys and litigants who enter her courtroom.

Weinstein said those qualities motivated him to appoint Grays as his deputy, with the ultimate goal of her taking over as top judge.

“I appointed Judge Grays as Deputy Administrative Judge because I know she had the skill set to be an excellent A J,” Weinstein told the Eagle in June. “Intelligent, personable and dedicated, she possesses all the qualities of leadership. Grays grew up in Springfield Gardens and received her bachelor’s law degree from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. She

Administrative Judge Marguerite Grays stands for the Pledge of Allegiance at a judicial induction ceremony earlier this year.

In her most recent role as deputy administrative judge, she learned from her predecessor, Administrative Judge Jeremy Weinstein.

“He gave me that final area of administrative experience,” she said. “I learned from my predecessor, Administrative Judge Jeremy Weinstein. I appointed Judge Grays as Deputy Administrative Judge because I know she had the skill set to be an excellent A J,”

Grays said she was particularly proud to lead the court in the current moment.

“I’m very blessed and so proud to have assumed this position,” Grays said. “We’ve had tremendously great administrative judges in the past and I’m especially proud to be the first African American female to hold this position in this historic time of change.”

“It means a tremendous amount,” she continued. “I’m so proud I can continue serving the people of Queens.”

During her nearly two decades on the bench, Grays has served as presiding judge of the commercial division in Queens and the foreclosure settlement part. She also worked on various state committees, including chairing the Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts.

Grays is the current president of the New York Chapter of the National Association of Women Judges and chair of the Board of Trustees at the Law Library of Queens County.

She is also a past-president of the Queens County Women’s Bar Association and the Association of Black Women Attorneys.

Throughout her career, Grays has remained invested in her native Queens. She said she wants the borough’s nearly 2.4 million residents to know that the judges work hard, the non-judicial staff work hard and we are here to serve the public,” she said. “And when they bring their cases to the Supreme Court Civil Term, they will get a fair disposition of any matter before them.”

Administrative Judge Marguerite Grays (left) with her predecessor, retired Administrative Judge Jeremy Weinstein.

Eagle file photo by Andy Katz

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Hottest brand in international fashion belongs to LeFrak City native (and it’s affordable)

By David Brand
Queens Daily Eagle

They call it the ‘Bushwick Birkin,’ but the hottest item in international fashion was designed by an artist from Queens. LeFrak City native Telfar Clemens has emerged as one of the world’s most influential fashion designers, with his brand Telfar creating clothing and accessories considered must-haves by celebrities, leaders and everyday fashionistas. Yet, unlike other clothing brands that inspire cult followings, Clemens’ creations are not meant to be exclusive. In fact, Telfar radically inclusive.

On Aug. 19, the company held a “Bag Security Program” that allowed anyone who wanted its famous “shopping bag” to get one, guaranteed. Customers who paid for the monochrome, leather handbag, with its embossed TC logo, between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. that day were promised one of the

“We are not about hype and scarcity. We didn’t set out to make an impossible to get product. The whole point of our bag is accessibility and community,” Telfar wrote on its website.

Telfar bags are priced uniquely low in the world of gotta-have-it fashion. The familiar bags max out at $257, ensuring that non-1 percenters can score one.

The brand’s slogan captures the spirit of inclusivity:

“Not for You, for Everyone.”

Dawoodi Bohras observe 10-day Ashara Mubaraka at home in Queens

By David Brand
Queens Daily Eagle

With COVID distancing rules in effect, Queens adherents of the Dawoodi Bohra sect of Shia Islam have observed the 10-day Ashara Mubaraka, one of the most significant events in their faith, from their homes.

Dawoodi Bohras typically gather in large groups at local community centers and a masjid on Springfield Boulevard, but this year to mark the occasion, which commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Husain ibn Ali, the grandson of Prophet Mohammed,

“Normally, many Dawoodi Bohras from this area gather with thousands of others across the globe at a city chosen for the occasion by our leader, His Holiness, Dr. Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, to listen to his sermons,” said Taha Adib, a spokesperson for Dawoodi Bohras in New York.

“This year will be different, but no less important, as we instead observe Ashara Mubaraka at home with our families, following prayers and sermons online, just as we did during Ramadan in May.”

Ashara Mubaraka sermons explore themes of humanity, justice, sacrifice, forgiveness and kindness.
NEW YORK — Playing hard: Sloane Stephens returned to Caroline Garcia at the Western & Southern Open tennis tournament on Sunday in New York.

BRITAIN — Museum reopening: A museum employee examined a marble statue at The British Museum in London on Monday. The museum will reopen to the public on Thursday.
Zoom glitches briefly bring U.S. schools to halt

By Mae Anderson
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) Teachers and parents got a brief glimpse into a new kind of pandemic-era nightmare Monday when Zoom — the video-conferencing service that powers everything from distance learning to business meetings to casual, socially distant get-togethers — abruptly went down.

For roughly two-and-a-half hours Monday morning, many users were unable to load the Zoom website, others could not join scheduled meetings. Zoom fixed the problem by 11:30 a.m. ET, the company reported on its status page.

The timing was less than ideal, since many schools across the U.S. were just starting one instruction after a summer surge in the coronavirus pandemic scotched many plans to reopen classes with students present in the flesh.

"Today was horrible," said Jacqueline Donovan, a professor at Broward College in Broward County, Florida. Her 12-year-old daughter M’charia and 14-year-old son Jayden were trying to log onto Zoom classes on Monday morning.

"They were both panic stricken and anxious," she said. Meanwhile, Donovan herself was trying to hold her first day of class over Zoom with a 1-and-a-half hour video conference, but that didn’t happen.

"I am not a tech savant, or software savant, or anything," she said. "But the Zoom outage made it obvious now that software glitches can spur brief moments of absence can spur brief moments of panic. These days, when Zoom goes down, it’s more like a power outage or phones going dead, making it a modern sort of utility for a nation still enduring the ravages of COVID-19.

Zoom and similar services "have been elevated to what we call ‘mission critical applications,’" said technology analyst and president of the consultancy Creative Strategies. "They’re no longer nice to have, they’re now must have.”

While Zoom has built up server farms and spent millions investing in its software, it was still a relatively nascent company when the coronavirus hit in March, Bajaraj said. "The bottom line is, software glitches happen.”

Ryan Grant in Crystal Lake, Illinois, was trying to log onto Zoom classes for his 3 1/2-year-old twins and 5-year-old son in front of computers to start their first days at pre-school and kindergarten. Then came an urgent message from their school, telling them to login to Business Meetings to cancel their schedule.

"I’m pretty digital and I’m used to it," he said. "But I was just talking over by kids who unattended themselves. It’s pretty difficult today.”

Grant, who also uses Zoom for his job as a financial advisor, said the experience was challenging no matter what. "I think we were prepared for one thing and this completely did a 180 on all of us, it was pretty difficult today.”

I was very difficult to change the file like this, to something we’re very familiar with on Zoom, to the other Google product,” he said. “We were prepared for one thing and this completely did a 180 on all of us, it was pretty difficult today.”

Grant, who also uses Zoom for his job as a financial advisor, said the experience was challenging no matter what. "I think we were prepared for one thing and this completely did a 180 on all of us, it was pretty difficult today.”

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Zoom did not disclose the cause of the problem, which ap- peared to hit both coasts of the U.S. especially hard. Its shares fell less than 3% during regular trading hours Monday.

Grade schools, high schools and universities are relying on distance learning technologies like Microsoft Teams to teach remotely and reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Schools began open- ing over the past month with a wide array of in-person, hybrid and online schooling plans. In 2019, during a normal school year, a quarter of elementary and secondary schools had opened by the last week of August. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, Inc., 99 Washington Avenue 80A Albany, NY 12210.用途/角色/用户/有法律用途。

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When the time, but few have become
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90-DAY DEMAND TO PROSECUTE IGNORED, COMPLAINT DISMISSED

Appellate Division, Second Department

On Oct. 7, 2011, Rosalidia Rodriguez and others were allegedly injured in a motor vehicle accident in Queens. On Sept. 14, 2014, the injured parties filed a personal injury complaint in Queens County Supreme Court, Civil Term against Thiemo Diallo, who owned and operated the other vehicle involved in the accident. On Nov. 7, 2017, Diallo served the plaintiffs with a 90-day demand to resume the proceedings and to serve and file a note of issue. The plaintiffs did not serve and file a note of issue and did not move to vacate the 90-day demand or to extend the 90-day period. Accordingly, in February of 2018, Diallo moved to dismiss the complaint. The plaintiffs opposed the motion and cross-moved for an order of preclusion, asserting that Diallo had not appeared for his deposition. In an order entered Sept. 27, 2018, Hon. Janice Taylor granted Diallo’s motion and denied the plaintiffs’ cross motion. Rodriguez and the other injured parties appealed and, upon their appeal, the justices of the Appellate Division, Second Department affirmed the determination of the Supreme Court. In their decision, the justices explained that where a plaintiff has been served with a 90-day demand, as in this case, “that plaintiff must comply with the demand by filing a note of issue or by moving, before the default date, either to vacate the demand or to extend the 90-day period.” They noted that the plaintiffs failed to do either within the 90-day period. Indicating that the determination of what constituted a justifiable excuse for a default lied within the sound discretion of the Supreme Court, the justices agreed that the Supreme Court providently exercised its discretion in granting Diallo’s motion to dismiss the complaint as the plaintiffs failed to demonstrate a justifiable excuse of the failure to abide by the 90-day demand and the existence of a potentially meritorious claim.

—Rodriguez v. Diallo, 2019-04554, August 19, 2020

CLAIMS DISMISSED FOLLOWING FAILURE TO PROVE LABOR LAW VIOLATION

Appellate Division, Second Department

Juan Henriquez allegedly sustained injuries on March 15, 2016, when a plank of wood fell on his head as he and others were dismantling a scaffold at a worksite in Manhattan. In Kings County Supreme Court, Civil Term, Henriquez filed a complaint against the Clarence P. Grant Housing Development Fund Company, Inc. and others, alleging a violation of the workers’ compensation law. Henriquez subsequently moved for summary judgment on the issue of liability regarding the violation of labor law. Hon. Carl Landicino denied the motion and Henriquez appealed. Upon his appeal, the justices of the Appellate Division, Second Department affirmed the determination of the Supreme Court. The justices explained that in order for Henriquez to have prevailed on a motion for summary judgment in a falling object case such as he alleged, he was required to demonstrate that at the time the object fell, it either was hoisted or secured, or required securing for the purposes of the undertaking. They noted that, in addition, Henriquez had to show, “that the object fell because of the absence or inadequacy of a safety device of the kind enumerated in the statute.” The justices agreed with the Supreme Court’s determination to deny Henriquez’s motion for summary judgment as he failed to establish his entitlement to judgment as a matter of law. They found that Henriquez’s evidence was insufficient to establish that the plank fell because of the absence or inadequacy of a safety device. They noted that Henriquez testified at his deposition that he was facing away from the scaffold at the time the plank struck him, and that he only learned about what happened from others after he awoke at the hospital. In their decision, the justices explained that Henriquez also submitted the deposition testimony of a superintendent who was not at the worksite on the day of the incident and also learned about it from others. The justices concluded that this testimony failed to establish that Henriquez’s injuries were proximately caused by the absence or inadequacy of a safety device. In addition, they agreed with the Supreme Court that Henriquez failed to demonstrate the admissibility of a daily log, which he offered as a business record, for the purpose of proving the truth of the information contained therein. In rejecting the information as hearsay, the justices indicated that the information failed to advance Henriquez’s claims because it showed “simply that an object fell causing injury to a worker.”


PRECLUSION OF TREATING PHYSICIAN’S TESTIMONY LEADS TO NEW TRIAL ON DAMAGES

Appellate Division, Second Department

On Jan. 15, 2009, Orhan Duman was allegedly injured when the vehicle he was operating was struck in the rear by a vehicle operated by Eric Joshua Scharf and owned by Marilyn Scharf. Duman alleged that, as a result of the accident, he suffered, among other things, “cognitive deficits secondary to traumatic brain injury, choreoathetoid movements secondary to CVA and aggravated by TBI.” In Kings County Supreme Court, Civil Term, Duman filed a complaint against Eric Joshua and Marilyn Scharf in an effort to recover damages for the injuries he allegedly sustained in the accident. The complaint proceeded to a bifurcated trial before a jury. The Supreme Court granted Duman’s motion for judgment as a matter of law against the defendants on the issue of liability, made at the close of the evidence in the liability phase of the bifurcated trial. At the damages phase of the trial, the defendants called as a witness one of Duman’s treating physicians, Dr. Naureen Duman, to testify at trial regarding causation, notwithstanding the failure to provide notice, as the provision did not apply to treating physicians. The justices determined that, under the circumstances of the case, the error in precluding the testimony could not be deemed harmless. As such, the justices reversed the order as appealed from, granted the defendants’ motion to set aside the jury verdict on the issue of damages in the interest of justice and ordered a new trial on that issue. The matter was remitted to the Supreme Court for a new trial on the issue of damages only.


CITY’S KNOWLEDGE OF DEFECT BARS DISMISSAL

Appellate Division, Second Department

The justices of the Appellate Division, Second Department affirmed the denial of a summary judgment in a personal injury case filed in Kings County Supreme Court, Civil Term. In the complaint, Danuta Piski alleged that on June 9, 2011, at the southeast corner of the intersection of Newell Street and Nassau Avenue in Brooklyn, she stepped from the sidewalk into the crosswalk and her foot became stuck in a 3-to-4-inch-deep hole, causing her to fall and sustain injuries. Piski filed the complaint against the city of New York and others. In the Supreme Court, the city moved for summary judgment dismissing the complaint as asserted against it. Hon. Lawrence Knipel denied the motion and the city appealed. The justices of the Appellate Division, Second Department affirmed the determination of the lower court. They explained that prior notice of a defect is a condition precedent which a plaintiff is required to prove and to maintain a complaint against the city. The justices determined that the city failed to establish that it lacked prior written knowledge of the alleged defect. The record indicated that, in support of its motion, the city submitted records from two of its agencies, the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), describing a hole of “cave-in” in the pavement at the relevant location. Among the records were three complaints regarding the hole received by the DOT on January 29, February 5, and March 1, 2010. The justices noted that the DEP records indicated that on March 4, 2010, the DOT “made area safe” with other notes and that the DEP records indicated another report by the DOT dated March 11, 2010, describing a “cave-in” at the location, with no indication that a repair was undertaken thereafter. The appellate justices noted that, instead, the DEP records contained a comment noting that a “work order has already been submitted for the repair.” They determined that there was no record that the hot patch of the area was ever done and consequently, the repair to the blacktop may not have been completed, leaving it vulnerable to greater wear and tear over the following year. Thus, the justices found that the city failed to eliminate triable issues of fact as to whether the repair undertaken on March 4, 2010, was ever completed and whether it received notice of the alleged defect on March 11, 2010, and failed to take remedial action.

—Piski v. City of New York, 2019-03272, August 5, 2020

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Recent Court Decisions and Appeals

By C. B. Abruzzese

BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE

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Two staff members to the virus. We are being very unfortunate, we lost about 15 clients and staff and many clients who have tested positive are cared for and healthy. We have been going above and beyond to make sure the clients who have to come to work to provide care have consistent mental illness.

In 1975, TSINY is an agency providing residential and outpatient to individuals per year. Founded in 1975, TSINY is a not-for-profit Mental Health Agency providing residential and outpatient to individuals per year and employs 380 staff.

We are now about six months since the pandemic essentially shut down most of New York City. How has your organization adapted during this time? TSINY had to adapt very quickly. While we had a disaster plan in place, we needed to modify it to cover telehealth, personal protective equipment, working remotely and at the same time move forward with technology that would allow staff to continue to serve our clients wherever they were. We have adjusted well, and we have been able to maintain all essential services. Those staff who have to come to work to provide care have been going above and beyond to make sure the clients are cared for and healthy.

How are you now adjusted in serving your constituents/clients/patient participants? This has been challenging but staff have adapted to telehealth very quickly. As an example, instead of coming in to visit your doctor or therapist, you can use your telephone, smartphone, tablet, or any other video-enabled device, as we continued to provide the support we are known for. Telehealth services have become a true lifeline for members of our community, enabling them to obtain the care they need in the safety of their homes. At the same time, we implemented new medical and cleaning protocols for our residential and outpatient programs keeping everyone safe and healthy.

How are you balancing the needs of your staffing and are you hiring? The smaller weddings are also less expensive, with the number of attendees of any “social gathering” capped at 50 in New York State. Celebrate for instance, offers an a la carte microwedding package starting at $55 per person, compared to the usual $165 to $185 per head cost for a full blown six-hour event.

Couples also have been adding special touch -es – for example, in attendance masks — to mark the occasion, O’Keefe said. “COVID is not stopping love or weddings,” O’Keefe said. “But couples are asking, ‘Do we really need 300? Snag Harbor offers 83 acres, encompassing a number of themed areas, including the Tuscan Garden, Rose Garden, Connie Gretz Secret Garden and New York Chinese Scholar’s Garden. Those looking for religious weddings are also getting back to nature. The National Catholic Reporter noted “outdoor Catholic weddings could become a pandemic trend,” while Brooklyn bride Devena Schaefer, a student at Touro College, chronicled her Orthodox Jewish wedding ceremony at the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. “In a way, the situation has allowed couples freedom from their family’s expectations,” said Dennis, who noted that the smaller weddings provided a departure from the massive celebrations traditional in certain cultures, including lavish Hindu weddings popular in the Queens Botanical Garden.

For Viloria and Veluya, part of a close-kin Filipino community who met at a gathering of the Staten Island event-planning company the 39-acre Queens Botanical Garden. Dennis, who noted that the smaller weddings provided a departure from the massive celebrations traditional in certain cultures, including lavish Hindu weddings popular in the Queens Botanical Garden.

Microweddings the ‘New Normal’ The Staten Island event-planning company Microweddings the ‘New Normal’ The Staten Island event-planning company.
Scene at the Bar: The Queens County Women’s Bar Association carries the torch for the equality, dignity and promotion of women

By Soma Syed

Over the coming weeks, the Eagle will feature perspectives from local bar association leaders about the importance of the organizations and their vital function in the legal community. Are you a bar association leader or member and want to share your perspective? Email Eagle managing editor David Brand at david@queenspublicmedia.com.

Today we feature perspective from attorney Soma Syed, president of the Queens County Women’s Bar Association and founder of the law firm Soma Syed and Associates.

What are the main functions of the Queens County Women’s Bar Association?

We have almost 300 female and male attorneys and judges who depend on our organization to educate, promote and support each other. When you join the QCWBA, you become part of both a local and statewide network of attorneys and judges. QCWBA came into existence out of the need for female attorneys to find a community to help them professionally since 1931. We make sure laws proposed and enacted help women and promote human rights.

Why should people join, especially new attorneys?

Whether you work or live in Queens, you need to network for professional development, mentorship, continuing legal education and career opportunities. In the legal world, partners and judges tend to hire people who come with reference and know, especially in the legal area where attorneys, judges, clerks and staff work closely. Here you find a place of sisterhood and immense personal satisfaction. We are an organization composed of members who know about our, family members, children, spouse, hobbies and passion.

How has bar association membership helped you and your career?

Joining a woman bar association was a natural extension of who I am. My mother was a trailblazer in her native country supporting women’s education and promotion. I have found immense joy and personal satisfaction in carrying the torch of our legacy of equality, dignity, promotion of women in the legal field, camaraderie among women attorneys, public service and honor. This has made me a compassionate and empathetic attorney.

What else should we know about your bar association?

We are a diverse bar association and we have a big tent. I am grateful to be here in this time and place, meet so many trailblazers, accomplished women. But you know what — these women are so down to earth, helpful, funny, giving and always doing the right thing.

Attorney Soma Syed is president of the Queens County Women’s Bar Association. Photo courtesy of Syed.

Jury trials set to resume citywide in coming weeks

By Rob Abruzzese

Special to the Eagle

The court system is on the verge of restarting jury trials throughout New York State in the next month for the first time since March, a move that includes New York City. Chief Judge Janet DiFiore said during her weekly address to the legal community on Monday.

DiFiore didn’t give an exact date for the expected return of jury trials, but another round of grand jury summonses has been sent out for the next term which begins Sept. 8.

“The right to a trial by jury is one of the pillars of our justice system, and we have an obligation to restore this fundamental right as soon as it is prudent and responsible to do so,” DiFiore said.

“And we believe that we are at that point now in many areas of the state.”

We have worked tirelessly to retrofit our facilities and implement extensive safety measures in preparation for the return of jurors, and spent countless hours learning, and planning, for how we can safely conduct jury trials based on the specific conditions present in and around each courthouse,” she continued.

The first petit jury summonses went out last week in the Fourth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Judicial Districts, as well as Suffolk County. Chief Judge DiFiore said that a limited number of civil and criminal trials have been scheduled in those courts on a pilot basis.

“We will proceed carefully, of course, closely monitoring all aspects of these trials in order to ensure compliance with health and safety protocols and refine our practices for safely selecting and seating jurors,” DiFiore said.

When New York City does resume jury trials it will also do so on a pilot basis with a phased-in approach. Chief Judge DiFiore explained that the phased-in approach to restarting jury trials is not a return to the way the court ran in February and early March, and that the court will continue to limit foot traffic by using strategies like virtual operations and social distancing as much as possible.

“Firmly among these strategies is the expansion of e-filing, particularly to high-volume courts like the New York City Housing Court, and we have prioritized new procedures and protocols in that court for all of the obvious reasons, including the court’s history of heavy in-person filings,” Chief Judge DiFiore said.

“I am pleased to report that as soon as Oct. 5, e-filing will be in place in the Housing Court citywide, when Queens and Staten Island come online.”

The court, with the guidance of Hon. George Silver, the deputy chief administrative judge for New York City, is also working to streamline pretrial litigation processes in civil matters to avoid in-person appearances.

Part of that includes finalizing a uniform citywide preliminary conference form in September that hopes to identify pretrial issues that can be most easily resolved virtually.

“We are also managing the flow of people in our courthouses through technology, including a new tool that allows court staff to send group text messages to attorneys and litigants notifying them of when their cases are ready to be heard, so that they can wait in more spacious areas of the courthouse, instead of congregating in crowded courtrooms waiting for their cases to be called,” DiFiore said.

In her speech, Chief Judge DiFiore gave a special shout-out to Brooklyn judges Hon. Frederick A. Ria and Hon. Joseph Gubbay, from the Brooklyn Treatment Court, who have conducted 425 virtual hearings since the beginning of May. She also mentioned Hon. Sherry Klein Heitler, who helped to coordinate the more than 300 treatment courts in New York.

“While the pandemic has intensified the problems facing many treatment court participants, and in some cases adversely affected their care systems, we are fortunate that our treatment court judges, coordinators, case managers and stakeholders have adjusted their operations and found new and innovative ways to connect with and support these individuals,” Chief Judge DiFiore said.

“Our treatment court judges and staff have leveraged remote technology to assess and admit new participants, monitor compliance and progress, connect participants with needed services and even conduct a number of virtual graduations,” she added.

Behind the Bench

The Eagle will devote even more coverage to the court officers, law clerks and other workers who make our courts run.

Have someone in mind who deserves a profile? Let us know who we should be covering.

Contact managing editor David Brand at david@queenspublicmedia.com.

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