

Gay City ^{NEWS} Gay City ^{NEWS}

The 2019 Gay City News Impact Honorees



CORAZON AGUIRRE

The 2019 Gay City News Impact Awardees.

BY PAUL SCHINDLER

Community News Group



RICK KOPSTEIN
Justice Marcy Kahn.



AMY MAYES PHOTOGRAPHY
Matthew Skinner.



PATRICK LUKE
Justice Joanne Winslow.

“We’ve been training recruits for years,” Downey told Gay City News last year. “I’ve seen reactions to that training improve.”

He also talked about the group’s upcoming appearance before NYPD senior brass later in 2018.

“This October, GOAL is going to present to everyone ranked captain and above with the police commissioner standing next to us,” he said. “It’s his conference.”

An example of the ways GOAL serves as a bridge between the NYPD and the LGBTQ community came in June 2016, when Queer Nation called for a vigil outside the Stonewall Inn less than 48 hours after a gunman killed 49 people in Orlando’s Pulse nightclub. Though organizers sought no permit and did not consult with police, the NYPD closed Christopher Street and several hundred participants gathered for more than two hours. Afterward, organizers — veterans of ACT UP, Queer Nation, and other activist groups — could be seen thanking police.

“I quarterbacked that,” Downey said, explaining that in the wake of Orlando, “The department leaned on GOAL more than any other time in history.”

Downey began his criminal justice career in 2005 with the Hudson County Prosecutor’s Office in New Jersey, and since joining the NYPD has served in the Transit Bureau, the Special Victims Division, the Hate Crime Task Force, and the Office of the Chief of Department. He is currently assigned to the Office of the Police Commissioner. Downey was promoted to detective in 2015 and was elected a union delegate in the Police Benevolent Association.

Downey earned his bachelor’s degree from Ramapo College of New Jersey, is a founding board member of the Brooklyn Irish LGBTQ Organization, and was recognized by the Research Foundation to Cure AIDS. A resident of Bay Ridge, he is a lector at Saint Athanasius Catholic Church.

THE RICHARD C. FAILLA LGBTQ COMMISSION

Hon. Marcy L. Kahn and Hon. Joanne Winslow, both associate justices of the New York State Supreme Court’s Appellate Division, are co-chairs and Matthew Skinner is executive director of the Richard C. Failla LGBTQ Commission of the New York State Courts.

The Failla Commission was established by Chief Judge Janet DiFiore and Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence Marks in December 2016 “to raise awareness about LGBTQ issues and foster a more equitable, supportive environment for LGBTQ members within the justice system.” It has developed and presented extensive training and educational programs and materials for judges, non-judicial personnel, and court partners throughout the state and organized or participated in LGBTQ Pride Month events in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, Central Islip, Ithaca, Utica, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Albany, Batavia, Delhi, White Plains, and Kingston.

On the policy front, the Failla Commission proposed amendments to the court system antidiscrimination rules and policies to expressly prohibit discrimination based on “gender identity” and “gender expression” — amendments approved by the Judicial Departments, the Administrative Board of the Courts, and the Court of Appeals in 2018. It has begun working to ensure full access by transgender and gender nonconforming employees, attorneys, and members of the public to court system facilities, including bathrooms.

Justice Kahn sits on the Appellate Division’s First Department bench in Manhattan. She was elected to the Supreme Court in New York County in 1994, having been the first out lesbian appointed as a judge of the New York City Criminal Court in 1987. Prior to that, Kahn spent nearly a decade as a civil litigation attorney at major New York law firms, after serving as a special assistant attorney general investigating corruption in the city’s criminal justice system.

The founding chair of the LGBT Community Center’s board, Kahn led the negotiations with the city to purchase the Center’s West 13th Street home in 1983. She was also a founding member of the International Association of Lesbian and Gay Judges and has served on the boards of Lambda Legal, the Hetrick-Martin Institute, and Gay Men’s Health Crisis. Among many honors, Kahn has been recognized by LeGaL, the LGBT

Law Association and Foundation of Greater New York, and the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund.

Kahn received her bachelor's degree from Stanford University and her J.D. from New York University School of Law. She and her spouse, Diane Churchill, are celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary in 2019.

Justice Winslow sits on the Appellate Division's Fourth Department bench in Rochester, to which she was named in 2017. She was elected to the State Supreme Court in 2008, after spending more than two decades as an assistant district attorney with Monroe County. In 1993, she was named deputy chief of the Local Courts Bureau, and later served as chief of the Elder Abuse Bureau, deputy chief of the Major Felony Bureau, and finally chief of the Major Felony Bureau. In some instances, she was the first woman to hold the position.

Winslow is a graduate of Springfield College in Massachusetts and Albany Law School.

Matthew Skinner became executive director of the Failla Commission this past fall after serving for four years as executive director of LeGaL, the LGBT Bar Association and Foundation of Greater New York. As leader of the Failla Commission, Skinner works closely with senior court system leadership in efforts to promote equal participation in and access to the courts and the legal profession by everyone regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. He earlier worked as a litigator at Proskauer Rose LLP, and clerked for the Honorable Richard K. Eaton at the US Court of International Trade.

Skinner graduated magna cum laude from the University of Notre Dame and Albany Law School.

The late Richard C. Failla, a graduate of the University of Florida and Columbia Law School and a Navy veteran, was an assistant district attorney in Manhattan before Mayor Ed Koch named him as an administrative law judge in 1978. Seven years later, Koch appointed him as the first out gay judge in the city Criminal Court, and in 1988, Failla became the first gay person elected to the New York State Supreme Court. Failla, who served on the board at the Gay Men's Health Crisis, died in 1993 at the age of 53.

STEVEN GARIBELL

Steven Garibell is a TD Bank vice president who is the business development officer for its LGBTQ initiatives, with responsibilities not only for bringing the bank's services to enterprises owned by members of the community but also working to ensure that TD is the top employer of LGBTQ professionals in the industry.

He has spent 12 years fostering banking relationships with the LGBTQ community in New Jersey and New York, most recently as TD Bank's small business relationship manager in the Bronx.

Garibell, who attended Montclair State University in New Jersey, began his career in retail banking with Wachovia/ Wells Fargo, where he helped build its Pride Business Resource Group throughout the Garden State. When he joined TD Bank in 2012, he became a financial educator and involved himself with both its Volunteer and its Pride Business Resource Group Networks.

Over time, Garibell joined the commercial banking group as a relationship manager, having completed the Risk Management Association's credit training for commercial lenders program.

As part of his community outreach, Garibell continues his work as a financial educator through TD Bank's Five Boro Chamber Alliance and in monthly classes he facilitates that are sponsored by the New York City Department of Small Business Services. He takes a particular interest in delivering business and community development into LGBTQ markets and neighborhoods, and leverages his skills and experience in professional networking through both Out Professionals and the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce. At NGLCC, he is a member of the Certification Committee, headquartered in Washington, DC, that verifies that participating enterprises are LGBTQ-owned and operated. That certification, in turn, helps business owners gain access to vendor diversity initiatives at larger corporations looking to purchase the goods and services they offer.

Animating Garibell's career is the belief that everyone should have a chance to be successful, no matter what their background is. Based on that view, he works to drive positive change through working collaborations that enrich the lives of the LGBTQ community and its talented entrepreneurs and small business owners.