



THE 6TH ACTL TRIAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM

NEW YORK CITY / JUNE 6-8





THE SIXTH ANNUAL TRIAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM FROM THE TEACHING OF TRIAL AND APPELLATE ADVOCACY COMMITTEE WAS HOSTED BY AND HELD AT THE MANHATTAN OFFICES OF WEIL GOTSHAL & MANGES. MORE THAN FIFTY ASPIRING TRIAL LAWYERS GATHERED FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

As they looked down at Fifth Avenue and Central Park, the fifty young lawyers honed their courtroom skills with the help of a faculty of ACTL Fellows. Tom Heiden chaired the program. Past Presidents Doug Young and Bart Dalton served on the faculty along with Fellows from each corner of the country who volunteered their time and paid their own expenses: Leigh Skipper (PA), Maurice Jenkins (MI), Jim Quinn (NY), David Berg (NY), Jan Conlin (MN), Patti Bobb (IL), Larry Krantz (NY), Daniel Slifkin (NY), Roland Riopelle (NY), Eric Breslin (NJ), Gerry Ivey (DC), Eugene Brown (CA), Rob Worley (LA), and Tom McCarthy (MI). President Rick Deane flew up from Atlanta to address the group.

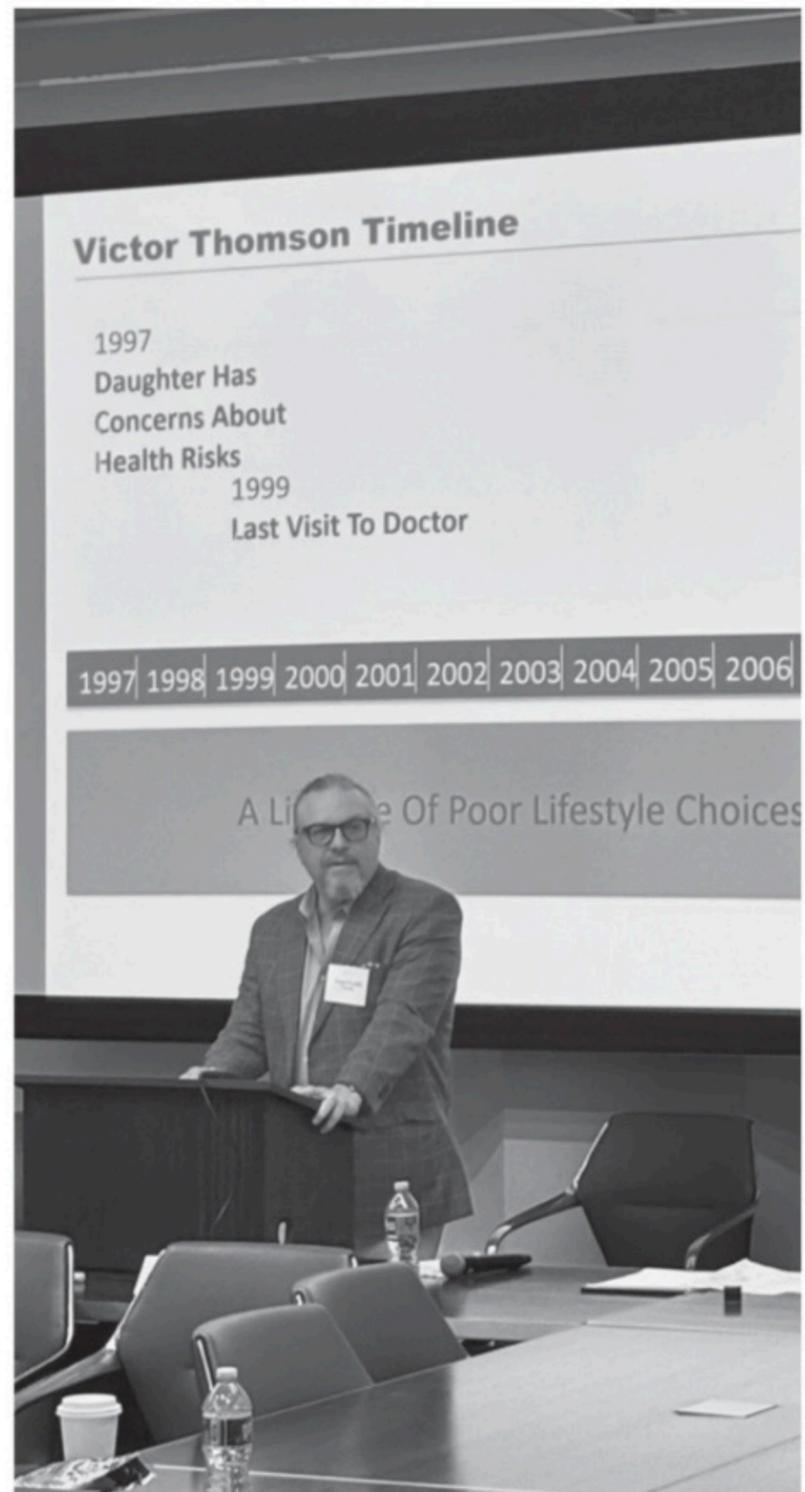
The participating lawyers were a broad mix of public interest, sole practitioner, small firm, and large firm lawyers. They came from criminal prosecution and defense, civil litigation and administrative practices. Many are employed by public interest legal groups.



The purpose of the program (as with the previous programs) is to help equip the next diverse cadre of excellent, ethical, stand-up courtroom advocates. The two-day program reinforces the commitment to the rule of law, to an independent judiciary, and to our system for the fair and peaceful resolution of disputes. The participants are reminded this is a program focused on “advocacy” and improving the quality of advocacy, i.e., on how to best present oneself, one’s client, and one’s cause, to a judge or jury. Today, defending and strengthening our judicial system may be the last hope to preserve our 248-year experiment in democracy. The College is perhaps best equipped to meet that challenge and to help train the that next generations of excellent, ethical, and courageous trial lawyers.

Weil was superlative. Their team, lead by Jim Quinn, David Lender, and Meredith Moore, worked tirelessly to support both the participants and Fellows.

The faculty enjoyed themselves: putting on demonstrations, critiquing each other’s demonstrations, and gathering for faculty dinners organized by Roland Riopelle (at the iconic National Arts Club on Gramercy Park) and the vintage Patsy’s Italian (with several reported sightings of Frank Sinatra). *[Editor’s Note: OK, since Frank has been dead for twenty-seven years, these reported sightings suggest the consumption of alcohol.]*



The participants voiced their appreciation for the opportunity and the experience, echoing the comments made by participants in each of the five prior programs:

"...WAY
BETTER THAN
I COULD HAVE
IMAGINED"

"...eloquent about the
value of the program"

"...fun"

"...SO HELPFUL
FOR ME"

"...I am about to
start a trial here
in New York City.
I am so grateful."

"...most diverse group yet"

This year's program saw a surge in interest, with more than 100 applicants. The need and demand for this sort of advocacy training reveals itself to be very high. Today is a moment when the threats to our justice system are unparalleled. Perhaps some of the surge in interest is driven by perceptions of our current political environment and of trial advocates' central role in that environment. Some may be the result of the word-of-mouth reputation of the programs. We hope to be able to continue the tradition. We hope to continue to provide this opportunity and this experience to aspiring trial lawyers. We are planning to hold one, or perhaps, two programs in 2026. We are actively looking for sponsor firms and, of course, additional Fellows to serve on the faculties. If your firm might be willing to host, please reach out. If you want to serve on the faculty, please volunteer.



The *Journal* said it well last year: "The focus of the program is the quality of advocacy rather than any overarching social policy. The target audience is largely lawyers in government and public interest roles. . . . The population that the program seeks to reach are people whose employment does not easily afford this sort of opportunity."

Thomas J. Heiden
Chicago, IL