

LAWYERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES – June 3, 2025

Present: Alexandra Jacobs, Hon. Alina Habba, Arnold Calmann, Carlos M. Bollar, Charles M. Lizza, Danielle Corcione, David M. White, Dennis Drasco, Dennis Gleason, Edward Hartnett, Edward Kole, Elizabeth Sher, Eric Abraham, Glenn Troublefield, Jeffrey Greenbaum, Jennifer A. Hradil, Joe Braunreuther, John Basiak, John T. O'Brien, Karen Confoy, Keith Miller, Kelly Crawford, Kerri E. Chewning, Kevin Marino, Kevin Walsh, Lisa J. Rodriguez, Hon. Matthew Platkin, Melissa Rhoads, Michael Galpern, Michael Zogby, Patricia A. Staiano, Peter C. Harvey, Shoshanna Schiff, Steven M. Richman, Sue Leming, Susan Smalley, Thomas R. Curtin, Victor Afanador, Wayne Fang, William Cook

Chief Judge Bumb, Judge Hammer, Judge King, Judge Day, Judge Quinn, Judge Brown (Ret.), Judge Wolfson (Ret.), Judge Hillman (Ret.)

The Lawyers Advisory Committee ("LAC") met at the Park Chateau, where the meeting was convened by Chair Thomas R. Curtin, at 6:00 p.m., and the following occurred:

1. The Chair, Tom Curtin, welcomed attendees, particularly first-time attendees. He provided a brief overview of the LAC's mission and roles and responsibilities of the Chair, the Chief Judge and the membership at large.
2. A motion to approve the minutes of the March 4, 2025, meeting was made and seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.
3. Chief Judge Bumb circulated the LAC subcommittee list and asked members to review and submit any edits to Melissa Rhoads. She began her remarks by announcing the official launch of the District's Civics Learning Center website on June 2, 2025, and added a physical center is targeted for opening in 2 years. She extended her thanks to everyone who attended the Criminal Law Symposium, asking members to submit ideas for future Symposiums. She announced that she recently gave remarks at both the AFBNJ's Judicial Conference and the NJ State Bar Conference reporting the District is still #1 in the Circuit in filings, particularly due to MDL filings. She thanked the AFBNJ leadership team for continuing to speak out in support of the judiciary, especially with regard to judicial threats. She noted that Judge Waldor will retire in August 2025 and that her backfill is currently undergoing a background check. Finally, she asked the Criminal Law Subcommittee to look at mitigation reports to determine if they are duplicative of pre-sentence reports and, if they are still to be submitted, should guidelines be put in place for their use.
4. Melissa Rhoads reported that L.Civ.R. 301.1 was amended effective June 2, 2025. The amendment serves to provide judicial immunity to bankruptcy judges serving as mediators in a bankruptcy case for actions taken and decisions made while performing in that capacity.

5. Hon. Alina Habba reported on behalf of the United States Attorney's Office and thanked everyone for welcoming her to the meeting. She reported on the Office's task forces/initiatives as follows: 1. drone threats; 2. Fentanyl; 3. Violent crime and 4. Illegal Immigration, although noted that directives were altered to not unnecessarily inundate the court. She also announced that Operation Apex Hammer is in effect in June with NJ and NY law enforcement working together to combat gang activity.
6. Hon. Matt Platkin reported on behalf of the NJ Attorney General's Office. He expressed gratitude for being included in the LAC, emphasizing the importance of the partnership between state and federal agencies. He reported that his office is working to secure more resources for the U.S. Marshals Service and is hopeful to gain full bipartisan support from all state attorneys generals.
7. Sue Leming reported on behalf of the AFBNJ and thanked Chief Judge Bumb for recognizing their support of the judiciary. She invited members to the upcoming Brennan Reception on June 10, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Park Chateau, where Rebekah Conroy will be sworn in as the new AFBNJ president, along with other new officers. She announced this year's Brennan Award will honor the judges involved in the POP/ReEntry Court. Leming also highlighted the success of the Judicial Conference held in March at the Marigold, as well as the Gindin Bench/Bar Conference, which featured the ceremonial passing of the gavel from Judge Kaplan to Judge Gravelle and recognized Judge Gambardella for her years of dedicated service. She also noted AFBNJ's continued support of Danny's Pantry and the Charter High School in Camden.
8. Keith Miller reported on behalf of the Historical Society. He highlighted the historical videos on the Society's website and commended Beth Sher for her substantial contributions to this project. He announced that the swearing-in ceremony for the Chief U.S. Probation Officer will take place on Thursday, June 5, 2025 and that plans are underway for a fall event celebrating the 100th anniversary of Probation. Finally, he announced the next "Great Trials" program will be held in Trenton, and he invited members to submit topic ideas. The next Historical Society meeting will be held in Newark on June 17, 2025.
9. Old Business:
 - a. Michael Galpern reported on behalf of the Federal Civil Practice Committee. He noted that the committee is focusing on the arbitration program and accompanying rules and expects to present a more developed proposal at the next meeting.
 - b. Shoshanna Schiff reported on behalf of the Bankruptcy Local Rules Committee. She indicated newly crafted District Court local rules for Bankruptcy Appeals have been submitted for vote at the June Board of Judges meeting.

- c. William Cook reported on behalf of the Model Civil Jury Charges Committee. He indicated the AFBNJ circulated a survey to gather feedback and responses are being evaluated. He noted a trend in creating model charges related to patent and environmental law.
 - d. Beth Sher reported on behalf of the Local Civil Rule 7.1.(i) Committee, stating that the rule will be maintained, and they are seeking a consensus regarding amendment.
10. New Business:
- a. Potential Immigration Law CLE – tabled.
 - b. Edward Hartnett referenced the federal rule amendment exhibit. He and Steven Richman reported the Judicial Conference is seeking help from New Jersey on third party litigation funding as the district was on the forefront of creating its local rule. Judge King added there have been no issues from the perspective of a judge.

The next meeting will be on September 4, 2025, at 6:00pm.