

New Attorney Registration Status: Attorney Emeritus

by Stacey J. Rosenfeld, Esq. *

In cooperation with the organized bar and legal services programs, the Unified Court System recently established a new “Attorney Emeritus” status for attorneys who are retired from practice, but who are not quite ready to leave the law.

Effective January 1, 2010, the Attorney Emeritus status was created by the Administrative Board of the Courts, consisting of Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman and the four Presiding Justices of the Appellate Division. The purpose of the new status is to provide attorneys, who certify that they are retired from the practice of law, the opportunity to provide *pro bono* legal services to the growing number of New Yorkers who cannot afford counsel.

Enrollees will be matched with *pro bono* opportunities in their area of New York State, and will be fully trained to provide legal advice and assistance to low and moderate income New Yorkers through *pro bono* programs sponsored by legal services organizations, bar associations and the court system.

In order to be eligible for the Attorney Emeritus status, the attorney must be 55 years of age, be in good standing and have practiced for a minimum of ten (10) years. Participants are exempt from the Attorney Registration fee and the CLE requirements for active practitioners. Additionally, participants are afforded malpractice insurance by the organization through which they perform legal services, and, if they participate in a court-sponsored *pro bono* program, they will be covered by the defense and indemnification provisions of Public Officers Law Section 17. Within a two-year period, participants must perform a minimum of 60 hours of *pro bono* services under the auspices of an approved legal services organization in New York.

An attorney may enroll as Attorney Emeritus by calling 877-800-0396 or by visiting www.nycourts.gov and completing a short online form. Additional information is available by calling 877-800-0396 or by email at volunteerattorneys@nycourts.gov.

** Stacey Rosenfeld is an attorney admitted in the State of New York and a new member of the Westchester Women’s Bar. She is currently working as an New Directions Extern with Scalise & Hamilton LLP, which focuses its practice on the representation of professionals (lawyers, judges, accountants, doctors, dentists, pharmacists, social workers and government employees) in professional responsibility and ethics matters and white-collar criminal matters.*