

**NFPA HOSTS PRO BONO CONFERENCE AT
ANNUAL JOINT CONFERENCE
By: Christine M. Flynn**

The National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA) Annual Joint Conference was hosted by the New York City Paralegal Association (NYCPA) from April 28, 2017 through April 30, 2017 at Duane Morris LLP in New York City. The Joint Conference included sessions on Leadership, Certification and Regulation and featured our 2017 Pro Bono Conference.

On Friday, April 28, 2017, Christine Flynn, NFPA Bono Coordinator and ABA Liaison to the Standing Committee on Pro Bono & Public Service, presented a Pro Bono Roundtable featuring information on pro bono and community service comparisons, identifying pro bono/community service opportunities, the work of the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono & Public Service and a discussion of the recommended aspirations for paralegals with respect to the completion of pro bono and community service hours. This presentation also highlighted the goals of the Pro Bono Committee for 2017 in connection with the adoption of the ABA Veterans Legal Services Initiative.

NFPA was honored to have the Honorable Jonathan Lippman serve as our luncheon keynote speaker on April 28, 2017. Judge Lippman presented an informative and inspiring discussion on the access to justice and the history of the Court Navigator Program. He also conducted a question and answer session on the role of paralegals in pro bono. Judge Lippman noted that the need is great for paralegal assistance in pro bono area on numerous levels and throughout the United States.



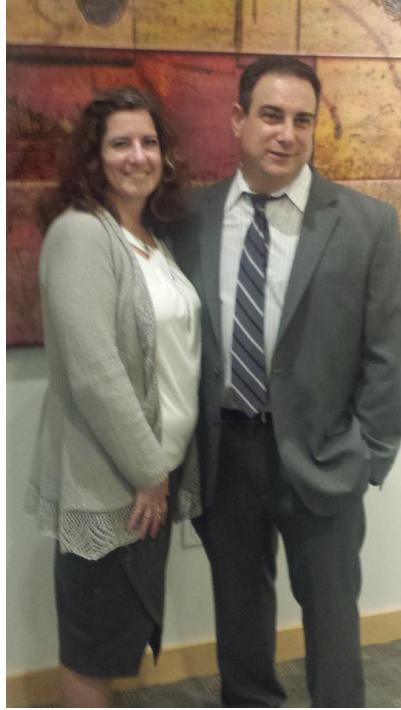
Pictured: NFPA President Valerie Wilus and NFPA Pro Bono Coordinator, Christine Flynn, with The Honorable Jonathan Lippman at the NFPA Joint Conference in New York.

On Saturday, April 29, 2017, Claire R. Thomas, Director of Training, Safe Passage Project, presented a discussion on the Representation of Unaccompanied Minors and the Asylum Program. Ms. Thomas discussed immigration removal proceedings, Safe Passage screenings, forms of relief, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and children qualifying for asylum. Ms. Thomas also addressed the benefits and need for paralegal volunteers to assist in completing intakes and working with this program.



Pictured: Claire Thomas and Christine Flynn, NFPA Pro Bono Coordinator and ABA Liaison to the Standing Committee on Pro Bono & Public Service .

On Saturday April 30, 2017, Marty Tankleff, J.D., NYS Exoneree, Public Speaker, Vice President, Absolutely Innocent Exoneree Advisory Committee Member, Innocence Project presented on “Justice Delayed is Justice Denied- Equal Access to the Courts”. Wrongfully convicted, Mr. Tankleff spent over 17 years incarcerated. Following his release in 2007, he set to work obtaining a B.A. in Sociology and obtained his J.D. in 2014. Mr. Tankleff presented a moving discussion of his case, life experience, and the obstacles in gaining justice in court. He also discussed how difficult it is for innocent or wrongly convicted people to obtain justice. An open discussion was also held with our paralegals on the wonderful work of the Innocence Project and how paralegals can assist in almost any state with this organization.



Pictured: NFPA President, Valerie Wilus, and Marty Tankleff..

The NFPA Pro Bono Committee has numerous goals and projects for 2017. We look forward to working with our local associations, members and delegates to achieve these goals and identify pro bono/community service opportunities and needs. For additional information, please contact Christine Flynn at philaparalegals@gmail.com