

NYSDRA News & Views

Celebrating 40 Years of Dispute Resolution

December 2025

A Word from NYSDRA's Executive Director



Theresa Hobbs
Executive Director

As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the New York State Dispute Resolution Association (NYSDRA), I am filled with deep gratitude and pride. For four decades, NYSDRA has stood at the forefront of promoting peaceful, effective, and accessible conflict resolution across New York State. What began 40 years ago as a coalition of New York's Community Dispute Resolution Centers has grown into a dynamic statewide organization shaping mediation, arbitration, restorative justice, and collaborative practice.

This milestone is not only a reflection of our history but also a celebration of our community—our members, partners, volunteers, and staff—whose commitment and vision have sustained NYSDRA's mission through times of change and challenge. Together, we have built bridges between communities, advanced the professionalism of the field, and empowered countless individuals to find common ground.

It is in that same spirit of connection that we are proud to introduce the first issue of the quarterly NYSDRA newsletter, **NYSDRA News & Views**, our newest effort to keep the ADR community informed, inspired, and in ongoing dialogue. Through this newsletter, we hope to share insights, highlight accomplishments, and strengthen the ties that make our statewide network so impactful.

Thank you for continuing the legacy our CDRC founders began. Here's to the next 40 years of collaboration, compassion, and conflict resolution that truly makes a difference.

Meet the NYSDRA Staff

Bobbie Dillon is the Special Education Dispute Resolution Center (SEDRC) Project Director. Bobbie leads statewide efforts to strengthen and promote New York's special education mediation program. With degrees in business, communication, and conflict resolution, she brings over a decade of professional mediation experience supported by advanced training in narrative mediation, nonviolent communication, and conflict coaching. Bobbie loves to travel and has seen all 50 states. She can be reached at bobbie@osedisputeresolution.org or 1-855-RESOLVE (737-6583) ext. 1.



Bobbie Dillon



Don Raiano

Don Raiano is the Lemon Law Program Manager at NYSDRA, overseeing statewide coordination and outreach for New York's Lemon Law Arbitration Program while serving as a key resource for consumers, manufacturers, dealers, and arbitrators. He holds a bachelor's degree in business and technology management from SUNY Delhi and enjoys playing guitar, golfing, traveling, and shopping. He can be reached at don@nysdra.org or (518) 687-2240 ext. 104 or 1-888-4-LEMONLAW.

Luke Roe serves as NYSDRA's Fiscal and Contract Management Associate, overseeing fiscal operations and contract performance. His responsibilities include budgeting, expense tracking, payment processing, and other key financial functions. Prior to NYSDRA, Luke has served in roles including bookkeeping and as a golf course employee. Outside of work, Luke enjoys playing golf and spending time outdoors. Luke can be reached at (518) 687-2240 ext. 102 or luke@NYSDRA.org.



Luke Roe



Lynne Ronesi

Lynne Ronesi is NYSDRA's newest Team member, coming onboard in November as a Program Associate managing NYSDRA's communications after first joining as an AmeriCorps member. Prior to that, she spent thirty years as a writing professor at universities in the US and the Middle East. While Lynne taught mostly academic writing and research during her career, she has recently been exploring narrative writing. She can be reached at lynne@nysdra.org or (518) 687-2240 ext. 106.

Paula Dischinger Miranda, a Project Associate for Special Education Dispute Resolution Center (SEDRC), is a Brazilian attorney and certified mediator with international training in law, business, and conflict resolution, known for leading complex mediations. Paula works from Brooklyn where two very fluffy dogs bring a lot of joy as well as occasional chaos to her home office. Paula can be reached at paula@osedisputeresolution.org 1-855-RESOLVE (737-6583) ext. 3.



Paula Dischinger Miranda



Shari Greenleaf

Shari Greenleaf is a SEDRC Project Associate supporting professional development for mediators and stakeholders and providing coordination for the special education mediation program. A former Schenectady City School District attorney, Shari has an extensive background in special education law, dispute resolution, and training. Shari devotes lots of time to the community—from volunteering at Mediation Matters, ushering at festivals and theatres, to helping at her grandchildren’s schools. She can be reached at shari@osedisputeresolution.org or 1-855-RESOLVE (737-6583) ext. 2.

Toni Garner serves as the Program Associate for NYSDRA’s Community Mediation Service Corps. Toni manages the program operations while supporting members and host sites and coordinating statewide trainings and other events. Bringing experience from childcare, healthcare, customer service, and animal care, Toni found their passion for ADR at NYSDRA. Outside of work, Toni is a horror movie fan and devoted dog lover who loves spending time with their nieces and nephews. Toni can be reached at toni@nysdra.org or 518-687-2240 ext. 105.



Toni Garner

[NYSDRA Turns 40:](#) [A Look Back at our Milestone 2025 Legacy Conference](#)

In September, NYSDRA marked 40 years of advancing access to justice with our Legacy Conference 2025 — and what a celebration it was! More than 250 dispute resolution professionals, court partners, and community advocates from across New York gathered (virtually and in-person) to “Reflect. Celebrate. Advance.”



Daniel Kos discusses the future of ADR on Day 2 of the NYSDRA Legacy Conference



Attendees gather for breakfast on Day 2 of the NYSDRA Legacy Conference

Over two energizing days, participants engaged in 30+ workshops, panels, and keynotes exploring the evolution of ADR in New York, including historical sessions honoring Judge Lawrence Cooke’s legacy and the development of both the CDRC network and NYSDRA. A major highlight was our collaboration with the Family Justice Initiative—launched by the New York State Unified Court System with the Center for Justice Innovation, in partnership with the Office of the Governor—which presented a two-part series on strengthening Family Court ADR programs and expanding collaboration statewide.

Day One featured keynote presentations by Sukhsimranjit Singh, Ph.D., and Robert A. Baruch Bush, J.D., while Day Two welcomed our very own Daniel Kos of the New York State Unified Court System. Daniel’s keynote was so well-received that he returned for a follow-up presentation on November 17, now available to conference attendees [here](#):

The celebration dinner at The Desmond Hotel included the presentation of the 2025 Lawrence H. Cooke Peace Innovator Award to John S. Kiernan, Esq., Co-Chair of the NYS Advisory Committee on ADR. Members of Chief Judge Cooke’s family joined leaders from the courts, state agencies, and community programs to honor both John’s achievements and Judge Cooke’s enduring vision.



Executive Director Theresa Hobbs presents the Lawrence H. Cooke Peace Innovator Award to 2025 recipient John S. Kiernan, Esq.

Executive Director Theresa Hobbs also announced the Lawrence H. Cooke Dispute Resolution Legacy Fund. Created as a permanent endowment, the Legacy Fund will provide support to expand access to dispute resolution across New York State—especially by helping CDRCs cover critical operational needs.

A heartfelt thank you to our generous sponsors: Mediation Center of CLUSTER, New York State Department of Health, Association for Conflict Resolution – GNY Chapter, Center for Justice Innovation, Sinclair Broadcasting Group, New York Center for Interpersonal Development, New York State Agricultural Mediation Program, JAMS, DAPOM, ADR Notable, Fisher Law Practice, Council Services Plus, Community Mediation Services, New Justice Conflict Resolution Services, New York State Council on Divorce Mediation, Empire Justice Center, Stewart’s Shops, The Ray Corollary Initiative, Mediation Matters, Jedi Ark, Fullness of Joy Photography, and Unsiloed.

Introducing The Lawrence H. Cooke Dispute Resolution Legacy Fund

At the close of the 2025 Legacy Conference, Executive Director Theresa Hobbs announced an exciting new chapter for NYSDRA: the creation of the **Lawrence H. Cooke Dispute Resolution Legacy Fund**. Established in honor of Chief Judge Lawrence H. Cooke (1914–2000)—whose leadership in the late 1970s and early 1980s helped build New York’s modern dispute resolution system—the Fund will ensure his vision continues to thrive for generations to come.

Designed as a permanent endowment, the Legacy Fund will generate annual support for strategic initiatives that strengthen and expand access to dispute resolution across New York State. A major focus will be providing “match support” for our statewide network of Community Dispute Resolution Centers (CDRCs), helping centers meet essential operational requirements. This support will:

- Ensure continuity and stability across all CDRCs
- Strengthen centers in underserved or economically challenged communities
- Preserve the comprehensive statewide network Judge Cooke envisioned
- Reduce barriers to innovation and program growth

NYSDRA’s goal is to raise \$1.5 million over the next three years to support and strengthen the CDRC network. This is an ambitious but achievable step toward sustaining and expanding the crucial work happening in communities statewide.

Together, we can carry Judge Cooke’s legacy forward—and ensure that New York continues to lead the way in accessible, community-driven dispute resolution.

NYSDRA Member Spotlight: Gregg Scheiner

Advancing Restorative Practices Across Long Island



Gregg Scheiner

NYSDRA is proud to highlight the ongoing work of Board Member Gregg Scheiner, Director of Restorative Practices at the EAC Network-Long Island Dispute Resolution Center (LIDRC). A dedicated leader within one of our long-standing CDRCs, Gregg has spent the past year strengthening school-based conflict resolution programs, uplifting young mediators, and advancing restorative practices throughout New York State.

This fall, Gregg served as moderator for a Westbury High School community talk, where students interviewed the North Hempstead Town Supervisor in an engaging, youth-driven conversation about leadership and career pathways. The event encouraged students to ask thoughtful questions, connect with local government, and see themselves as future changemakers.

Gregg also shared his expertise widely, presenting restorative practices workshops at several state and regional events, including the Long Island Counselors Association Fall Conference, the DCJS SNUG Conference in Albany, and two workshops at the New York State Association of Youth Bureaus Conference.

A passionate advocate for empowering young people, Gregg provided Peer Mediation Training at: Dodd Middle School (Freeport) and Saxton Middle School (Patchogue).

He also helped oversee Peer Mediation Award Ceremonies at Dodd Middle School – Freeport School District, Coram Intermediate School – Longwood School District, and Saxton Middle School – Patchogue–Medford School District.

During these ceremonies, newly trained Peer Mediators received their Certificates of Completion and were officially sworn in—marking the start of their important work supporting peaceful conflict resolution in their schools.

NYSDRA extends sincere appreciation to Gregg for his leadership, creativity, and unwavering commitment to restorative practices. His work continues to inspire students, strengthen school communities, and expand the reach of conflict resolution across Long Island and beyond.

Upcoming NYSDRA Trainings and Support Events: **Dec 2025 - March 2026**

Special Education Dispute Resolution Center (SEDRC)

- CDRC Coordinators Quarterly gathering: Dec 3, 2025 & March 4, 2026
- Foundations for New Special Education Mediators: Feb 26 & 27, 2026
- Special Education Learning Communities: Nov 12, 2025 & Feb 11, 2026

Contact info@osedisputeresolution.org or 1-855-RESOLVE for more information

Lemon Law Arbitration Program

- Quarterly meeting for Arbitrators: Jan 27, 2026

Contact don@nysdra.org or (518) 687-2240 ext. 104

Community Mediation Service Corps (CMSC)

- Conflict Coaching: Jan 7-9 & 14-16, 2026

Contact toni@nysdra.org or 518-687-2240 ext. 105

Founded in 1985, the New York State Dispute Resolution Association promotes and strengthens the use of dispute resolution throughout New York State. Through training, advocacy, and collaboration with courts, government agencies, and community organizations, NYSDRA supports a statewide network of 18 Community Dispute Resolution Centers (CDRCs) that provide mediation and restorative practices to thousands of individuals, families, and communities annually. For more information, visit www.nysdra.org.



[Subscribe](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)