

Merril Sobie's Remarks: NYSBA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

As the name of this award suggests, it has been a long road. The journey commenced in the dark ages of judicial administration, prior to the birth of OCA. In that era the Appellate Divisions controlled the court system. One day in 1968 my boss, the legendary Presiding Justice of the First Department, Bernard Botein, told me, in his words, "to take a long hard look at the important new court." When I looked I found a dysfunctional, atomized, underfunded tribunal, which had been cobbled from disparate fiercely autonomous pieces of several predecessor courts. I wrote a lengthy report and in the years that followed implemented an integrated funded court with an "all purpose" part structure adhering to a "one family, one judge" paradigm.

When a decade later, I traded court administration for academia, my horizons expanded. A partial list of endeavors in which I participated, includes the establishment of this committee under the leadership of Judge Levine, the study of the representation of children, F.C.A. Article 3, the History of Children's Laws and the McKinney commentaries. Fast forwarding to ruthlessly the near present, permanency and raise the age come to mind.

Many people, including several in this remote room, have contributed greatly to progressive children's laws and remain my esteemed colleagues and friends. The overarching dedicated support of this great bar association has been invaluable.

It has been a long road, but a wonderful journey. In recent years, I have experienced an additional benefit. Representing and advocating for children keeps one perennially young.

Thank you.