

# Press Releases

## O'Melveny Helps Launch Court Square Law Project

October 26, 2015



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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NEW YORK — October 26, 2015** — O'Melveny & Myers LLP is proud to be a founding sponsor of the Court Square Law Project (CSLP), a program that will train and deploy new lawyers to provide legal services to moderate-income clients in areas of chronic underrepresentation. The New York City Bar Association, the City University of New York School of Law, and New York City's "BigLaw" community — including O'Melveny — partnered to launch the start-up. O'Melveny chair Bradley J. Butwin — who serves on CSLP's Executive Committee — helped lead efforts to organize the New York City law firm community to contribute start-up funding for CSLP. O'Melveny is one of 19 law firms that are CSLP founding sponsors.

#### **About O'Melveny & Myers LLP**

With approximately 700 lawyers in 15 offices worldwide, O'Melveny & Myers LLP helps industry leaders across a broad array of sectors manage the complex challenges of succeeding in the global economy. We are a values-driven law firm, guided by the principles of excellence, leadership, and citizenship. Our commitment to these values is reflected in our dedication to improving access to justice through pro bono work and championing initiatives that increase the diversity of the legal profession. For more information, please visit [www.omm.com](http://www.omm.com).

*The following press release was issued by the New York City Bar Association and CUNY School of Law:*

#### **Court Square Law Project Will Provide Legal Services to Moderate-Income Clients and Jobs to Law School Graduates**

*Big Law Firms Fund Innovative Start-Up Program*

**New York, October 15, 2015** – The New York City Bar Association, the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law, and the New York City “BigLaw” community have forged a unique partnership to address the persistent justice gap in America and the professional crisis that continues to affect new lawyers. These groups today announced the launch of the Court Square Law Project to train and deploy new lawyers to deliver legal services to persons of moderate means in areas of chronic underrepresentation. The Court Square Law Project will accept applications later this fall from recent graduates of any law school who are admitted to practice in New York State. It will be housed in Court Square, Long Island City, at CUNY School of Law, which will provide a special graduate law program for participants. Nineteen “Founding Sponsor” law firms have each pledged \$100,000 in start-up funding for the venture.

The Court Square Law Project is designed to address issues raised in the report of the City Bar’s Task Force on New Lawyers in a Changing Profession, *Developing Legal Careers and Delivering Justice in the 21st Century* (read the report here: <http://bit.ly/1a4Juo4>). Debra L. Raskin, president of the New York City Bar Association, said, “Our groundbreaking Court Square Law Project will address both a crisis in the legal profession and the persistent access to justice gap in our society.” Carey R. Dunne, the former president of the New York City Bar Association who convened the Task Force, said, “Our Task Force noted the irony that, at a time of widespread handwringing about the supposed ‘oversupply’ of lawyers in our profession, tens of millions of Americans in all regions of the country have important unmet legal needs. I am delighted that the New York City Bar Association now is moving forward with our recommendation.”

Michelle J. Anderson, dean and professor of law at CUNY School of Law and chair of the Court Square Law Project’s Executive Committee, said, “Unlike existing programs, the Court Square Law Project will focus on the development of a mission-driven business model to deliver high-quality legal services to people of moderate means. We will structure the program and track outcomes with a research partner to develop a successful model that can be replicated in other parts of the country.”

Anderson continued, “The Court Square Law Project represents the first coalition among the legal academy, the largest law firms in the country, and the organized bar to develop a scalable, research-driven model to address both the chronic civil justice gap and the underemployment of recent law school graduates.”

Task Force members Bradley Butwin, chair of O’Melveny & Myers, Eric Friedman, chair of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, and

Brad Karp, chair of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, took the lead to organize the New York City law firm community to contribute start-up funding for the Court Square Law Project. Butwin, Friedman, and Karp said in a statement, “Many New Yorkers are caught in a double bind. They do not qualify for government-supported legal services. While they can afford to pay something for legal services, there are many demands on their very limited discretionary income. Something needed to be done, and we are honored that so many of New York City’s established law firms answered the call to participate in implementing this innovative solution.”

The Founding Sponsor law firms are: Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP; Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP; Debevoise & Plimpton LLP; Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP; Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP; Kirkland & Ellis LLP; Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP; Latham & Watkins LLP; Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP; O’Melveny & Myers LLP; Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP; Proskauer Rose LLP; Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP; Shearman & Sterling LLP; Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP; Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz; Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP; and Winston & Strawn LLP.

Nationwide, fewer than four in ten moderate-income individuals faced with a serious legal issue relating to personal finance, housing, employment, or similar matters seek professional assistance, and almost one quarter do nothing. It is difficult to find legal counsel at an affordable price and there are competing priorities for limited resources. In New York City, 99 percent of tenants are unrepresented in eviction cases; 99 percent of consumers are unrepresented in hundreds of thousands of consumer credit cases filed each year; and 97 percent of parents are unrepresented in child support matters.

The City Bar will provide the Court Square Law Project with guidance, seasoned attorneys to serve as mentors to the fellows and instructors, and assistance with practice development through various programs. Court Square Law Project Fellows will benefit from many CUNY Law advantages, including contemporary office space, library resources, and IT and other support.

The Court Square Law Project will enroll up to ten new attorney fellows in each of the first four years of the five-year pilot program. Employment will take the form of a two-year fellowship residency in which participants will receive a stipend, legal experience, curriculum-based training, mentoring, legal supervision, and other tools necessary to help them transition to a self-sustaining law practice. Visit the website at [www.courtsquarelaw.org](http://www.courtsquarelaw.org).

### **About the New York City Bar Association**

The New York City Bar Association, since its founding in 1870, has been dedicated to maintaining the high ethical standards of the legal profession, promoting reform of the law and access to justice, and providing service to the profession and the public. The Association, through its 24,000 members, continues to work for political, legal, and social reform, while implementing innovative means to help the disadvantaged. Protecting the public's welfare remains one of the Association's highest priorities. [www.nycbar.org](http://www.nycbar.org). For information about the Task Force on New Lawyers in a Changing Profession report, read the executive summary at <http://bit.ly/1j4CAA9> or the full report at <http://bit.ly/1a4Juo4>.

### **About CUNY School of Law**

Founded in 1983, CUNY School of Law is the premier public interest law school in the country. The school trains lawyers to serve the underprivileged and disempowered and to make a difference in their communities. A greater percentage of graduates from CUNY Law choose careers in public interest and public service than any other law school in the nation. National Jurist ranks CUNY Law first in the nation in placing graduates in public interest law jobs, second in the nation for diversity, and sixth in the nation for best public interest law school. U.S. News & World Report ranks CUNY Law third in the nation for clinical training and in the top ten for diversity. [www.law.cuny.edu](http://www.law.cuny.edu).

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