

N E W S
New York State
Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection

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Good Deeds by Good Lawyers

(Albany, NY-- 11/21/13) The legal profession in New York State, through the Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection, recently awarded nearly \$1.4 million in reimbursement to 36 law clients who lost money due to dishonest conduct by their former lawyers in the practice of law.

Lawyers in New York State provide 100 percent of the principal resources of the Lawyers' Fund by paying an attorney registration fee. A small portion of each registration fee supports all awards from the Lawyers' Fund and related administrative costs. No taxpayer money is used for this client protection program. Of every dollar received by the Lawyers' Fund, over 92 cents go directly to client reimbursement.

Twenty-six former lawyers from across New York State were responsible for the misconduct that resulted in these 36 awards from the Lawyers' Fund. There are over 279,000 registered lawyers in New York State.

The Lawyers' Fund is administered by a seven-member Board of Trustees appointed by the State Court of Appeals, New York's high court. The Trustees serve without compensation. Since 1982, the Fund has restored more than \$168 million to 7,398 eligible law clients.

The Lawyers' Fund is chaired by **Eric A. Seiff**, a Manhattan lawyer with Scopetta, Seiff, Kretz & Abercrombie. In announcing the awards, Mr. Seiff said:

"On behalf of the 279,000 lawyers in New York State, the Lawyers' Fund provides financial reimbursement for the losses caused by dishonest conduct of a tiny fraction of our membership. The theft of law client money is a violation of the trust placed in lawyers, and in reimbursing client victims, the Fund strives to maintain trust in our legal profession and the honesty of the overwhelming majority of the lawyers of this State."

In addition to Mr. Seiff, the Trustees are **Eleanor B. Alter**, a Manhattan lawyer with Kasowitz, Benson, Torres & Friedman; **Peter A. Bellacosa**, an attorney with the Manhattan law firm of Kirkland & Ellis; **Nancy Burner**, an attorney with Nancy Burner & Associates, P.C. in Setauket, Suffolk County; **Patricia L. Gatling**

of Manhattan, the Commissioner and Chair of the New York City Commission on Human Rights; **Charlotte G. Holstein** of Syracuse, a civic leader and Executive Director of F.O.C.U.S. Greater Syracuse; and **Anthony J. Baynes** of Williamsville, the founder and Chairman of the AJ Baynes Group, a Buffalo based development and logistics company.

Types of losses covered by the Lawyers' Fund include a lawyer's theft of estate assets, real estate down payments, litigation settlement proceeds, and law client money embezzled in investments within an attorney-client relationship. The Fund is not authorized to compensate for alleged malpractice or assist in resolving disputes over legal fees.

A relatively new type of loss for which the Lawyers' Fund has provided reimbursement involves law clients who have advanced legal fees to lawyers who falsely promised to provide legal representation in loan modification proceedings.

The Lawyers' Fund is located in Albany. Telephone: 800-442-3863. Website: www.nylawfund.org