

The Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey

M.E.N.T.E.

Mental
Education &
Nurturing
Through
Engagement

2021
Conference
Program



Tuesday, May 18, 2021
Wednesday, May 26, 2021
3:00 – 5:30 PM

[via Zoom](#)



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

SESSION 1 – MAY 18, 2021

3:00 P.M.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Reynold Lambert, Esq., President, Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey (HBA-NJ)
Partner, Lowenstein Sandler LLP

3:10 P.M.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Alejandro Guadarrama, Esq., *Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP*

3:20 – 4:20 P.M.

RECOGNITION

Mental Health Issues Affecting Attorneys and Pathways to Systemic Change for Well-Being in the Legal Profession

Bree Buchanan, JD, MSF, *Krill Strategies*

Raul Ayala, Esq., *Office of the Federal Public Defender, Central District of California*

4:25 – 5:25 P.M.

RESILIENCY

Fighting Back Against Imposter Syndrome & Other Mental Health Issues That Impact Latinx Attorneys

Grissel Seijo, Esq., *Restaurant Brand International*

Eduardo Juarez, Esq., *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*

CLOSING REMARKS

Alex J. Fajardo, ME.N.T.E. Co-Chair & Trustee - Region 7 (Mercer County)
Associate, Stark & Stark

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

SESSION 2 – MAY 26, 2021

3:00 P.M.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Reynold Lambert, Esq., President, Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey (HBA-NJ)
Partner, Lowenstein Sandler LLP

3:10 P.M.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dennis Romero, MA, *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*

3:20 – 4:20 P.M.

RESPONSIBILITY

Your Responsibility to Seek Help

The Easy Way (LAP) or the Hard Way (OAE)

Lauren Martinez, Esq., *New Jersey Office of Attorney Ethics*

Charles Centinaro, Esq., *New Jersey Office of Attorney Ethics*

Ramon Ortiz, Esq., *New Jersey Lawyers Assistance Program*

4:25 – 5:25 P.M.

RESPIRA (BREATH)

Breathing Together in 2021 - Coping Strategies and Resources

Dr. Ruben Lambert, Psy. D., *Wisdom Spring Wellness Services*

Lynn S. Garson, Esq., *Baker Hostettler*

CLOSING REMARKS

Maria Z. Cortes, Esq., ME.N.T.E. Co-Chair & Trustee - Region 13 (Atlantic and Cape May Counties), *Associate, Fox Rothschild LLP*

2020-2021 HBA-NJ PRESIDENT



Reynold Lambert, Esq.

Partner, Lowenstein Sandler LLP

Reynold (“Rey”) Lambert is a Partner at Lowenstein Sandler LLP, where he focuses on complex commercial disputes, class actions, and domestic and international arbitrations. As counsel for one of the world’s largest telecommunications companies and other international entities, Rey develops and oversees litigation strategies for class actions and other disputes throughout the United States. Among other notable engagements, Rey secured a \$475 million award in an international arbitration venued in Hong Kong relating to a cross-border M&A transaction.

Prior to joining Lowenstein Sandler, Rey served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Susan L. Reisner, New Jersey Superior Court, Appellate Division. He graduated Rutgers University School of Law with honors, where upon graduation he received the Justice Henry E. Ackerson, Jr. Award for distinction in the area of legal skill.

As the son of Cuban immigrants, Rey believes that lawyers should use their skills to help those who cannot afford legal services. At Lowenstein Sandler, he dedicates a substantial amount of his time to pro bono matters and works closely with the firm’s Center for Public Interest. He also is an active leader in the firm’s diversity and inclusion initiatives, and a founding member of its Diversity Leadership Network, which is an employee resource group that focuses on recruiting, supporting, and promoting attorneys from diverse backgrounds.

Rey is the President of the Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey. He also is a Board Member of Essex-Newark Legal Services and served as a Committee Member of the New Jersey Supreme Court Committee on Model (Civil) Jury Charges.

Rey is a Recipient of the HNBA’s “Top Lawyers under 40” Award (2020).

2021 M.E.N.T.E. CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS



Maria Z. Cortes, Esq.

Associate, Fox Rothschild LLP

Maria represents clients in a variety of real estate, gaming law and litigation matters. Before joining Fox, Maria served as a law clerk to New Jersey Superior Court Judge Julio L. Mendez, Assignment Judge of the Atlantic/Cape May Vicinage. Maria assisted with trial preparation, managed motions practice, conducted legal research and drafted legal opinions for general equity and prerogative writ actions.

Prior to that, she served as a judicial extern to New Jersey Superior Court Judge Carol E. Higbee of the Appellate Division in Linwood, New Jersey. Maria also worked as a summer associate and law clerk at a Wildwood, New Jersey-based law firm. During law school, Maria was the Managing Notes Editor for the Rutgers *Journal of Law and Public Policy*.



Alex J. Fajardo, Esq.

Associate, Stark & Stark

Alex is an Associate in Stark & Stark's Nursing Home Litigation Group. Mr. Fajardo concentrates his practice on personal injury claims, nursing home malpractice, and litigation with emphasis on wrongful death, catastrophic injury, negligence, and abuse claims arising in nursing homes, assisted-living facilities, psychiatric facilities, hospitals, boarding, and group homes.

Prior to joining Stark & Stark, Mr. Fajardo worked for a personal injury firm in the Princeton area, where he concentrated his practice on nursing home malpractice.

Mr. Fajardo was born in Havana, Cuba. When he was four, his family moved to Weehawken, NJ, where his father started his own plumbing business to support his family of six. Mr. Fajardo's immigrant experience fuels his dedication to serving clients of all walks of life and his appreciation for a legal system that operates on principles of justice and rule of law. Mr. Fajardo gives back to the community by serving on the Boards of Las América ASPIRA Academy Charter School in Newark, DE and The Hispanic Family Center of Southern New Jersey, in Camden, NJ. He also provides free consultations to clients of the Hispanic Family Center on a range of issues, including landlord-tenant and contract disputes.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Alejandro Guadarrama, Esq.

Counsel, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP

Alejandro Guadarrama is a tax counsel in the Washington, D.C. office of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher, and Flom LLP. His practice focuses on tax controversy and litigation matters, which involve advising corporate and individual clients on diverse and novel tax disputes before the Internal Revenue Service and the courts. Before joining Skadden, Alejandro spent several years working in arbitration and litigation matters connected to South America. A first-generation lawyer, he was admitted to practice in Venezuela in 1997 after graduating from Universidad Católica Andrés Bello.

After completing a Master of Laws program at the University of Miami School of Law, he revalidated his legal credentials in the United States when he gained admission to the New York State Bar Association in 2003.

Alejandro is a proud member of the Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia (HBA-DC) and the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA). In recent months, he has been involved in a committee put together by the HNBA and the Alliance of Latinx Leadership & Policy (ALLP) charged with vetting Latinx candidates for U.S. Attorney. Alejandro is also active in his firm's Latinx affinity network and its steering committee. He participates in recruiting efforts, actively pursues diversity in his firm's pipeline, and maintains enduring connections with local law student associations and Latinx students. He is also a trusted mentor to many young lawyers at his firm.

Alejandro also maintains an active pro bono practice focused on migration and access to justice issues faced by nationals of Central, South America, and the Caribbean living in the United States. He is also a founding member, local leader, and steering committee member of Skadden's Pro Bono Immigration Impact Project. Alejandro routinely liaises with local legal service providers and non-profits. Recognizing his deep commitment to the immigrant community in the Greater DC area, Ayuda named him Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year in 2017.

In 2017 Alejandro was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and in late 2018 he was forced to take an extended leave of absence from his firm. Alejandro would have been unable to successfully come back to practice law in the summer of 2019 without the help from his family, friends, and colleagues, most of whom are also lawyers and the support of his firm. Since then, he has devoted a substantial portion of his productive time to supporting lawyer well-being initiatives at the local, regional, and national levels. Alejandro currently serves on the Advisory Committee to the ABA's Commission of Lawyer Assistance Programs (CoLAP). He volunteers with the Lawyer Assistance Program of the DC BAR (DC LAP) and is also an active member of the HNBA's Wellbeing Committee. Since 2020, he belongs to the Lawyers Depression Project (LDP), an online peer-to-peer support group for attorneys, paralegals, law students, and admins that is helping break the stigma around discussing mental health in our legal profession.

Alejandro was born in Venezuela. With a Cuban mother and Venezuelan father, he became Cuban Venezuelan American when he was sworn in as a U.S. citizen in 2016. He met his Venezuelan American wife Patty in Washington, D.C. They live in Bethesda, Maryland, with their two daughters Carlota and Amalia, and their puppy Brownie.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Dennis Romero, M.A.

Regional Administrator, DHHS Region II, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Mr. Dennis O. Romero, M.A., is the first Regional Administrator (RA), DHHS Region II for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an operating division of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). In that role, he represents the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use at the regional level in fulfilling the agency's mission of reducing the impact of mental illness and substance abuse on America's communities.

He provides authoritative advice and assistance on behavioral health policies and innovations for use in the delivery and financing of prevention, treatment and recovery services, develops regional perspectives on SAMHSA initiatives, and is a visible advocate for individuals with mental illnesses and substance use disorders within the federal government and across the region.

Prior to his current appointment as Regional Administrator, Mr. Romero served as the SAMHSA lead establishing the federal framework necessary to ensure a coordinated approach involving the Departments of Justice, Interior, and Health and Human Services. Mr. Romero also helped to assist and respond to the behavioral health needs of tribal governments across the country through the provisions of training, guidance and technical assistance to enhance the Tribe's behavioral health prevention and treatment initiatives as required under The Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010. Prior to that position, Mr. Romero served as the Agency's Deputy Executive Officer and Deputy Director for the Office of Program Services at SAMHSA, which oversees the conduct of management and administrative operations across the agency. Preceding that position, Mr. Romero served in several senior leadership capacities in SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, providing national leadership in the prevention sciences, development and dissemination of effective strategies, services and support efforts in reducing substance abuse while promoting the strategic prevention framework across our nation's behavioral health care system.

Mr. Romero has extensive knowledge in the fields of behavioral health administration, program development, and as an experienced clinician served in numerous clinical capacities in the Northeast region both in the public and in private sectors. Mr. Romero has served on many professional committees, advisory boards, and commissions (at regional, state and local levels) that address issues related to the field of behavioral health as well as allied social and educational fields. He is also the recipient of numerous awards, honors and recognitions.

Earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Philosophy and Psychology from Cathedral College, he also holds a Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology from Manhattan College. He received post-graduate training at the State University of New York, Albany Campus.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Raul Ayala, Esq.

*Deputy Federal Public Defender, Collaborative Courts
Supervising Attorney, Office of the Federal Public Defender*

Raul Ayala is the Collaborative Courts Supervising Attorney for the Federal Public Defender's Office in the Central District of California. As such, he has been assigned as the lead Deputy Federal Public Defender for each of the Conviction and Sentence Alternatives (CASA) Program courts -- two in Los Angeles and one each in Santa Ana and Riverside.

In addition, he is a team member of the Substance Abuse Treatment and Reentry (STAR) Program, the district's post-conviction reentry drug court. Raul has been part of the CASA and STAR programs since 2011, and also serves as the office supervisor for its developing Social Services Unit.

After working several years at a private non-profit community law firm that he and several other law school classmates established in the San Joaquin Valley upon graduating from UC Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco, he became a trial deputy for the Federal Public Defenders Office from 1984 through 1988. During that time, he tried dozens of cases in district court and argued several matters before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. In the following twenty years of private practice as a criminal defense lawyer, he tried many more cases in both federal and state courts, and remained active in various bar associations and public interest scholarship foundations. He returned as a federal defender for a second "tour of duty" in 2008, and is a regular trainer for the national Defender Services Office of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts in Washington, D.C. Raul is currently chair of the ABA Criminal Justice Section's Diversion Standards Task Force and serves as a co-chair of the section's Alternatives to Incarceration and Diversion Committee.

As a recovering alcoholic since 2004, Raul has served on the ABA Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs, on the board of The Other Bar, Inc. (a California non-profit organization for legal professionals in recovery), and is currently co-chair of the HNBA Attorney Wellness Committee.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Bree Buchanan, JD, MSF
Senior Advisor, Krill Strategies

Bree Buchanan is founding co-chair of the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-being and is a co-author of its groundbreaking 2017 report, *The Path to Well-Being: Practical Recommendations for Positive Change*. In December 2020, she was appointed Board President of the newly formed Institute for Well-being in Law, a new nonprofit dedicated to bringing about systemic change in the legal profession such that considerations of well-being become central to the practice. Ms. Buchanan served as chair of the ABA Commission on Lawyers Assistance Programs (2017-2020) and as director of the Texas Lawyers Assistance Program from 2013 until retirement in 2018. She is now Senior Advisor with Krill Strategies, Inc., providing consultation on issues related to lawyer well-being and impairment for major legal employers. Ms. Buchanan is co-host of the podcast, *The Path to Well-Being Law*, and has shared her own story of recovery as a featured guest on podcasts - as well as articles published - in the United States, Canada, and the U.K.



Charles Centinaro, Esq.
Director, New Jersey Office of Attorney Ethics

Charles Centinaro is the Director of the Office of Attorney Ethics of the Supreme Court of New Jersey, which is the investigative and prosecutorial arm of the Supreme Court in discharging its constitutional authority to supervise and discipline New Jersey attorneys who engage in unethical conduct. Mr. Centinaro began his private practice after graduating from Rutgers University and the J. Reuben Clark Law School in Brigham Young University in Utah.

Mr. Centinaro was named Assistant County Counsel for Hudson County in 1991 and left that post to join the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office. From August 1999 to July 2001, Mr. Centinaro served as assistant counsel in the Office of Chief Counsel to the Governor, first for Gov. Christie Whitman and then for acting Gov. Donald T. DiFrancesco. Mr. Centinaro left the Governor's Counsel's Office to become the First Assistant Deputy Public Defender for the Mercer Trial Region of the Office of the Public Defender and he was subsequently appointed Director of Juvenile Defense Services for the Office of the Public Defender.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Lynn Garson, Esq.

Counsel, BakerHostetler

Lynn Garson practices healthcare law at Baker & Hostetler in the firm's Atlanta office. Ms. Garson's areas of expertise include physician practice acquisitions, employment and related agreements, and regulatory research.

Lynn is also a mental health advocate and author. In July 2012, she published *Southern Vapors*, a memoir describing her journey from major clinical depression to recovery, and has since spoken widely, including a TEDx Emory talk: "Reforming the Approach to Mental Health in the U.S." and made numerous presentations to private and public organizations including the American Bar Association, local Bar associations, American Health Lawyers Association and a number of law schools.



Eduardo Juarez, Esq.

Supervisory Trial Attorney, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, San Antonio District Office

Eduardo Juarez is the Supervisory Trial Attorney for the San Antonio Field Office of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission where he litigates lawsuits to enforce the federal civil rights statutes prohibiting employment discrimination.

Before working for the EEOC, Mr. Juarez was a Trial Attorney with the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia and began his legal career as an Associate with the law firm of Sidley & Austin in Chicago. Eduardo received his B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Notre Dame and his law degree from the University of Michigan. He served as President of the National LGBT Bar Association in 2016 and as Chair of the LGBT Law Section for the State Bar of Texas in 2011. In 2017 Mr. Juarez received the Stonewall Award from the American Bar Association Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity for his civil rights work. Mr. Juarez is currently serving on the American Bar Association Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs and on the State Bar of Texas Lawyers Assistance Program Committee.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Ruben Lambert, Psy. D.

Clinical and Consulting Psychologist, Wisdom Spring Wellness Services

Dr. Ruben Lambert is a licensed Psychologist and founder of Wisdom Spring Wellness Services (WisdomSpring.com). He specializes in Mind/Body Wellness Interventions. He is also a Zen Master in the Korean Zen Tradition.

Dr. Lambert integrates the wisdom of Zen with modern day scientific psychological research to provide training and interventions that target the mind and body. His approach is simplistic and the goal is to provide practical techniques for achieving optimal wellness moment to moment in daily life.



Lauren Martinez, Esq.

Deputy Ethics Counsel, New Jersey Office of Attorney Ethics

Lauren Martinez is Deputy Ethics Counsel with the Office of Attorney Ethics of the Supreme Court of New Jersey. In that capacity, Lauren investigates and prosecutes attorney misconduct, including financial crimes. Prior to joining the OAE, she served as an Assistant Prosecutor for the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office, as well as the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office.

During her time as an Assistant Prosecutor, she specialized in motion practice supporting sexual assault victims' request for Closed Circuit Television Testimony, as well as litigating dozens of appellate matters. Lauren graduated magna cum laude from Rutgers University in 2011. Specializing in behavioral neuroscience, she was published for her scientific work in the international peer-reviewed Journal, Behavioural Brain Research. She graduated from Rutgers Law in 2014 and was also a 2014 Eagleton Institute of Politics Graduate Fellow. In her spare time, she serves in multiple mentorship roles and on various Rutgers University Alumni committees to promote government service and diversity of the legal profession.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Ramon Ortiz, Esq.

Senior Attorney Counselor, New Jersey Lawyers Assistance Program

Ramon Ortiz is a Senior Attorney Counselor at the New Jersey Lawyer's Assistance Program (NJLAP) in New Brunswick, New Jersey. He has been employed by NJLAP for the past 25 years. Prior to joining the New Jersey Lawyers Assistance Program, he was an Associate Professor of Law, Clinical Professor of Law, and Director of Clinical Programs at Seton Hall Law School. He also practiced law with the firm of Ortiz & Velez for 20 years.



Grissel Seijo, Esq.

Counsel, Employment Law & Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Restaurant Brand International

Grissel Seijo has over 20 years of psychological counseling and legal advocacy experience, spending the last decade as an employment and labor attorney in Florida and New York. As Counsel, Employment Law and Diversity and Inclusion Officer, at RBI, Ms. Seijo dedicates her time to counseling the business on a wide variety of topics from hiring, recruiting, retention, training, coaching, progressive discipline and making effective choices for company operations. Additionally, she focuses on strategizing and implementing initiatives that help create a more diverse and inclusive franchisee, supplier and marketing base.

Ms. Seijo's expertise also extends to employment-related documents and learning materials, drafting, negotiation and implementation of employment contracts, separation agreements, executive compensation packages, restrictive covenants, and employee handbooks. She is also a sought after lecturer and writer, focusing on topics such as hiring/firing, corrective actions, internal investigations, diversity and inclusion, wage and hour issues, employment policies, restrictive covenants, and compliance.

Born and raised in the South Bronx, Ms. Seijo is a founding board member of the Líderes Board of LatinoJustice PRLDEF, one of the oldest non-profit civil rights organizations focusing on education, voting rights and immigration issues for Latinos. She is a strong supporter of peer networking and education as a pathway to success and an active mentor helping to prepare law students for the Florida and New York bar exams.

Currently, the Vice Chair of a Latina Commission of the Hispanic National Bar Association, she actively looks to diversify the practice of law in corporations, law firms and at law schools.

HBA-NJ 2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Summer

July 22 40th Annual Scholarship Awards Gala

2nd Annual Financial Awareness & Community Training
(F.A.C.T.) Seminar

Northern New Jersey Membership Mixer

Southern New Jersey Membership Mixer

Young Lawyers' Committee Summer Mixer

September

Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

Continuing Programs

American Dream Pipeline Program

Civics Education Initiative

Law School Mentorship Program

Professional Development/CLE Programs

REGISTER AT WWW.NJHBA.ORG/EVENTS-CALENDAR

HBA-NJ 2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DIAMOND



PLATINUM



GOLD



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SILVER



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Founded in 1980, the HBA-NJ is a 501 (c)(6) nonprofit Association that is comprised of attorneys, judges, law professors, law students, and other professionals who share a common interest in addressing the issues affecting Hispanics within the legal community.

The purpose of the Association is to serve the public interest: (i) by cultivating the art and science of jurisprudence, (ii) by advancing the standing of the legal profession, and (iii) by preserving high standards of integrity, honor, and professional courtesy among Hispanic lawyers.

Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey, P.O. Box 25562, Newark, NJ 07101