

Eastern District Bar Association celebrates 50 years of the Federal Magistrates Act

By Rob Abruzzese
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The Eastern District of New York Chapter of the Federal Bar Association held a 50th anniversary celebration of the Federal Magistrates Act in Central Islip on Wednesday, March 13.

The Federal Magistrates Act of 1968, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, created a new judicial officer in the federal district courts in response to an increasing caseload. The act replaced what was considered an outdated commissioner system in which judicial officers assisted district judges.

Today the officers are called magistrate judges, and their roles have grown significantly since the 1960s. Nowadays their duties include overseeing discovery, issuing search and arrest warrants, selecting juries, and holding arraignments, preliminary hearings and change of plea hearings. They also try cases on consent and issue reports and recommendations on certain motions.

Members of the EDNY Chapter of the Federal Bar Association used the 50th anniversary of the act as a reason to honor the contribution of the magistrate judges.

"This concept of flexibility, innovation and encouragement of these brilliant and exceptionally capable men and women to increase their participation in all matters of the court has persisted in this district to this day," said Hon. Dora Irizarry, chief judge of the EDNY. "It is what has made this district the innovator of programs now duplicated around the country and distinguished it in the nation."

"I look forward to working with our magistrate judges as we forge into the future, finding better ways to administer justice fairly and efficiently," Chief Judge Irizarry continued. "On behalf of all the district judges of the court, I thank all of you [the magistrate judges] for your incredible service to the people of the EDNY."

Plaques listing the names of the EDNY magistrate judges were presented by Chief Judge Irizarry to Chief Magistrate Judge Roanne L. Mann, and by Judge Joanna Seybert to Magistrate Judges Kathleen Tomlinson and Ramon E. Reyes. The plaques will be displayed in both the federal courthouse in Downtown Brooklyn and the courthouse in Central Islip.



The annual Purim Luncheon is one of the biggest events of the year hosted by the Brooklyn Bar Association. From left: Eli Okin, Hon. Miriam Cyruunik, Richard Klass, Hon. Katherine Levine, Hon. Ellen Spodek and An



From left: Samson Alder, Guy Regev and David Ginsberg.



Magistrate judges, seen from left: Hon. Viktor V. Pohorelsky, Hon. Marilyn D. Go, Hon. Ramon E. Reyes Jr., U.S. District Judge Hon. Joan M. Azrack, Chief Magistrate Judge Hon. Roanne Mann, Hon. Steven Locke, Hon. A. Kathleen Tomlinson and Hon. Sanket Bulsara

Photo courtesy of EDNY