



New York State Bar Association Honors Seven Leaders In Criminal Justice With Outstanding Achievement Awards

by [New York State Bar Association](#)

ALBANY, NY (01/27/2011)(readMedia)-- The New York State Bar Association's Criminal Justice Section presented its Awards for Outstanding Achievement to seven leaders who have made an outstanding contribution in the criminal justice field.

Criminal Justice Section Awards Committee Chair Norman P. Effman of Buffalo (executive director, Attica Legal Aid) and President-elect Vincent E. Doyle III of Buffalo (Connors & Vilaro LLP) awarded the 2011 awards on January 27 during the State Bar Association's Annual Meeting at the Hilton New York in Manhattan. Abbe D. Lowell of Washington D.C. (McDermott Will & Emery) was a guest speaker at the event.

"Whether it is advocating to provide a better future for at-risk children, educating the public and profession on how to prevent wrongful convictions, or improving resources for prosecutors in their pursuit of justice, the seven winners of the Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Criminal Justice collectively have made important contributions to improving the public's understanding and confidence in the justice system," said James P. Subjack of Fredonia, chair of the Criminal Justice Section. "I am pleased to reward their extraordinary efforts, and I congratulate each winner on a job well done."

Award categories and recipients are:

- **The Vincent E. Doyle Jr. Award for Outstanding Jurist:** Hon. Jed S. Rakoff, United States District Judge, United States District, Southern District of New York, New York City. Judge Rakoff is highly regarded for his efforts to hold banks and financial executives accountable for their financial misdeeds, and his push for greater transparency in the court system. Nominated to a judgeship by President William J. Clinton on October 11, 1995, he was confirmed by the Senate on December 29, 1995. The award was presented by Vincent E. Doyle III, son of Vincent E. Doyle Jr.
- **The Charles F. Crimi Memorial Award for Outstanding Private Defense Practitioner:** James P. Harrington, Harrington & Mahoney, Buffalo. Harrington is one of Buffalo's top private defense attorneys and recognized for his work in death penalty cases. He is a past president of the New York State Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. He currently serves as the Criminal Justice Act representative for the Western District of New York, representing the interests of the attorneys accepting criminal case assignments in federal courts.
- **Outstanding Contribution to the Bar and the Community:** Hon. Phylis S. Bamberger, former justice, Supreme Court, Bronx County. Bamberger chairs the State Bar's Task Force on Wrongful Convictions, whose groundbreaking report found that identification procedures and other government practices were the two leading causes of wrongful convictions among 53 cases examined by a panel of experts. Under her leadership, the task force helped improve public confidence in the justice system, raised awareness of the causes and effects of wrongful convictions, and worked to prevent further miscarriages of justice.

- The Michele S. Maxian Award for Outstanding Public Defense Practitioner: Elsie Chandler, (Youth Law Project, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem), Harlem. Noted for her commitment to client-centered, humanistic representation of children accused of criminal charges, Chandler has devoted her life's work to children's rights. She began her career as an elementary school teacher and later received a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, before going to law school. She has focused her practice on juvenile justice issues. She founded the Legal Aid Society's Juvenile Offender Team in 1995, an innovative and comprehensive approach to representing teens 13 to 15 years old accused of violent offenses and charged as adults under New York law.
- Outstanding Contribution to the Delivery of Prosecutorial Services Award: Sean Smith, (New York Prosecutors Training Institute), Middleburgh. Smith was cited for developing innovative resources to assist prosecutors across the state. His "Prosecutors' Encyclopedia," has transformed the way prosecutors research, collaborate, prepare for trial and handle appeals and other post-conviction matters. In its first three months of operation, the Encyclopedia has attracted users from 48 states and hosts more than 4.3 million articles.
- Outstanding Contribution to Criminal Law Education: Joanne Macri, (director, Criminal Defense Immigration Project, New York State Defenders Association), Albany. Macri was recognized for conducting more than 25 workshops and seminars on possible immigration consequences of criminal charges filed against an immigrant. She conducted an additional 25 trainings on the meaning and implementation of the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision of Padilla v Kentucky, which upheld that criminal defense counsel has a duty to provide affirmative and competent advice to a noncitizen defendant regarding the immigration consequences of a guilty plea.
- Outstanding Contribution in the Field of Corrections: Brian Fischer, commissioner, New York State Department of Correctional Services Authority, Spring Valley. Since 2007, Fischer has been commissioner of the nation's fourth largest state prison system. He oversees a correctional system of 30,000 employees, 67 correctional facilities, approximately 58,000 inmates, and a 900-bed drug treatment campus for parole violators and individuals who are sentenced by the courts to parole supervision. He has guided the department through many challenges, including complex initiatives for sex offenders and inmates with mental illness; successful accreditation of every department correctional facility by the American Correctional Association; and ensuring the safety of staff and inmates.

The 77,000-member New York State Bar Association is the official statewide organization of lawyers in New York and the largest voluntary state bar association in the nation. Founded in 1876, State Bar programs and activities have continuously served the public and improved the justice system for 135 years.

###