



NEWS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Joseph A. Zayas
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New York State Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts Renamed for Pioneering Justice Betty Weinberg Ellerin

NEW YORK—The New York State Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts, launched in 1986 to promote equal opportunity and treatment for women and address gender bias in the New York State Courts, has been renamed for its longstanding chair, pioneering Justice Betty Weinberg Ellerin, now Senior Counsel at Alston & Bird LLP. The official renaming took place at the Committee’s recent meeting in Manhattan, where Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson, First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George, and newly appointed Committee Co-Chair Justice Llinét Rosado of the Appellate Division, First Department joined the Committee’s members in paying special tribute to Justice Ellerin, a woman of many firsts who has dedicated her life to fighting for women’s rights and under whose dynamic leadership the Committee has flourished and evolved.

Aligned with the New York State Courts’ mission and working within the court system, the newly renamed Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin Committee on Women in the Courts—a broad-based group of jurists, court officials, and practicing lawyers—addresses a variety of concerns of women litigants, attorneys, and court employees. In recent years, it has acted on behalf of constituencies that range from domestic violence victims to immigrant women and from sexually harassed employees to self-represented matrimonial litigants. The Committee was also instrumental in the creation of a statewide network of human trafficking intervention courts.

“The iconic Betty Weinberg Ellerin, upon breaking through the glass ceiling, went on to dedicate her career to helping other women on that path. No one is more deserving of this honor than Justice Ellerin, who not only fought for better opportunities for women lawyers and court employees but also for the fair treatment of women litigants, witnesses, and others,” said Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson. “She is a true champion of women’s rights, children’s rights, and human rights, and has led the Committee with

distinction over the past decades. I am deeply gratified that her legacy will now be memorialized through the renaming of the Committee, whose mission is integral to the fair administration of justice.”

“Women judges, lawyers, and court employees of today stand on the shoulders of trailblazers like Justice Ellerin who, as advocate, role model and mentor, paved the way for so many. While much progress has been made in leveling the playing field for women in the courts, Justice Ellerin still looks to the important work ahead, continuing her passionate pursuit of the goal of eradicating all forms of gender bias in the New York State Courts as Co-Chair of the Committee that now—and rightfully—bears her name,” said Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas. “I can’t think of a more fitting way to pay homage to her and her life’s work.”

“Justice Ellerin is a dynamo whose lifelong efforts have led to reforms that, furthering the rights of and opportunities for women lawyers, court employees, and other court users, have made a positive, lasting impact on the delivery of justice in New York State,” said First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George. “The Committee’s new name honors Justice Ellerin’s many, and extraordinary, accomplishments, serving to inspire generations to come.”

“Throughout her life, Justice Ellerin strove to pull other women up as she climbed the ladder of success and shattered glass ceilings. She brought this same passion and drive to the Committee as its Chair over the past three decades—resulting in much-needed reforms—and continues today, at the young age of 94, to do so,” said Justice Rosado. “I am grateful to Chief Judge Wilson for the renaming of the Committee in Justice Ellerin’s honor, which couldn’t be more apt, as well as for giving me the opportunity to work alongside the iconic Betty Weinberg Ellerin in my capacity as the Committee’s Co-Chair.”

“During my career, I always recognized that I had to bring other women along, to help them be visible and demonstrate what they can do. It enriches society, and it’s fair,” said Justice Ellerin. “The Committee’s work is so very dear to my heart, and I am overwhelmed upon receiving this special honor. I warmly thank Chief Judge Wilson and the court system’s leadership team for their acknowledgment and support. While the Committee will now bear my name, I want to emphasize that this important work could not be done without the collective efforts of its dedicated members to whom we owe so much. I look forward to the Committee’s continued efforts, now strengthened by the addition of our wonderful and dynamic Co-Chair, Justice Rosado, as we work to eradicate the remaining areas of bias that still affect women in the courts and legal system.”

Bronx native Betty Weinberg Ellerin was the first woman to hold the title of Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for the New York City Courts, the first woman appointed as an Associate Justice of the Appellate Division, First Department, and the first woman to serve as the Appellate Division, First Department’s Presiding Justice.

Justice Ellerin began her court career in 1955, working as a law clerk to various Supreme Court Justices over the next 21 years. She served as a New York City Civil Court Judge, assigned to New York County's Criminal Court bench, from 1977 to 1978. She was designated an Acting Supreme Court Justice in 1978 and elected to the State

Supreme Court in New York County in November 1979, serving on that bench from 1980 to 1981. The following year, Chief Judge Lawrence Cooke named her Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for the New York City Courts, with administrative responsibility for the operation of all trial courts in New York City's five boroughs. In 1985, Governor Mario Cuomo appointed her as an Associate Justice of the Appellate Division, First Department. She was subsequently appointed as the Appellate Division, First Department's Presiding Justice by Governor George Pataki. While she served in that position for just one year because of mandatory age limits, she remained as an Additional Justice until her retirement from the bench in 2005, joining the law firm of Alston & Bird as Senior Counsel the following year.

Justice Ellerin attended Washington Square College under the combined college-law program, receiving her B.A., cum laude, in 1950, and her LL.B. from New York University School of Law in 1952. She began practicing law at the firm of Klein & Ruderman in New York City in 1952, where she remained for three years.

In addition to her role as Co-Chair of the Committee on Women in the Courts that now carries her name, she serves as Vice Chair of the Committee on Character and Fitness of the Appellate Division, First Department, and Vice Chair of the Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics. She is a founding member and director of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, past President of the New York Women's Bar Association, past President of the National Association of Women Judges and past Chair of its National Task Force on Gender Bias in the Courts, and a panelist with JAMS (Judicial Arbitration and Mediation). Justice Ellerin is the recipient of numerous awards, most notably the Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award from the American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession, and the Louis J. Capozzoli Gavel Award from the New York County Lawyers' Association.

To learn more about the Hon. Betty Weinberg Ellerin Committee on Women in the Courts, go to <https://ww2.nycourts.gov/ip/womeninthecourts/index.shtml>.

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