 Fordham Law Women’s 3rd Annual Symposium:  
COVID-19 and the Gender Impact  
Friday, March 5, 2021  
Fordham University School of Law via Zoom  

About the Symposium  
Fordham Law Women hosted its first ever symposium in 2018, a collaboration with all six of Fordham Law School’s journals, to commemorate 100 Years of Women at Fordham Law. As the name of the symposium suggests, Fordham Law Women organized a day of highlighting legal issues that disproportionately affect women, through the lens of each journal’s specialty area. This year, Fordham Law Women’s third annual symposium will continue the student organization’s mission of bringing important gender and policy issues to the attention of members of the Fordham Law and New York legal community.
## Agenda

### 11:00am - 11:10am

**Introduction Opening Remarks**  
Dean Matthew Diller  
Dean, Fordham Law School

**Opening Remarks by Fordham Law Women**  
Krista Gresia (’21) and Zoe Buzinkai (’22)  
Fordham Law Women Co-Presidents

### 11:10am - 12:00pm

**COVID-19 and the Impact on Women in the Workforce**  
Moderated by Professor Lisa J. Teich, Esq., Adjunct Professor at Fordham Law, Part-Time Faculty, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Panelists:
- Naomi R. Cahn, Justice Anthony M. Kennedy Distinguished Professor of Law, Nancy L. Bue ’69 Research Professor in Democracy and Equity, University of Virginia School of Law
- Poonam Kumar, Partner, DLA Piper LLP
- Dr. C. Nicole Mason, President and CEO of the Institute of Women’s Policy Research
- Linda McClain, Robert Kent Professor of Law, Boston University School of Law
- Stephanie A. Scharf, Partner, Scharf Banks Marmor LLC

### 12:10pm - 1:00pm

**COVID-19 and the Impact on Marginalized Communities**  
Moderated by Kamille Dean, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Fordham University School of Law

Panelists:
- Amanda McRae, Director of United Nations Advocacy at Women Enabled International
- Sahar Moazami, United Nations Program Officer, OutRight Action International
- Professor Seema Mohapatra, Associate Professor and Dean’s Fellow at Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law

### 1:10pm - 2:00pm

**COVID-19 and the Impact on the Response to Domestic Violence**  
Moderated by Amy Barasch, Executive Director, Her Justice

Panelists:
- Hamra Ahmad, Director of Law & Policy, Her Justice
- Cindy J. Kanusher, Esq., Executive Director, Pace Women's Justice Center
- Kavita Mehra, Executive Director, Sakhi for South Asian Women
- Darlene Reda, Program Administrator, Office for Women
- Honorable Joy Watson, Nassau County District Court

### 2:00pm - 2:05pm

**Closing Remarks**
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COVID-19 and the Impact on Women in the Workforce

The COVID-19 and the Impact on Women in the Workforce panel will address the challenges women have faced, and are currently facing, during the pandemic. The panelists will focus on the gender inequities experienced by women, specifically women lawyers. The panel will address the issues of working mothers, and the inequities faced by working women in marginalized communities. The panelists will also focus on solutions to these issues and how the community can move forward to support working women.

**Moderator**

**Professor Lisa J. Teich, Esq.**

Lisa J. Teich advises, counsels and represents management in a wide range of employment-related matters. Her experience includes defending employers against diverse employment-related claims, including discrimination, harassment and retaliation before federal and state courts, administrative agencies, and arbitration tribunals; advising & counseling management on the development and implementation of employment policies and practices, compliance with federal, state and local employment laws, and preventative employment practices in such areas as termination, hiring and discipline; and developing employee handbooks, supervisory manuals and other employment-related forms, policies and procedures. Professor Teich is also an Adjunct Professor of Law, Fordham University School of Law, and a Part-Time Faculty, John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

**Speakers**

**Naomi R. Cahn, Justice Anthony M. Kennedy Distinguished Professor of Law, Nancy L. Buc ’69 Research Professor in Democracy and Equity, University of Virginia School of Law**

Naomi Cahn is an expert in family law, trusts and estates, feminist jurisprudence, reproductive technology, and aging and the law. Prior to joining the University of Virginia faculty in 2020, she taught at George Washington Law School, where she twice served as associate dean. She is the director of UVA Law’s Family Law Center. With Professor McClain, she is the co-author of Gendered Complications of Covid-19: Towards a Feminist Recovery Plan, forthcoming in the Geo. J. Gender & Law.
**Poonam Kumar, Partner, DLA Piper LLP**

Poonam Kumar has extensive experience working on a wide variety of cross-border transactions, including mergers and acquisitions, divestitures, spin-offs, joint ventures corporate restructurings, as well as general corporate and commercial law matters.

Poonam's recent work experience has focused on highly complex global corporate restructuring and integration transactions. She has advised large multinationals on the planning and implementation of various multi-jurisdictional transactions, including pre-acquisition planning, post-acquisition integration, divestiture restructurings, legal entity rationalization, supply chain optimization, cash repatriation and intellectual property planning and migration. She regularly advises on the general management and expansion of international operations through the establishment of foreign subsidiaries, branches, representative offices and liaison offices.

Poonam's practice extends across a wide variety of sectors, with a particular emphasis on transactions in energy, manufacturing and the financial services industry. Her experience has made her particularly effective at directing and coordinating large teams of lawyers to assist clients in structuring, negotiating, implementing and closing international transactions. Poonam's transactions regularly involve multidisciplinary cross-border teams that leverage the strength of the firm's global platform.

**Dr. C. Nicole Mason, President and CEO of the Institute of Women’s Policy Research**

Dr. C. Nicole Mason is the president and chief executive officer of the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR), a leading voice on pay equity, economic policies, and research impacting women. Having stepped into this role in November 2019, Dr. Mason is the youngest person currently leading one of the major inside-the-Beltway think tanks in Washington, D.C., and one of the few women of color to do so. She succeeded noted economist and MacArthur Fellow Heidi Hartmann, the Institute’s founding CEO.

As one of the nation’s foremost intersectional researchers and scholars, Dr. C. Nicole Mason brings a fresh perspective and a wealth of experience to the Institute for Women’s Policy Research. For the past two decades, Dr. Mason has spearheaded research on issues relating to economic security, poverty, women’s issues, and entitlement reforms; policy formation and political participation among women, communities of color, and youth; and racial equity. Prior to IWPR, Dr. Mason was the executive director of the Women of Color Policy Network at New York University’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, the nation’s only research and policy center focused on women of color at a nationally ranked school of public
administration. She is also an inaugural Ascend Fellow at the Aspen Institute in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Mason is the author of Born Bright: A Young Girl’s Journey from Nothing to Something in America (St. Martin’s Press) and has written hundreds of articles on community development, women, poverty, and economic security. Her writing and commentary have been featured in the New York Times, MSNBC, CNN, NBC, CBS, Real Clear Politics, Nation, Washington Post, Marie Claire, the Progressive, ESSENCE, Bustle, BIG THINK, Miami Herald, Democracy Now, and numerous NPR affiliates, among others.

**Linda McClain, Robert Kent Professor of Law, Boston University School of Law**

Linda C. McClain is the Robert Kent Professor of Law at Boston University School of Law and affiliated faculty in BU’s Women’s Gender & Sexuality Studies Program and Kilachand Honors College. McClain has written extensively about family law, gender and law, feminist legal theory, and civil rights. Her most recent book is Who’s the Bigot? Learning from Conflicts over Marriage and Civil Rights Law (Oxford University Press, 2020). She is co-author (with Professor Naomi R. Cahn) of Gendered Complications of COVID-19: Towards a Feminist Recovery Plan, 22 Georgetown Journal of Gender and the Law (forthcoming). She is a former faculty fellow at Harvard University’s Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics and at Princeton University’s University Center for Human Values. A member of the American Law Institute, she serves on the Executive Committee for the AALS Sections on Family and Juvenile Law and on Women in Legal Education. She is on the editorial board of Signs and the Journal of Law and Religion and a contributing editor to Jotwell.

**Stephanie Scharf, Partner, Scharf Banks Marmor LLC**

Stephanie A. Scharf represents corporate clients and government entities in litigation and arbitration in a wide range of commercial disputes, class action defense, product liability and mass tort defense, insurance coverage for corporate policyholders, and employment litigation. In three decades of representing clients in federal and state courts, Stephanie has tried civil and criminal jury and bench trials, has managed the pre-trial, trial and appellate phases of litigation, and has overseen the resolution of multiple commercial disputes and complex tort actions. Stephanie frequently counsels companies on ways to avoid litigation and mitigate risks at the product or enterprise level.

Stephanie’s recent engagements include litigation over the scope of a multi-billion dollar facilities use contract; class action defense of distance learning programs; defense of fraud claims involving financial investments; insurance disputes for large corporate policyholders; pharmaceutical product liability defense; contract disputes involving global and small
businesses; and the defense of non-competition, trademark and copyright litigation. At trial, she is adept at presenting technical issues to judges and juries, bringing to bear her advanced training in statistical analysis and scientific research. Whether as trial counsel, national coordinating counsel, regional counsel, or as a member of a "virtual firm" created to address specific client problems, Stephanie focuses on framing effective legal strategies and achieving results that serve her client's business goals.

Stephanie has a Ph.D. in Behavioral Sciences with a focus on social and organizational psychology as well as statistical analysis of large data sets. Before practicing law, she managed large national data-driven initiatives in the areas of health and employment.

Stephanie frequently combines her skills in data analytics to create cutting edge research on issues of diversity and inclusion. Her most recent report (with co-author Roberta Liebenberg) is Walking Out the Door: The Fact, Figures and Future of Experienced Women in Private Practice. This innovative study received national attention for its multidimensional perspectives of women, men and managing partners about the status, impediments, and avenues for change to create greater gender diversity at senior levels. Stephanie also founded and conducted the NAWL Annual Survey of Women in Law Firms (2006-2014); the National Survey of Women's Initiatives (2012); and the first-ever survey of women as lead counsel in litigation, First Chairs at Trial: More Women Need Seats at the Table (2015).

**CLE Materials:**
- [https://scholarship.law.bu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1975&context=faculty_scholarship](https://scholarship.law.bu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1975&context=faculty_scholarship)
- [https://news.virginia.edu/content/law-professor-pandemics-impact-women-highlights-opportunities-change](https://news.virginia.edu/content/law-professor-pandemics-impact-women-highlights-opportunities-change)
- [https://iwpr.org/media/press-hits/the-system-was-never-designed-for-working-moms/](https://iwpr.org/media/press-hits/the-system-was-never-designed-for-working-moms/)
- [https://www.brookings.edu/essay/why-has-covid-19-been-especially-harmful-for-working-women/](https://www.brookings.edu/essay/why-has-covid-19-been-especially-harmful-for-working-women/)
COVID-19 and the Impact on Marginalized Communities

The COVID-19 and the Impact on Marginalized Communities panel will discuss the impact the pandemic has had on marginalized groups. Specifically, this panel will focus on women of color, women with disabilities, and the LGBTQ community. Panelists will address the intersectionality among the different communities that played a role in how each group has been impacted. Each panelist will advise the audience on how to better support these groups.

Moderator

Director Kamille Dean, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Fordham Law School

Kamille Dean serves as the Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at Fordham University School of Law. Director Dean was formerly the Director of Diversity and Inclusion at St. John’s University School of Law. She also served as the Director of the Ronald H. Brown Center for Civil Rights and the Ronald H. Brown Law School Prep Program for College Students. Prior to her administrative positions, Director Dean was a faculty member at Thurgood Marshall School of Law. Director Dean serves on the board of directors for a local credit union, and she co-founded the nonprofit Cans 4 Cancer. She is a graduate of CUNY Queens College and the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Speakers

Amanda McRae, Director of United Nations Advocacy at Women Enabled International

Amanda McRae is a human rights lawyer by training, with a J.D. from Duke University School of Law. Before joining WEI in 2016, Amanda was a Global Advocacy Adviser with the Center for Reproductive Rights. Amanda also served as a researcher at Human Rights Watch, where she focused on human rights issues in the Western Balkans and disability rights worldwide.

With WEI, Amanda builds upon relationships with U.N. human rights institutions, agencies, and political bodies and collaborates with several organizations of women with disabilities worldwide on U.N. submissions and advocacy. She also leads WEI's COVID-19 response work.

Sahar Moazami, United Nations Program Officer, OutRight Action International
Sahar Moazami currently serves as a UN Program Officer at OutRight Action International. OutRight Action International is an NGO working to promote and protect the rights of LGBTI individuals globally. Sahar received their JD from Fordham Law school and is a New York State bar admitted attorney with a focus on international human rights law. Prior to law school they attended Boston University for their undergraduate degree, majoring in Political Science and minoring in American and Persian history.

**Professor Seema Mohapatra, Associate Professor and Dean’s Fellow at Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law**

Seema Mohapatra is a visiting associate professor at FAMU College of Law and a tenured associate professor of law and dean’s fellow at Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law. This summer she will join St. John’s University School of Law as a full professor and the founding director of St. John’s new academic center devoted to health care law, bioethics and health justice. She is an expert in the areas of health care law, public health law, bioethics, torts, and international health and family law. Her research interests include health equity and justice, the intersection of biosciences and the law, and health care ethics.

**CLE Materials:**

- [https://academic.oup.com/jlb/article/7/1/lsaa036/5849058](https://academic.oup.com/jlb/article/7/1/lsaa036/5849058)
COVID-19 and the Impact on the Response to Intimate Partner Violence

The COVID-19 and the Impact on the Response to Intimate Partner Violence panel will discuss the disrupted access to orders of protections and the sexual and reproductive healthcare services. With courts closed, the pandemic has prevented some victims of intimate partner violence from accessing and obtaining justice. The panelists will address the issues that victims of intimate partner violence faced during the lockdown. Panelists will explore the effect on the responses to IPV, and specifically address how different regions were impacted.

Moderator

Amy Barasch, Executive Director, Her Justice

Amy Barasch Esq. is the Executive Director of Her Justice, a non-profit that connects over 7,000 low-income women and children to private attorneys every year. Ms. Barasch has devoted most of her career to the issue of intimate partner violence at nonprofits, government agencies, and law firms. Until fall, 2012, Ms. Barasch served as the Executive Director of the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence. During her tenure,

Ms. Barasch was central to the implementation of improvements made to New York’s response to intimate partner violence, such as the launch of a statewide database of police-reported domestic incidents; the inclusion of domestic violence as a high-priority issue in all State-level anti-crime initiatives; the creation of a State-level Fatality Review process; the issuance of a domestic violence and the workplace policy in all state agencies; and ensuring responsive and up-to-date training for local governmental employees in the areas of child welfare, public safety, temporary assistance, healthcare, and probation.

Prior to joining state government Ms. Barasch was a member of the New York City Office to Combat Domestic Violence where she designed and ran an interagency high risk case conferencing program in Brooklyn and the Bronx, which became the basis of the Brooklyn Family Justice Center. Ms. Barasch led the design team and ran the Brooklyn FJC until she joined the State. Prior to joining the City, Ms. Barasch represented victims of domestic violence in family court in order of protection, custody and visitation, and abuse and neglect cases, in private practice, and as the creator and director of a law student externship program in Westchester, New York at the Pace Women’s Justice Center.

Ms. Barasch has published and spoken publicly about partner violence throughout her career; and has served as the chair of the NYC Bar Association’s Domestic Violence Committee, as a member of the New York State Domestic Violence Advisory Council and the Avon Foundation’s Advisory Council. She is currently a member of the NYC Bar Association’s Pro
Bono committee. Ms. Barasch received her BA from Brown University, and her JD from Columbia Law School.

Speakers

Hamra Ahmad, Director of Law & Policy, Her Justice

Hamra Ahmad is Director of Law and Policy at Her Justice, a nonprofit organization providing legal services to women living in poverty throughout New York City by training and mentoring volunteer attorneys to address individual and systemic barriers.

Prior to joining Her Justice, Ms. Ahmad was Executive Director of the Hudson Valley Justice Center (HVJC), a nonprofit organization providing civil legal services to immigrants. She has also served as Director of the Center for Legal Services at My Sisters’ Place, a nonprofit organization working with victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. She co-authored a chapter in the Services for Trafficking Victims: A Brief Guide for Lawyers on best practices when working with trafficking survivors. She is a leading expert in the area of Immigration and Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking, conducting trainings and presentations to law enforcement, judges, and social service agencies.

Ms. Ahmad also implemented the Immigration Project of the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, providing a variety of immigration services to the large East African resettlement population. Ms. Ahmad received her J.D., cum laude, from the University of Minnesota Law School. She is licensed to practice law in New York and Minnesota.

Cindy J. Kanusher, Esq., Executive Director, Pace Women's Justice Center

Cindy Kanusher, Executive Director of the Pace Women's Justice Center (PWJC), has focused her career on domestic violence and legal services for the underrepresented. Twenty-three years ago, she joined PWJC, a legal services provider for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and elder abuse, serving Westchester and Putnam Counties.

During her tenure, PWJC has grown into a highly respected, multi-faceted legal services and training center serving over 3500 victims and survivors of interpersonal violence annually. After becoming Executive Director in 2015, she identified a need for a flexible legal service model for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and elder abuse. In response, she developed a walk-in clinic concept to provide free, bilingual legal services in a safe and accessible location; the new clinic and office space was inaugurated in June 2018. Since its opening, the clinic has been serving 70-80 victims of abuse monthly, increasing services by 20%.
Prior to becoming Executive Director, Cindy was responsible for oversight of PWJC's Legal Helpline, Moderate Means Panel of lawyers, Elder Justice Unit, and PWJC’s rural sexual assault and domestic violence training programs, through which she has trained lawyers, judges, advocates, and law enforcement agents.

Before PWJC, she worked as an Assistant District Attorney in the N.Y. County District Attorney's office for 10 years, specializing in the prosecution of child abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence cases. She is a graduate of Brandeis University and received her Law Degree from Brooklyn Law School.

Cindy has strong relationships with partner agencies and community members at large, serving on various boards and councils. She was appointed to serve on Westchester County’s Women’s Advisory Board in 2018, is on the Board of the Westchester Women's Agenda, and serves on the Westchester County Domestic Violence Council, Westchester County Anti-trafficking Task Force, and Westchester County Families Task Force.

**Kavita Mehra, Executive Director, Sakhi for South Asian Women**

Kavita is a non-profit leader with 20 years of experience and is deeply committed to serving organizations that build equity and advocate for justice. Currently, she is the executive director of Sakhi for South Asian Women (Sakhi), which has existed for 32 years to represent the South Asian diaspora in a survivor-led movement for gender-justice and to honor the collective and inherent power of all survivors of violence.

Under Kavita’s leadership, Sakhi has tripled its staff and has launched a trauma-informed mental health program, a housing program, and a food justice program for survivors. Her commitment to building a survivor-centered movement has positioned Sakhi to open its second office in Queens in January 2020 and its third office in Brooklyn in 2021. Most notably, Kavita has successfully stewarded Sakhi through the Covid-19 pandemic, providing critical, life-saving services to survivors across New York City, while also ensuring its financial stability and growth. Prior to joining Sakhi, Kavita was the interim CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Newark and has held leadership positions at the GlamourGals Foundation, South Asian Youth Action, and Asian Women in Business.

Kavita has written opinion pieces for City Limits, Ms. Magazine, the Huffington Post, Brown Girl Magazine, and Act To Change. She has also presented at the Women’s Economic Forum in Delhi, Harvard University and Columbia University and has been featured in leading media outlets, including The Takeaway with Tanzina Vega, NowThis, CNN and The New York Times.
Kavita completed her Bachelor of Arts from New York University with a double major in both History and Gender Studies. She also holds a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies, with a concentration in South Asian Studies, from Columbia University, as well as a certificate in Business Excellence from The Columbia Business School. A proud New Jersey native, she lives in Jersey City with her life partner and son.

**Darlene Reda, Program Administrator, Office for Women**

Darlene Reda currently works for the Westchester County Office for Women as a program administrator. Most recently, she was the Director of the Westchester County Family Justice Center, a crisis-intervention program offering an array of services to domestic violence victims which is overseen by the Office for Women.

Darlene began her career as an Assistant District Attorney in Bronx County, handling many types of misdemeanor and felony cases including domestic violence, robberies, narcotics and homicide. She then worked as a trial attorney handling labor law, personal injury and medical malpractice cases.

In her present role, Darlene develops and provides trainings on topics including domestic violence, workplace safety, and lethality risk factors. Darlene is also responsible for overseeing county contracts administered by the Office for Women, drafting grant applications to obtain funding for programs and initiatives, and providing direct services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. She enjoys working on the development and implementation of innovative programs such as the Westchester County Domestic Violence High Risk Team, a collaborative, countywide effort aimed at reducing homicides in family violence cases.

Darlene received her J.D. from Villanova Law School and a B.S. in Accounting from the Pennsylvania State University. She lives in Westchester, NY with her husband, three children and their dog, Princess.

**Honorable Joy M. Watson, Nassau County District Court Judge**

Hon. Joy M. Watson has been a judge of the Nassau County District Court since January, 2013, presiding over the Domestic Violence Part for over 6 years. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Watson worked as Deputy Nassau County Comptroller, in charge of Audits and Special Projects. She also served as the Office’s Freedom of Information Law Officer and EEO Officer.

Judge Watson served as Principal Law Clerk in the Nassau County Supreme Court for over four years.
Her legal career started in the Nassau County District Attorney’s Office where she rose through the ranks to serve as Bureau Chief of the Sex Offense and Domestic Violence Bureau and Deputy Bureau Chief of the Major Offense/Homicide Bureau.

Judge Watson received her J.D. from Pepperdine University School of Law and her B.A. degree from The University at Albany.

Active in her community, Judge Watson is a member of the Nassau County Bar Association, serving on numerous committees, President of the Kiwanis Club of the Nassau County Courthouses, past President of the Nassau County Women’s Bar Association, past President of Irish Americans in Government and Past President of the American Academy for Professional Law Enforcement. She is a mentor at the Hempstead Middle School and is a former member of the Board of Directors for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island. She is also on the faculty at Molloy College in Rockville Centre.

Judge Watson is admitted in the New York State Courts, Eastern and Southern District Federal Courts for the State of New York and the United States Supreme Court.

CLE Materials: