

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

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Lawyers Make Good

(Albany, NY-- 8/8/13) The Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection recently awarded over \$3.0 million in reimbursement to 67 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-seven former lawyers were responsible for the misconduct that resulted in these 67 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 \$165 million to 7,330 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:

"The theft of law client money by these few former lawyers is a violation of the trust placed in New York's legal profession. On behalf of lawyers in New York State, the Lawyers' Fund provides financial reimbursement for these losses. Sixty-five of the 67 clients received full reimbursement for their loss. The remaining two clients received partial reimbursement from the Fund's maximum \$300,000 award."

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 can not compensate for alleged malpractice or assist in resolving disputes over legal fees.

A relatively new type of loss the Lawyers' Fund has reimbursed involves law clients defrauded of advance legal fees by 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