

Forchelli, Curto, Deegan, Schwartz, Mineo & Terrana, LLP LI-Based Firm Celebrates 40 Years

If there is one formula that has contributed to Forchelli, Curto, Deegan, Schwartz, Mineo & Terrana, LLP's growth since the Uniondale law firm was launched in 1976, it has been the collaboration between its most experienced attorneys and their younger colleagues. Through this structure, the firm has expanded from three attorneys with three practice areas to more than 60 attorneys and 16 practice areas. As the firm celebrates its 40th year anniversary, it continues to depend on this formula to develop in talent, practice areas and new technology. The firm embraces its mixture of talented attorneys who bring generational characteristics to the firm. "For any organization to survive, it has to have a blend of the old and the young," said Managing and Founding Partner, Jeffrey D. Forchelli. "You have to combine the energy and the enthusiasm of the young with the experience and sometimes restraint of the more mature practitioners. Blending all of those qualities makes a better law firm. In the past 40 years, society as a whole has changed," Forchelli noted. "A lot of younger people rely very heavily on social media and texting, while the older generation relies on personal calls and face-to-face meetings. Recognizing that these different forms of communication complement each other, the firm encourages its younger attorneys to educate its older attorneys about the uses of social media, while having the older generation remind the younger group that good old-fashioned phone calls and meetings personalize their clients and their cases. Social media and texting is very good and efficient at times but it doesn't have a personality. Sometimes you have to see someone face to face so you can get an idea of who and what you are dealing with," Forchelli said. "Often clients want to shake hands, smile and know that you are alive and well and handling their matter. This cannot be done online."



Managing Partner Jeffrey D. Forchelli



Jeffrey G. Stark (l), head of Forchelli's Litigation Department welcomes new hires Michael A. Ciaffa (c), who has been named Of Counsel in the firm's Litigation Department; and Peter Skelos, who directs the firm's Appellate Practice Group and is a member of its Litigation Department. All three attorneys provide decades of judicial and litigation experience to the firm and its clients.

Weaving even more experience into its platform, the firm recently welcomed two former jurists who bring decades of judicial and litigation experience that will benefit the entire firm and its clients. Michael A. Ciaffa has been named Of Counsel in the firm's Litigation Department and Peter Skelos directs the firm's Appellate Practice Group and is a member of its Litigation Department. The Litigation Department is headed by Jeffrey G. Stark, who has served as Justice of the New York Supreme Court. Ciaffa, who served as a Nassau County District Court Judge from 2009 to 2014, has achieved notable success adjudicating high profile commercial cases, partnership disputes, insurance coverage issues and lawsuits challenging illegal or unconstitutional government actions. Skelos, among his many judicial duties, was elected as a Justice of the New York State Supreme Court for the 10th Judicial District in 1998. In 2004 Justice Skelos was appointed by Governor George Pataki as an Associate Justice of the Appellate Division, Second Judicial Department. He is known for his incisive questioning from the bench and is the author of numerous scholarly opinions. "We brought Michael Ciaffa and Peter Skelos in, not so much for them having served as judges but, for being very good lawyers," Forchelli said. "Both are very experienced practitioners,

having extensive experience in the private sector for many years before becoming judges. They add a lot to the firm because so much of law is experience, and the experience of sitting on the bench as a judge is a great educational tool. They have seen the law from both sides of the bench. That experience adds a lot to your thinking on how things can and should be done."

The firm not only concentrates on developing its talent, it also invests in the latest technology, most recently upgrading its computer system within its Tax Certiorari Department. "This program allows us to have everything with us so that we can make simple adjustments and do valuations during conferences, in court or while we are on trial," said the firm's Chief Operating Partner and head of the Tax Certiorari Department, John V. Terrana.

The firm's various practice areas continue to expand and are enhanced as a result of a combination of attorneys who range from baby boomers to millennials. Robert H. Groman, head of the Tax, Trusts and Estates Department recently celebrated 50 years practicing in this field. Jeffrey D. Forchelli, in addition to his other responsibilities, has headed the Land Use Department since the firm was founded. The Real Estate dept. is headed by Brian R. Sahn who was recently honored as a Legal Eagle. James C. Ricca and Steven G. Gaebler

who co-chair the Banking Department are well respected throughout the banking industry. Joseph V. Cuomo, chair of the Corporate Law Department continues to oversee the firm's sponsorship of the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) Greater New York Chapter, the largest community of in-house counsel in the world. The Construction Law Department which was seamlessly integrated into the Firm, co-chaired by Peter A. Agovino and Joseph P. Asselta, complements the other real estate based practice areas. Since joining the firm, the Labor and Employment Department continues to expand under its chairman Gregory S. Lisi. The firm's Industrial Development Agency (IDA)/Municipal Benefits Department, headed by Daniel P. Deegan, continues to represent award winning transit orient development projects.

As the firm looks toward the future, it plans to continue its decades-long growth pattern. "We are constantly looking into other people and other firms to see if there is a good mix," Forchelli said. "However, we want to grow in an orderly and intelligent fashion. We want to grow in a way that we feel, in the long run, makes us a better firm. To grow in a way that increases our numbers, as well as increases the ability, experience and enthusiasm of our attorneys is what we look for."



When you walk through our doors, you're one step closer to success.

When choosing an attorney, take a step in the right direction. For nearly 40 years our clients have benefited from the high level of service and commitment we provide. We are focused on achieving outstanding results in the most complex legal and business matters, and most importantly the success of our clients.

— COUNSELORS AT LAW —

**Forchelli, Curto, Deegan,
Schwartz, Mineo & Terrana, LLP**

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