

Justice Kurtz Sets Civil Forum for March 12 at '360'

One of the most useful and popular programs designed to smooth the Kings County civil calendar process has been the Kings County Supreme Court Goldberg/Aronin Civil Forum, launched 14 years ago by then-Chief Administrative Justice Michael Pesce.

Held on a regular basis, this Forum provides an opportunity for barristers, jurists and court personnel to exchange views and information and has "done wonders for court house morale," according to former justice told us.

Today this collegial, informative confab is led by Justice Donald Scott Kurtz, who announced that the next forum will take place Wednesday, March 12, 9 a.m. in the 11th floor boardroom of 360 Adams St.



Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Donald Scott Kurtz

Justice Kurtz always invites questions and comments in advance of the forum and has often resolved many matters in advance to streamline the actual scheduled agenda. In his announcement, he states that invitees should contact him either by email at dkurtz@courts.state.ny.us or by telephone at (347) 401 9097.

The forum's name honors the late Justices Richard Goldberg and

Irving Aronin, who served as chairs in earlier days.

One item likely to be brought up by trial lawyer Steve Harkavy is a plan to honor the late Irwin Kosover, one of the most respected defense counsels who practiced at 360 Adams St. for much of the building's storied existence.

App. Justice Skelos Gives Sound Message To Incoming Lawyers

Every lawyer we know remembers the moment she was interviewed by a representative of the Character Committee and how she felt upon taking the oath and signing the Lawyers Register in the appropriate Appellate Division courtroom.

As I watched Appellate Division



Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Arthur Schack

Justice Peter Skelos speak to some 60 smiling and nervous lawyers Tuesday morning on Monroe Place, it seemed to me that they might also long recall some of Justice Skelos's words, which boldly yet subtly tackled one of the thorniest issues of the day: distinguishing "the law" from "freedom."

Part of what A.D.J. Skelos was a tribute to the late Justice Steven W. Fisher, pointing out that "Those of

us who had the privilege of working with Justice Fisher came to know him as a justice who was totally dedicated to the court and, more importantly, dedicated to the rule of law.

"Those words, dedicated to the rule of law, are the words which governed his career, and similarly they are the words which answer the question just posed ... how must we as attorneys conduct ourselves?"

"...Justice Fisher was a fan of the movies, and so, he would often use a scene from a movie to articulate his position.

"One of his favorite movies was 'The Ten Commandments,' which recounts the Biblical story of freedom, the release of the Israelites from bondage and the rendering of the commandments, which em-



Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Miriam Cyrulnik

body the rule of law.

"As Moses came down from his 40 days in solitary prayer, he delivered the rule of law, the Ten Commandments, to his people.

"Among those in attendance was another Biblical character named Dathan, who was the leader of the rebels, and, as we know, he was Moses's chief nemesis.

"After Moses delivered the Ten Commandments, a defiant Dathan

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By Charles F. Otey, Esq.

yelled to Moses, 'We will not live by your commandments, we are free.'

"In response, Moses instructed his people with the words: 'There is no freedom without the law.'

"Those words," concluded Justice Skelos, 'there is no freedom without law,' were of great significance to Justice Fisher, as they are to all of us on the bench, and so they should be to you the newly minted attorneys, in-

lawyers for protecting the law really are, ironically, presenting a "clear and present danger" to their own true freedom.

Sharing the bench with Hon. Skelos Tuesday were four other Appellate Division Justices — the Hon. Sylvia Hinds-Radix, Hon. William Miller, Hon. Joseph Maltese and Hon. Colleen Duffy.

'Hot Topics in Land Use' To Be Aired at BBA CLE

With property prices soaring — especially in Brooklyn — CLE Director Meredith Symonds and her Brooklyn Bar Association team have selected a very relevant subject for their March 20 session: "Hot Topics in NYC Land Use."

Starting at 6 p.m., a talented panel will "provide an overview of the NYC land use approvals appeals" and discuss some of the complexities involving several topics, including Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, City Environmental Review, Changes to the City's Zoning Resolution and others.

Real estate prices are climbing rapidly as the Depression of 2008 seems to be slowly winding down. As a result, there are battles of land use such as those revolving around the fate of Long Island College Hospital. Cobble Hill residents want to keep the hospital at the end of Atlantic Avenue up and running.

State leaders see a profit to be had by selling all or most of the valuable LICH real estate converting much of it to condos and co-ops. Mayor Bill de Blasio was solidly on the side of the hospital advocates.



Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Ellen Spodek

deed as they should be to each and every person in this room."

Many who heard this Biblical injunction, "There is no freedom without the law," had to see how the extremist media war against "activist judges" and lawyers reflects the wisdom of Moses, the late Justice Fisher.

Contrary to what we see and hear from power-added extremists (Rush Limbaugh? Sen. Ted Cruz?) those who deride all jurists and

Kings Inn Probes Risks, Benefits of Pre-Settlement Funding



The Kings County American Inn of Court met last Tuesday to hold a regular CLE session honing in on the ethical challenges inherent in dealing with "Pre-Settlement Funding Companies." Seen here, left-right, are BBA President Andrew Fallek, Doron Leiby, Don Savatta, Paul Sabaj and Alan Tractman. Other panel members included President Justice Ellen Spodek, Hon. Robin S. Garson, Appellate Division Justice Cheryl Chambers, Hajin Suh, Andrew Leftt, Scott Star, Paul Weitz and Steve Finkelstein. President-elect is Dave Chidekel; Inn Counselor is Justice Arthur Schack, with Treasurer Justice Miriam Cyrulnik and Secretary Jon Besunder. Executive Director is Jeff Feldman, and Court Attorney Lucy DiSalvo is Inn Administrator.

Photos Courtesy of Paul Sabaj