



Candidate Statements for the 2024-2025 LGBT Bar NY Board of Directors

Rhys Bortignon: I hereby kindly submit my candidacy for the LGBT Bar NY Board of Directors. Since moving to New York in 2015, my husband and I have made an ongoing effort to support and contribute to the LGBTQ+ community. Given my background as a lawyer, I have been an active participant in LGBTQ+ initiatives through my employers, including (i) assisting with immigration applications/filings, (ii) filing appeal briefs in criminal matters, (iii) filing name change petitions for transgender youth (through TLDEF), and (iv) volunteering at LGBT Bar NY's weekly legal clinic at The Center. I first started at the LGBT Bar NY's legal clinic in 2018.

Ryan Bravata: My name is Ryan Bravata and I am a U.S. Immigration Attorney-Manager at Vialto Partners LLP. I first joined LGBT Bar NY as a law student member in 2017. The same year that I joined was also my first year living openly "out" as a queer man as my time prior to law school was spent in a monastery in Alabama. As a survivor of conversion therapy, joining LGBT Bar NY was the first time I felt I didn't have to hide my true self within an organization. Since then, LGBT Bar NY has helped me become more involved with as well as learn more about the history of our community. As a law student, I participated in the LGBT Bar NY student leadership offerings, networking events, the Pride March, mentorship program, career fair, as well as attended several lectures to include the late Honorable Paul Feinman. Now, as an attorney, I have served as a mentor in the mentorship program, attended the networking mixers, CLEs, volunteered at the LGBT Bar NY clinic, and helped fundraise for the annual GALA. Finally, I am currently serving as the Treasurer of both the Foundation and the Association. I look forward to continuing to serve the organization in this capacity for the upcoming year.

Daniel Chavez: I am a Hispanic gay man, and I have always been and will continue to be dedicated to serving others. I am a new attorney and just completed my first year with The Kurland Group, a boutique civil litigation firm dedicated to serving LGBTQ individuals and racial minorities.

During the Summer of 2019, after my first year of law school, I had the pleasure of interning with LGBT Bar NY and learning from Brett Figlewski. I was exposed to LGBT Bar NY's many critical initiatives, helped research and draft legislation, witnessed the impact of New York's Gender Equality Act, and participated in LGBT Bar NY's in-person legal clinic. Each experience helped solidify my desire to contribute to LGBT Bar NY's incredible impact. I am deeply committed to the rule of law and achieving equality for all members of the LGBTQ community.

I am also committed to diversity and believe in the power of intersectional perspectives while working to achieve equality through the administration of the law. I am intimately familiar with the law's effect on individual lives, and the opportunity to join LGBT Bar NY's Board of Directors is an exciting chance to apply my passions in service to the LGBTQ community, bringing what I hope is a fresh perspective to LGBT Bar NY's work. LGBT Bar NY is a constant source of inspiration and a constant reminder of the power, resilience, and legacy of New York's LGBTQ community. It would be my honor to contribute to that influence as part of LGBT Bar NY's Board. Thank you for your consideration.

Ben Bussman: I am writing to express my interest to serve on the board of LGBT Bar NY. Throughout my career, I have been committed to leveraging my expertise to advance social justice causes, particularly those affecting marginalized communities. I currently serve as the head of Latham & Watkins LLP's New York LGBTQ+ Lawyers Group coordinating speakers, putting together events and supporting queer attorneys and allies. I am also active in the firm's pro bono practice. My two areas of focus are (i) transgender name changes with the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (TLDEF) and (ii) refugee assistance with the International Refugee Assistance Project

(IRAP). In addition to direct casework through IRAP, I coordinate attorney staffing for Afghan and Central American refugees.

Kristen Chin: LGBT Bar NY's mission has always resonated with me, and I have benefited from the organization. As a law student, I attended numerous LGBT Bar NY events and found a community that was generous with advice when I was trying to launch a career. As a young lawyer, I attended the annual gala almost immediately upon returning to New York after a five-year absence and reconnected with old friends and colleagues. I have served on the Board of directors since 2022. In law school, I was the co-chair of the Outlaws. In Hong Kong, I served as my firm's liaison to the citywide LGBTQ+ attorney network and led my firm's pro bono effort in the city's first LGBTQ+-related lawsuit. In New York, I have been active as the co-chair of the Fordham Law School LGBTQ+ Alumni Affinity Group and serve in various affinity groups in the firm. I am certain that my lived experience as an Asian, female lesbian will continue to be helpful in contributing to LGBT Bar NY.

Ricardo George Doriott: Having previously served as the Law Student Representative on the DC LGBT Bar Association Board of Directors, I became actively involved in LGBT Bar NY when I moved to the city in 2015 to join Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer. As a current Associate at Morgan, Lewis & Brockius LLP, I have greatly enjoyed attending LGBT Bar NY's broad array of events and meeting its diverse members. I have also worked to support LGBT issues by organizing a CLE surrounding LGBT Immigration Issues, working with the Transgender Legal Defense Education Fund, and serving on LGBT Bar NY's Pro Bono Leadership Council. Outside of the law, I am on the Leadership Council for Stonewall Quarter Share, a giving circle made up of young LGBT professionals. In this role, I hosted the group's annual Fire Island Fundraiser and chaired the Grants Committee, a group tasked with determining the scope of SQS's annual grant and reviewing the list of non-profits who apply. Finally, I am a proud member of the New York City Gay Men's Chorus, and an occasional bowler with Big Apple Sports. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Malikah M. Fulton: I believe that joining the LGBT Bar NY Board will serve to enhance my leadership capacity and increase my civic and community engagement. Central to my service in the Metropolitan Black Bar Association ("MBBA") has been strengthening the organization's best practices. To do this, I assisted with editing the bylaws, creating the conflict of interest policies, and increasing constituent outreach and board engagement. I plan to bring the same effort and enthusiasm that I have exhibited with the MBBA to LGBT Bar NY. My desire to serve our community and inspire others to join the profession is what led me to join LGBT Bar NY, and I aim to strengthen the organization's support of black attorneys. I believe that LGBT Bar NY will help me refine my voice as a leader and help me to continue to develop new initiatives to support the legal diversity pipeline.

Lindsay Goldbrum: I have been serving on the Board of LGBT Bar NY for the past two years. For the last four years, I have had the pleasure of becoming extremely involved in LGBT Bar NY and realized how incredible this organization is. In the Spring of 2017, I became involved in the relaunch of the Women's Committee for LGBT Bar NY, and since then, I have either planned or assisted in the planning of every women's event that LGBT Bar NY has hosted. At the beginning of this term, I began serving as co-chair of the committee. Some of the events I have planned include the Women's Game Night at Amsterdam Billiards, a happy hour at Ayza Wine & Chocolate Bar, bowling night at Brooklyn Bowl, and a karaoke night. I have also volunteered at a number of LGBT Bar NY events, including the annual Gala, I have participated on a panel for our law student leaders, and I have served as a LGBT Bar NY mentor to one of our law student members. I believe that LGBT Bar NY is an incredible organization. It brings together a group of intelligent and impressive individuals from a number of diverse backgrounds. I would be honored to have the opportunity to further donate my time and efforts to LGBT Bar NY and help do what I can to improve this organization that does so much for so many.

Pamela B. Goldsmith: I would like to express my interest in becoming a member of LGBT Bar NY's Board of Directors, where I can contribute my skills and passion towards continuing its mission to improving the administration of the law and ensuring full equality for members of the LGBTQ community.

As a trial litigator for 30 years, I understand first-hand the importance of advancing LGBTQ legal professionals and the need to take an active role in accomplishing this goal. I have served on LGBT Bar NY's Judiciary Committee for four years (two as vice-chair) and represented LGBT Bar NY for the 2018 Civil Court Independent Screening Panel. I am a current member of Defense Research Institute's Diversity Committee, member of my firm's Council on Inclusion and Diversity, was a past member of the NYC Bar Association's LGBT Rights Committee and received City and State's Corporate Social Responsibility Award for Outstanding Leadership in Promoting Diversity and Inclusion. Additionally, with an Appellate Division judge, I helped to start an informal lesbian judge-attorney group, with the objective to address the low percentage of lesbian partners in New York firms and judges on the New York bench.

I truly believe in LGBT Bar NY's advocacy in supporting policies to protect the LGBTQ community, providing legal services to those in our community in need, and educating the greater New York community as it relates to legal issues and civil rights impacting our community. My role on the Judiciary Committee has given me direct insight into LGBT Bar NY's commitment and I would appreciate the opportunity to serve on its Board of Directors. Thank you for your consideration.

Janice Grubin: I am pleased to offer my candidacy for the LGBT Bar NY Association Board for the ninth consecutive year. I am proud to have committed most of my thirty-year plus legal career to the core value of our LGBTQ+ community – personal and professional equality. I believe that my success as a gay restructuring lawyer and my service on LGBT Bar NY's Association Board, as Co-Chair of LGBT Bar NY's Judiciary Committee and as a member of the Committee on Character and Fitness, New York Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department (where I was recruited to make the Committee more diverse) (the "CCF"), together, are a living testament to this principle.

I have done my best to serve the legal needs of our community through, and in tandem with, my demanding law firm career. These activities include serving as (i) a member of the Advisory Group of Gender and Bankruptcy Law to the Working Committee of the Second Circuit Task Force on Gender Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts (1996-1998); (ii) the Chair and Co-Chair of LGBT Bar NY's Judiciary Committee (2012-); (iii) the Chair of the Association & Foundation Boards' Governance Committee (2020-); (iv) LGBT Bar NY's representative on the New York County Democratic Committee Independent Screening Panels for six Civil Court and six Supreme Court judicial openings (2013, 2017); (v) a member of LGBT Bar NY's Partners Group (2013-2019); (vi) a member of the CCF (2018-); and (vii) an equity law partner with a flourishing insolvency practice (including advising not-for-profit boards) (2003-). I am also proud of the diversity I bring, as a lesbian, to IWIRC (The International Women's Insolvency and Restructuring Confederation) since its inception in the mid-1990's. Finally, my selection by the New York County Democratic Committee earlier this year as Panel Administrator of the 2021 Supreme Court Independent Screening Panel (with respect to 3 open seats) was an honor and a privilege.

The Judiciary Committee's evaluation of judicial candidates constitutes some of LGBT Bar NY's most important work. These evaluations are conducted with an eye toward the candidate's sensitivity and level of active commitment to LGBTQ+ issues, including the advancement of fairness and integrity in all judicial matters, and conclude with the ratings being posted on social media and on LGBT Bar NY's website and published in the New York Law Journal prior to the elections. The Committee continues to search for ways it can be meaningfully heard in the judicial and non-judicial election and appointment processes at the federal, state, and city levels. To that end, the Committee formed a sub-committee in 2021 to issue letters endorsing qualified LGBTQ+ candidates for federal and state judicial appointments, working in conjunction with LGBT Bar NY's Executive Director, Eric Lesh.

I am also excited about continuing to participate in the implementation of an evolving strategic plan for LGBT Bar NY to cement our organization's trio of roles as change agent, stabilizing presence and port in the storm for our community and its legal professionals.

In these challenging times, it would be a privilege to again serve on the Association Board. I am confident that my professional experience, my passion for, and commitment to, LGBT Bar NY's mission, and my Board service over

the last ten years will continue to make me a responsive and effective Association Board member in 2024. Thank you for your consideration.

Erica Healey-Kagan: I have been dedicated to serving the legal needs of the LGBTQ community for over 15 years, both through my work at the Kurland Group and my involvement in various non-profit organizations. After being involved in LGBT Bar NY's Lawyer Referral Network for many years, it was truly a privilege to litigate alongside Brett Figlewski and the LGBT Bar Association in the Joseph O. v. Danielle B. matter, in which we won a landmark appellate decision recognizing the equal application of the presumption of legitimacy to same-sex marriages. Following this, I was so grateful to receive LGBT Bar NY's Community Excellence Award in 2022, and I would be honored to be able to serve on its Board of Directors.

Anthony Perrotto: As a native New Yorker, Anthony has given almost the entirety of his legal career to government and public service. He first came to LGBT Bar NY as a clinic volunteer in 2015 and joined the Board of Directors in 2018, where he now serves as President. Currently, Anthony serves as Principal Law Clerk to Justice David J Kirschner, Supreme Court, Queens County - Criminal Term. He previously served as Court Attorney to Justice Richard Lee Price in Supreme Court, Bronx County - Criminal Term, and, most recently, an Assistant District Attorney with the Bronx County District Attorney's Child Abuse / Sex Crimes Unit.

Madeleine Skaller: Madeleine Skaller is a civil litigator at Levy Konigsberg specializing in seeking justice for victims of sexual abuse. Madeleine's litigation experience covers an extensive range of personal injury claims with an emphasis on childhood trauma.

Madeleine received her J.D. from The George Washington University Law School in 2018, where she graduated with honors. Madeleine received her B.S. in Development Sociology with a double minor in Environmental Studies and Law and Society from Cornell University in 2015.

Since 2020, Madeleine has volunteered at LGBT Bar NY's free Tuesday night legal clinic even when the clinic went fully virtual during the pandemic. As a board member, Madeleine has continued to volunteer her time at the clinic and worked to improve the clinic experience for both volunteer attorneys and clinic visitors.

Michael J. Weiner: After over a decade of supporting LGBT Bar NY as a volunteer in its legal clinics, and as a member and officer of its Judiciary Committee, I would be honored to serve on the Board of Directors to support LGBT Bar NY's mission, among other things, (i) to ensure a forum of LGBT attorneys, legal scholars, and jurists, (ii) to secure dignity and equality for LGBTQ+ people, and (iii) to support a culture that fosters, protects, and celebrates diversity and inclusion.

I first became involved in LGBT Bar NY as a volunteer at the clinic at the 13th Street Center in about 2009. I also worked on a Steering Committee to establish a legal clinic in Newark, New Jersey, for which I was honored in 2015 with the Award for Outstanding Commitment to LGBT Bar NY's Clinics.

Since 2012, my principal service to LGBT Bar NY has been as a member, Vice Chair, and now Co-Chair of LGBT Bar NY's Judiciary Committee. I have been extensively involved in every aspect of the Judiciary Committee's activities, among other things, in interviewing and rating hundreds of candidates for federal and state judicial office and, this year, establishing an extern program. I have also served as LGBT Bar NY's designee to independent judicial screening panels throughout New York City and presented on behalf of LGBT Bar NY to potential judicial candidates concerning the judicial screening process.

Service on the Board of Directors would provide a unique opportunity to use my knowledge, work ethic, and abilities to further support our bar association and its important mission.

Eric Wursthorn: I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as a member of the LGBT Bar for nearly two decades. I first learned of the LGBT Bar through Professor Arthur Leonard, who taught my first-year contracts class at

NYLS. After my first semester, Professor Leonard hired me as his research assistant, and suggested that I write for the LGBT Law Notes. I continue to write articles for the Law Notes to date. Last year I also began volunteering at the Tuesday Night Clinic, which has proven to be an invaluable experience. I mentor law students through the LGBT Bar's Mentorship Program and have spoken at the LGBT Bar's Career Fair Panel. I am a court attorney in the New York State Court System with 17+ years of experience. I have worked in Criminal Court, Civil Court and currently am the Principal Court Attorney for Justice Lynn Kotler in Supreme Court, New York County, Civil Term where I manage a general assignment part handling commercial, employment, insurance, labor law, tort and real estate litigation. Prior to my tenure with Justice Kotler, I served as a court attorney for the Honorable Judith J. Gische (ret.). I currently serve on the Executive Committee of the State Bar's LGBTQ+ Law Section as Chair of the Membership Committee and am a member of the City Bar's delegation to the State Bar's House of Delegates. I also sit on the State Courts of Superior Jurisdiction Committee and Family Courts and Family Law Committee of the New York City Bar. I previously served on the LGBT Rights Committee of the City Bar, where I helped organize and fundraise for the Annual Pride Event.