

# OUR HOUSE IS YOUR HOME

*Celebrating the Professional Journeys of Diversity Pipeline Program Alumni*



## ABOUT #OURHOUSEISYOURHOME

In the weeks leading up to the Diversity & Inclusion Celebration Dinner, the City Bar's Office for Diversity & Inclusion launched the "Our House Is Your Home" campaign to celebrate the professional journeys of students who have walked through the House of the Association as Diversity Pipeline program participants. In the following pages, featured alumni share their first experiences at the City Bar, how mentors have played a role in their professional and personal development, and what advice they would give to their younger selves. For many students, engagement with the City Bar began in high school through the Thurgood Marshall Summer Law Internship Program and now continues, as practicing attorneys, in the form of City Bar committee service. Each unique alumni profile is linked by a common theme: through its programs, people, and impact, the City Bar is considered to be a "second home" for the legal professionals that started their career journeys in part at the House of the Association.

## HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN

You can help strengthen pipeline programming and opportunities for the next generation of legal professionals by donating to the #OurHousesYourHome campaign at [bit.do/citybar18](https://bit.do/citybar18) or by texting CITYBAR18 to 91999.

## DIVERSITY PIPELINE PROGRAMS

#OurHousesYourHome donations will support Diversity Pipeline Programs, which include:

- [Thurgood Marshall Summer Law Internship Program](#), which is the City Bar's flagship pipeline program, places high-achieving New York City high school students with legal employers for the summer and provides them with weekly professional development programs. TMSLI has served over 1,200 students since its founding in 1993.
- [LSAT/Law School Prep Series](#), a comprehensive all-day workshop for college students and recent graduates, providing free sample LSAT prep courses and information on the entire admissions process from application through the first year of law school. The Series has run for nine years and has served over 2,500 students since 2009.
- [Launching Your Career Seminar Series](#), a 5-week series of interactive workshops on discrete professional development subjects like resume-writing, networking, and etiquette, among others.
- [Law Preview Scholarship](#), which provides recipients with a tuition scholarship for a 6-day BARBRI Law Preview law school prep course covering the 1L required coursework. Since 2012, over 200 scholarships have been awarded.
- [1L Diversity Fellowship](#), which provides first-year law students from underrepresented populations the chance to spend a summer in one of New York's leading law firms and corporate/government law departments. The program's 600 alumni include partners in law firms, association general counsels, Assistant District Attorneys, Assistant Attorney Generals, an Assistant US Attorney, executive directors, and founders of their own companies.

# OUR HOUSE IS YOUR HOME

VERONICA DUNLAP, FORDHAM UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW (2014)



*The New York City Bar Association's Diversity Pipeline programs support high school, college, and law students as they pursue careers in the legal profession. Diversity Pipeline alumna Veronica Dunlap, a 2014 graduate of Fordham University School of Law, shares her City Bar story. She is currently Director of Strategic Initiatives at the National Network for Safe Communities.*

## WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE NEW YORK CITY BAR ASSOCIATION FOR THE FIRST TIME?

I first visited the City Bar visit for the Annual Law Student Welcome Reception. The building was so beautiful and intimidating, but everyone there was so welcoming – it felt like family, right away. In 2011, my 1L year, I was the Fordham Law Thurgood Marshall Fellow at the City Bar. I then participated in the Alliance of Securities and Financial Educators (ASAFE) Securities & Finance Seminar Series, which deepened my industry knowledge through a curriculum delivered by leading experts in finance law and business.

## DESCRIBE YOUR CITY BAR COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE.

In prior years, I served on the Diversity Pipeline Initiatives Committee and volunteered at pre-law events, helped with resume preparation for summer law interns, and conducted mock interviews. In 2016, I worked with the Women in the Legal Profession Committee on the *Street Smarts for Women Lawyers* publication.

## WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON DEALING WITH SURPRISES ALONG YOUR CAREER PATH?

I was placed in a leadership role before I believed I was ready. My mentors challenged my own perception of my readiness by helping me recall my path to where I had landed – it was eye-opening. What others saw in me, I had yet to fully embrace for myself. Now, I recognize and own my leadership ability and continued growth.



VERONICA DUNLAP

## IF YOU COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO YOURSELF 10 YEARS AGO, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Believe in your dreams, wholeheartedly, and go after them full-force. There are people who will help you reach your goals – trust them.

## IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE CITY BAR?

The City Bar is my grounding place. It is where I go to remind myself why I became a lawyer. And because it is the regular gathering place for the people who treated me like family on my path to becoming a lawyer, it is my “second home.” I am so grateful to have the City Bar as a resource.

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EMMANUEL FASHAKIN, JR., BROOKLYN LAW SCHOOL (2014)

NEW YORK  
CITY BAR

DIVERSITY

*The New York City Bar Association's Diversity Pipeline programs support high school, college, and law students as they pursue careers in the legal profession. Diversity Pipeline alum Emmanuel Fashakin, Jr., a 2014 graduate of Brooklyn Law School and member of the Government Ethics and State Affairs Committee, shares his City Bar story. He is currently a litigation associate at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP.*

## WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE NEW YORK CITY BAR ASSOCIATION FOR THE FIRST TIME?

I first stepped foot into the City Bar for a Government Ethics and State Affairs Committee meeting as a student-member, and was further introduced to all the Association has to offer through the Diversity Fellowship Program.

## WHO ARE YOUR MENTORS?

I was fortunate to meet a host of people who took an interest in my development as a law student and emphasized the meaningful relationships one could cultivate as a City Bar member. I am especially grateful to my professors Bill Araiza, Winnie Taylor, and Stephen Weiner. They helped shape me into the lawyer I am today.

## DESCRIBE SOME OF THE WORK YOU DO AS A CITY BAR COMMITTEE MEMBER.

I serve on the Government Ethics and State Affairs Committee and work with the subgroups tasked with researching or writing various ethics-related projects. Our recent reports include support for a no-excuse absentee voting constitutional amendment and support for an early voting period.

## IF YOU COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO YOURSELF 10 YEARS AGO, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Keep going. It will all pay off.



EMMANUEL FASHAKIN, JR.

## WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON DEALING WITH SURPRISES ALONG YOUR CAREER PATH?

"Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome" is associated with the legal profession for good reason. It is part of what makes the field so interesting. Whether the surprise is pleasant or unsavory, I have found success in: 1) keeping an open mind that sometimes things will not go as planned; 2) remaining focused on the objective so as not to let the surprise derail the end goal; 3) reaching out to others for advice if needed; and 4) reflecting on these unforeseen episodes in order to take away tangible lessons that I can apply to future situations.

## IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE CITY BAR?

It has been an absolute pleasure being a member of the New York City Bar Association. The 1L Diversity Fellowship was a wonderful experience that changed the course of my legal career. I remain a proud member and will continue to look for ways to give back to the City Bar and aid its efforts.

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PETER A. GARCIA, ELISABETH HAUB SCHOOL OF LAW AT PACE UNIVERSITY (2016)



*The New York City Bar Association's Diversity Pipeline programs support high school, college, and law students as they pursue careers in the legal profession. Peter A. Garcia, 2016 graduate of Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University and member of the Task Force on Puerto Rico, shares his City Bar Story. He is currently a Senior Examiner at FINRA (Financial Industry Regulatory Authority).*

## WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE NEW YORK CITY BAR ASSOCIATION FOR THE FIRST TIME?

I first walked into the New York City Bar Association as a law student for a networking event. I continued to visit the City Bar many times – at times as much as, or more than, my law school campus. One memorable program was the Alliance of Securities and Financial Educators (ASAFE) Securities & Finance Seminar Series.

## DESCRIBE YOUR CITY BAR COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE.

I am proud to be a newly appointed member of the Task Force on Puerto Rico. Currently, I am learning about upcoming initiatives to help my fellow Puerto Ricans – our fellow American Citizens – who still suffer from the devastating impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Despite over seven months passing since these hurricanes, Puerto Ricans continue to lack access to clean water sources, stable electricity, resources to rebuild their homes and mainland infrastructure, among many other issues. These are but a few reasons why I joined the committee. I look forward to contributing to the efforts to help American Citizens who are in need.

## WHO ARE YOUR MENTORS?

Particularly at the City Bar, Neysa Alsina and Gabrielle Brown are my mentors. Their wisdom, enthusiasm, and willingness to listen and help have been invaluable. They have both informed me about events, programs and initiatives offered by the City Bar and other organizations that I did not know existed – all of which I benefited from tremendously.

## IF YOU COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO YOURSELF 10 YEARS AGO, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Take your time, do not rush, and think about your options before you go full steam ahead.



PETER A. GARCIA

## WERE THERE ANY SURPRISES ALONG YOUR CAREER PATH?

I would not call certain experiences surprises, but instead bumps in the road during my law school and career journeys. I was able to overcome these obstacles partly due to my stubborn determination to move forward and succeed. Equally as important along my path were the relationships I established with mentors, friends, and colleagues, many of whom I met or got to know better at City Bar programs and events.

## IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE CITY BAR?

There is no other organization, bar association or otherwise, that provides programs and events like the New York City Bar Association. Since my very first event at the City Bar, I have had wonderful experiences at this "historic home," including holding my MetroLALSA graduation reception there. I sincerely hope that other law students, attorneys and legal professionals have the opportunity to appreciate what the City Bar has to offer.

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DAVID W.D. MITCHELL, VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL (2013)



*The New York City Bar Association's Diversity Pipeline programs support high school, college, and law students as they pursue careers in the legal profession. ALI Fellow David W.D. Mitchell, a 2013 graduate of Vanderbilt University Law School and member of the Labor and Employment Law Committee, shares his City Bar Story. He is currently a senior associate at Hogan Lovells.*

## WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE NEW YORK CITY BAR ASSOCIATION FOR THE FIRST TIME?

I first came to the City Bar as a junior associate at Hogan Lovells and a new member of 1844 (a group of approximately 60 Black male lawyers who primarily practice in New York City's Vault 100 law firms and in-house legal departments.) The City Bar graciously allowed 1844 to hold its monthly meetings there, thus beginning my relationship with the organization.

## DESCRIBE YOUR CITY BAR COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE.

I serve on the Labor and Employment Law Committee as an affiliate member. I am currently in the process of organizing a panel on recent developments to sexual harassment laws for an upcoming summit centered on the topic.

## IF YOU COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO YOURSELF 10 YEARS AGO, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Keep building and maintaining strong relationships with your peers. Learn the importance of mentors and sponsors. Don't limit yourself when setting out the goals you want to achieve.

## WHO ARE YOUR MENTORS?

I feel fortunate to have had strong mentor relationships with seasoned attorneys from early on in my career. I am especially grateful to the wisdom and support I have received from Nate Saint-Victor and Conway Ekpo.



DAVID W.D. MITCHELL

## WERE THERE ANY SURPRISES ALONG YOUR CAREER PATH?

When I started working at a law firm fresh out of law school, I expected that my practice would focus exclusively on litigation. Upon joining the labor and employment group shortly thereafter, I found myself spending an increasing amount of time serving as a specialist on M&A transactions. I learned that I quite enjoy working on transactional matters, an area in which I previously had little to no interest. This experience taught me to continue to pursue projects that interest me and to keep an open mind in the process.

## IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE CITY BAR?

It has been a pleasure getting more involved at the City Bar in recent years through my membership on the Labor and Employment Law Committee and as an Associate Leadership Institute (ALI) Fellow, and as a mentor to this year's Fellows. I look forward to further strengthening my ties with the City Bar as my career develops and grows.

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KARLA PEREZ, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SCHOOL OF LAW (2017)



*The New York City Bar Association's Diversity Pipeline programs support high school, college, and law students as they pursue careers in the legal profession. Diversity Pipeline alumna Karla Perez, a 2017 graduate of The University of Texas School of Law, shares her City Bar Story. She is currently an Associate and Assistant Counsel at Societe Generale.*

## WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE NEW YORK CITY BAR ASSOCIATION FOR THE FIRST TIME?

The first time I walked into the New York City Bar Association was for an interview as part of the Thurgood Marshall Summer Law Internship Program. Little then did I know the role the City Bar would play in my path towards a legal career. I soon returned to the City Bar for the Constitutional Rights Symposium the Launching Your Career Professional Development Series, and later attended the LSAT/Law School Prep Series, which really helped prepare me for my 1L year. I served as a law Fellow when I was in law school, assisting with the Office for Diversity Benchmarking Research, and helped bring the UT Center for Women in Law program to the City Bar.

## WHO ARE YOUR MENTORS?

I have several people who I look to for advice and guidance. For me, at the City Bar that has been Gabrielle Brown. Gabrielle has constantly made herself available to discuss any worries or concerns and provide feedback. In the years that I have known her, she has helped keep me grounded and moving forward.

## IF YOU COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO YOURSELF 10 YEARS AGO, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I would tell my younger self: Be more confident and do not let setbacks derail you. Stay focused, be persistent and put in the work.



KARLA PEREZ

## WERE THERE ANY SURPRISES ALONG YOUR CAREER PATH?

Absolutely – there have been many surprises along my career path and I am sure there will continue to be many others. In the past, I had a very "fixed" mindset and did not deal with surprises well. I am working on having more of a "growth" mindset and embracing surprises. I try to remind myself that sometimes what looks like a failure is actually a redirection, and that I should take each surprise, whether positive or negative, as an opportunity for growth.

## IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE CITY BAR?

The City Bar has had a great impact on my life and on my career. I am grateful for everything that I have learned, everyone that I have met and everything I have had the opportunity to experience because of the City Bar.

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RAABIA QASIM, CUNY SCHOOL OF LAW (2016)



*The New York City Bar Association's Diversity Pipeline programs support high school, college, and law students as they pursue careers in the legal profession. Diversity Pipeline alumna Raabia Qasim, a 2016 graduate of CUNY Law School and member of the Civil Rights Committee shares her City Bar story. She is currently serving as an NYC Social Justice Fellow with the New York City Council.*

## WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE NEW YORK CITY BAR ASSOCIATION FOR THE FIRST TIME?

I first came to the City Bar the summer after my senior year of high school to participate in the Thurgood Marshall Summer Internship Program. Through the program, I was placed at Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP. I then returned to participate in the LSAT Prep Series and Launching Your Career Professional Development series before law school, and was a Law Preview Scholar before my 1L at CUNY.

## WHO ARE YOUR MENTORS?

Gabrielle Brown's guidance and support has been instrumental to my legal career. She has been there at every step of my professional journey to share life and career advice, going above and beyond to ensure I succeeded in becoming a lawyer. I would not be where I am today without her or the City Bar's Office for Diversity & Inclusion.

## DESCRIBE SOME OF THE WORK YOU DO AS A CITY BAR COMMITTEE MEMBER.

I serve on the Civil Rights Committee and help organize panel discussions, bring in guest speakers for meetings, and serve on the education subcommittee.

## IF YOU COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO YOURSELF 10 YEARS AGO, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Believe in yourself. If you can do that, you can make anything happen.



RAABIA QASIM

## IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE CITY BAR?

The City Bar is invaluable to all young lawyers. I first walked through the doors of the City Bar as a high school intern and am still active in the City Bar today as an attorney, 12 years later. The City Bar has been my home through the long and difficult journey to becoming a lawyer. I am fortunate to have mentors at the City Bar who are invested in my personal and professional success. It's what makes the City Bar so unique.