

Diversity Dialogues: Elix R. Madera-Fliegelman

John: Welcome to Amici, news and insights from New York courts. I'm John Caher. As part of our celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion is sponsoring a series of interviews of employees of Hispanic descent. Today we're joined by Elix R. Madera-Fliegelman, the chief clerk in Bronx Surrogate's Court. Elix, who has been with the court system since 1990, migrated from Puerto Rico with her family when she was just a child. She is a great example of someone who joined the court system at a young age, worked her way up, and is now managing a very busy court, not to mention 35 other people.

John: Elix, thank you for your time. Let's dive right in, if I may. On the occasion of Hispanic Heritage Month, what do you wish that other Americans better understood about Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican community?

Elix: I hate to sound biased, but I consider Puerto Rico to be a land of compassionate, kind-hearted, and talented people. We are a community willing to give the shirts off our backs to those closest to us, even if that means we would have to go without. Hopefully, someday in the future a Puerto Rican will run for President.

John: Puerto Ricans are also United States citizens, which is why in the introduction I used the word in describing your family's journey here as "migrant" rather than "immigrant," correct?

Elix: That's correct.

John: Okay. Now, when and why did your family migrate?

Elix: In 1957, my father and mother decided to come to New York for economic opportunities. My father knew leaving Puerto Rico at the time would offer him an opportunity to get a high paying job to support his family. I was the youngest of four — two older brothers, 6 & 4, my sister was 2, and I was only 3-months-old at the time.

John: So, you probably don't have any childhood memories of Puerto Rico, correct?

Elix: Only the stories I heard from both my parents and family members from Puerto Rico who visited our house. My parents were the first ones who arrived in New York. Thereafter, our family members came to our house when they were ready to change their future and embrace better opportunities for their families.

John: It sounds like your parents were very hard-working people.

Elix: Yes, they were. When we were a little older, my father explained why he came to New York. He worked with his brothers, my uncles, in the sugar cane fields. He was a jack-of-all-trades. He was also a musician, who played many instruments, made guitars, and sang as a side hustle. When he came to New York, he got a job in a factory making furniture. Today, you see people on the train singing or dancing for money. My father did this as well to support his 7 children at home. On the other hand, my mother was a housewife who ensured we all got along, protected one another, and respected everyone we encountered. My mother provided us with valuable soft skills: never be judgmental, be a good listener, get an education, believe in God, always be respectful, pay it forward, and most importantly, value the dollar and save for a rainy day. Those were the beliefs she dictated to us every day. It was embedded in our brains.

John: Now, did you have any particular role models as a child?

Elix: I would have to say my mother. She was my role model. Like I said, she embedded in our brains that education was important. The more we learned, the more well-rounded we would become. No one would take away our education. It would also separate us from those like her who were lucky enough to get an education. I never understood what she meant until I was 10 years old and she sat us all in the living room. I remember she explained her childhood. She was the youngest of nine and only attended school up to the third grade. My grandmother became a widow at the age of 58 with 9 children, my mother being the youngest. No one was working to support them. Therefore, my grandmother stopped her from continuing school to help support the family. My mother walked to school bare footed because there was no money to buy shoes. When my mother returned home from school, she had blisters on her feet from the sun beaming on the rocks and bleeding from the cuts she obtained from the broken bottles on the ground. To make extra money to feed the family, my mother and her siblings had washboards they would use at the river to wash clothes. Therefore, my mother always stressed the importance of obtaining an education. Make sure you get an education; she would always say. I was the first one in my family to graduate college.

My mother also suffered from domestic violence. She finally threw out my father when I was just 10 years old. My oldest sister, may she rest in peace, was 12. When we first came to New York in 1957, I remember we lived in Manhattan. We lived there until I was 8 and then we moved to 138th Street & Willis Avenue in the Bronx. When my father left the house, my mother had no money. We were too young. My mother had no skills. A neighbor who lived in the building mentioned to us, "They're looking for a couple of girls to work in the factory." So, we asked, "Where

is it?" We did not know where it was, but we crossed the Willis Avenue bridge, my sister and I, into Manhattan and worked in the factory.

It was piecework. My sister learned how to sew. I was on the floor tagging the garments. If I tagged a two-piece outfit, it was 10 cents. I would put a tag on the top or the blouse or on the skirt. If it was one item, like a dress, it was 5 cents. My sister would make 10 cents to 25 cents, depending on what she sewed. If she sewed a collar, it was 5 cents. If she sewed two long sleeves, it was 30 cents. So that is how we earned our money. Whatever we made; we would give to my mother. We would do that after school.

We would come home, do our homework, and then tell my mother, "Okay, we're going to work." We would leave and walk over the bridge. It was dangerous back then. You never knew who you were going to bump into crossing the bridge. It is not like we were big girls.

John: How old were you when you were going to school and working in, I guess, a modern-day sweatshop?

Elix: I was 11 and my sister was 13. We would put makeup on. In our minds, we thought we would appear older and get jobs. My first real job was when I was 15. I remember a friend of mine who was an executive secretary in the city worked on 49th Street, Avenue of the Americas, which is 6th Avenue. I was 15 and she was 18 at the time. The building that I worked in is now known as the Simon & Schuster Building, but back then it was the Uniroyal Inc. Building.

I was in the elevator with her one day. I had already been working in the factory for four years. So, I knew that I needed to get an education to achieve a better future. I knew that I did not want to continue working in a factory. It was not for me. I was not making enough money back then. I said to myself, "Someday I will go to college. I need to make money so I can get an education and working this little part-time job is not going to get it." Plus, anything that I made I would give to my mom, so it is not like I had money.

Anyway, I was on the elevator with my friend. She's talking to me, "Well, when you graduate and you get a little older, maybe I could get you into where I'm working. They are looking for secretaries." I said, "It's better than working in a factory." I remember there was an older fellow behind me who I did not notice at the time because he was very silent in the elevator. He patted my shoulder and said, "Young lady, I have a business card for you." So, he gives me the business card. He said, "I don't know how old you are, but apparently you're looking for part-time work." I replied, "I am." Then he asked me to give him a call.

When I got home, I was extremely excited. I told my mother, "Mom, guess what? I was in the City across the street from Radio City. One day I'll go in and watch a show when I make the big bucks." I called the person and he said, "Well, how old are you?" I said I was 15. He told me, "Well, I can't hire you unless you get working papers." So, I went to my school's guidance counselor at that time and said, "I know I'm young to get working papers." But I explained to her that my mother had survived domestic violence. There was seven of us, plus her. I was working in a factory. I was not making much, and I really needed to get a real job.

The counselor helped me get the working papers and I began working three hours a day. I came home, did my homework, jumped on the train, got off on 49th Street, Avenue of the Americas and went to work. I learned how to be a secretary. I typed invoices for clients and made deposits for the firm. I learned clerical duties, made copies, sent faxes and answered calls. So, I said to myself, "Wow. This is a different environment. This is neat." This is where I could see myself working, like Melanie Griffith in the movie "Working Girl." I worked there for a while and then I graduated. Then at that point I met my son's father. We can get into that later.

John: Ok. You're 15 years old. You're carrying down a job. You're helping support the family. That's a lot on the shoulders of a 15-year-old.

Elix: Right. Well, I did not have a childhood. Like I said, at the age of 10, my father left the house. At 11, I started working. But I knew that education was crucial, like my mother always told us. So, history repeated itself. My mother was 9 when she started working to help support my grandmother. Here I was, 11-years-old supporting my family after my father left the house. And then at 11, I realized there was not enough money coming in. With the little money that we made, my mother would take us to the store, and we would buy whatever we could. I remember buying big cans of spaghetti.

John: I'm very familiar with them. They were common in my house as well.

Elix: Right. They were huge. Instead of having spaghetti, my mother would dress it up a little bit and she would make soup because there were so many of us. She would add potatoes, noodles, spices and vegetables. We would have bread with butter on the side and that was dinner. But we were happy because we had each other. My mother was happy that my father was not beating her anymore and we were happy to see our mother in a better environment. Even though we were poor, we were happy as a family because we had each other to lean on.

John: Sure. At some point you graduated from high school and then what educationally? Did you go to college?

Elix: I attended Walton High School, graduated with an academic diploma, and then attended Bronx Community College, from which I graduated in June of 2000 with an associate's degree. I majored in Accounting with a minor in computer science. That was what opened my doors.

John: Okay. Now, on your business card, you have an unusual quote. It reads, "Master before mister." What does that mean?

Elix: The "Master before the Mister" means education is extremely important. It provides independence because an education can never be taken away. It separates you from others. The more you know, the more you are worth. Sometimes, a boyfriend, husband, or partner may not work out and you may need to be depend on your education to get a good job so you can take care of yourself and children, if needed. This quote applies to my life because when I met my son's father, I was young.

At the age of 22 I had my son. That is when the beatings began. So, it's like they say, history tends to repeat itself. During my pregnancy, he always used to threaten me but because I was pregnant, he would never hit me. But he would push me around and pull my hair. So, I knew eventually I would be a punching bag. The last beating that he gave me, I could tell you exactly when it was and at what time. It was October 16, 1982 at 5:30 p.m. My son was not even 3-years-old.

My son's father would beat me and bruise my body up, but he never hit me in my face. That was the first time he hit me in my face and now my face was exposed. So now I could not hide my face. In the summer I would wear long sleeves and long pants to hide the bruises on my legs and arms.

Sometimes my mother would ask "Why are you wearing all those clothes? It's so hot outside." I would say, "Oh no, Mommy. I feel cold" or whatever other excuse I could come up with. I did not want her to know that history was repeating itself and her daughter was encountering the same thing she had experienced with my father. I wanted to spare her. I also did not want my brothers to get involved. They always swore to all of us, to both my sisters and me, that "if you ever get involved with a man and he touches a hair on your head, you have to come and tell us right away. We're not going to let you be subjected to the way we were raised, like how Daddy would beat up Mommy. You have to let us know."

When we were younger, my older brother, may he rest in peace, taught us how to box. We had a small apartment. We had bunk beds. My mother had clothes lines. We would bring down the bunk beds and make a little wrestling ring. My older brother, Woody, was the referee and he would put us between the beds. He showed us how to box. Woody used to say, "If I'm not around and somebody tries

to attack you, this is what you do. You punch them here and you punch them there."

Like I said, we were a very tight family. It was sad when my brother found out that my son's father used to beat me up. My brother was a correction officer. He came to the house and he saw me laying down. My mother did not want to open the door. He kept on knocking, knocking, knocking. And then finally she opened the door. He came in. He saw me on the bed all laid out with a busted lip. He opened my eye. I had a black eye. I was all bruised. He wanted to kill him. I said to my brother, "You know what? I am sorry. I made a mistake. He is not for me, but I'll get out of it. I do not want you to go to jail. You have your own kids to raise. This is not what I want. I made a mistake. I should have listened to Mommy."

When my mother first met him, she said, "He's no good for you." I do not know how, but she picked it up. She said, "You're going to be crying more tears than me." I remember those words. It was like she sensed it. I didn't listen and wound up going through hell and back. I suffered by myself because I did not want to share my misery with my mother who had lived it with my father.

My son's father was a substance abuser and an alcoholic. He used to work in the post office but lost his job. Now, here I was working in law firms coming to work with covered up beatings. He knew what he was doing. But anyway, you move on, you learn, and you share your experiences. This way, hopefully somebody else can be spared from living the hell that I experienced.

I found the courage to leave my son's father. When I left, I told his mother, "This is the last beating he's going to give me. I have a son. I need to remove myself from this environment. This is not the upbringing and behavior I want my son to be subjected to nor should he grow up thinking this is the way to treat women."

John: You've used this painful experience to help others. Could you just tell me a little bit about your experience in that regard and your volunteer work with the Violence Intervention Program?

Elix: I volunteered my time for the community, church and programs, like Violence Intervention Program, Inc., from January 2016 through July 2016. In volunteering my time on the weekends and after work. I educated young teenagers and shared my success story as a domestic violence survivor. Some of these girls were young. They were 14 years old. They had dropped out of school. They were becoming parents. They were being subjected to domestic violence.

For the young girls who were becoming moms, I always let them know that it was not the end of the world. I would tell them now you just need to work harder to

support your child. Although your education might be delayed, it should be something you should strive to accomplish.

Back then, we did not have the programs like we have now, like this Violence Intervention Program. I would donate clothes, including business clothes, to some of these programs because too many of these girls had no proper cloths to wear for job interviews. I would sit with them. I would show them how to write their resumés. I would also engage in little skits with them, to teach them about the interview process—how to dress, how to sit, etc. I did all of this because I felt that I needed to pay it forward. Some of those girls experienced the same household violence that I had dealt with. Some girls and boys had both parents who were substance abusers. Many times, the girls felt they had no way out. They would get involved with a guy and think, "Okay, that's my way out." They get pregnant. It turns out they are with the wrong guy. The beatings begin. Some of these girls didn't believe in God and I said to them, "Listen, you have to believe in something." Some of them became religious because that is what I learned from my mother, too. I would tell them; you must believe in yourself. You are worth something to somebody.

John: That's certainly true. Thank you. That's a beautiful story of giving back. Now, you came to work for the court system back in 1990. Happy 30th anniversary, by the way. But how did you come to work for the court system?

Elix: Actually I have been in the court system for about 28 years, due to some unforeseen circumstances in the early 1990's My career in the courts began when I was dating my husband, who is a retired Senior Court Officer for Bronx Supreme Court. I always worked in the private sector for large firms, for example: Chadbourne & Parke, Stroock, Stroock & Lavan and Coudert Brothers, etc. to name a few. I was tired of working the long hours. The court system provided controlled hours, better benefits, and afforded me the opportunity of spending quality time with my nine-year-old son. The Court system was offering an entry level position at the time, Administrative Services Clerk, handling all the manual timesheets for the courts, and Michael K. Burke, the Court's Chief Clerk at the time hired me.

He was a little skeptical because I was making a lot of money and applying for an entry level position in the courts. But I explained to him that it was not the money that I was looking for. I was looking for stability. I was looking for controlled hours. I was looking for better benefits and to spend quality time with family. That was my goal.

Unfortunately, in 1991 I was let go due to administrative cutbacks. I proceeded to return to a private sector law firm. I returned in 1992 as a Confidential Secretary to a Judge, and once again was let go because the primary secretary returned from

maternity leave. Thereafter, I returned to the court system and have been here ever since.

John: I understand. Now, your husband is a court officer or was a court officer?

Elix: He is retired Senior Court Officer, with 32 years in the court and 5 years as a NYS Corrections Officer.

John: What's his name?

Elix: My husband's name is David Fliegelman. He was an EMT, Special Response Team, Judicial Team and union delegate for the court. He had an outstanding career.

John: Oh, okay. You've pretty steadily climbed the court system career ladder. Were opportunities for advancement readily available or did you have to scratch and claw and fight your way to the top?

Elix: Well, I am a firm believer you should never give up in trying for anything you want in life. At the end of the day, I do not want to say, "I could have, should have, and did not." I am a motivator by nature, and I practice what I preach. I see it, believe it and claim it. Every time I applied for a job, it did not matter what it was, if it was an entry level, whatever it entailed, I wanted to learn. I wanted to share the experience and acquire the knowledge in doing so. That is the same model that I follow in advocating for the courts. I tell people, "You're working in private sector. You are making a lot of money. But at the end of the day, working in the courts is a better job for your future." The court has so many facets to learn, whether it is Civil Court, Family Court, Housing Court, Supreme Court and Surrogate's Court, you name it. You learn a little bit of everything.

John: Now, in your 28 years, how have things changed for employees of different origins? Or has it changed?

Elix: Well, I am a board member of the Gender Fairness Committee. I have seen and witnessed firsthand the changes in our court system, allowing all employees from different backgrounds, cultures, and countries to get promoted. Our employees reflect our community and our future in the Unified Court System. I believe that. It is my pleasure to be a part of a wonderful team.

John: Now, how does diversity enrich the court system?

Elix: The diversity enriches the court system by allowing everyone to bring their strengths, talents, and knowledge to be shared with others. In working together, we share different issues, views, and experiences which provides a better foundation for a Unified Court System and the community we represent every day.

John: Now, of course you, I imagine, share your background and heritage with other people you work with. What have you learned from the person of a culture different than your own?

Elix: Well, working in the Bronx Courthouse / Surrogate's Court, quite often people come into the courthouse from all parts of the world. They have different languages and we use the Language Line to assist them. Most of them, after having interaction and speaking with them in regard to someone passing away, I realize we have empathy, sharing, kindness and understanding allows them to warm up to our courthouse so we can make their visit easier than expected. We are all human beings and, by nature, appreciate one another. When we show empathy, caring, kindness to people, regardless where they are from, we are all the same when we get to the core.

John: That's great. Now, when you joined the court system, there had never, ever been a person of Hispanic heritage on the Court of Appeals, New York's highest court. It wasn't until 1994, nearly four years after you started, that Governor Mario Cuomo appointed the Honorable Carmen Beauchamp Ciparick, the daughter of two migrants from Puerto Rico, to the court. Was that a special moment for you and people in your community?

Elix: Yes, it was. It was awesome to see someone from Puerto Rico accomplish a high position of this nature in the courts. A woman from Puerto Rico is an inspiration for all groups. She opened a door we may have thought would never be possible. I knew at this time, it was the beginning of diversity, enrichment to our Unified Court System.

John: Wow. So quite an impact. Now let's get back to you. Before you became a manager, you were active in the CSEA, the labor union that represents thousands, probably tens of thousands, of government employees. You served as chief union representative. Why did you get involved in the union?

Elix: I held a position with the CSEA Union as a Chief Union representative. I began as a union delegate in October 2002. In 2006, I was promoted to Chief Union Representative. I was a board member of the Political Action, Safety & Health Committee until August 2016. It gave me an opportunity for a promotion to Deputy Chief Clerk for the Bronx Surrogate's Court, and to step into a managerial position with knowledge of both sides of the fence. I would be dealing with employees, protecting both management and employees, learning the protocols and procedures, and applying them when needed.

Of course, I had to step down from my position as a union representative. But this was an asset to me being hired. I was able to have both knowledge of a union representative on behalf of the employees and knowing the pros and cons of

management. There are numerous occasions with employees in which I step in before the union gets involved. I bring them to my office and say, "These are the choices. I am representing management. You also have your protection as a member. But at the end of the day, both the member and management have to meet on common ground." It usually works.

John: Now that you're dealing with unions from a decidedly different perspective, has your perspective on unions changed any?

Elix: It has changed a little bit. For example, right now we are dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. We have employees that step up to the plate. They come in, no problem. If I need to pull them from one department and put them in another department to meet the needs of the court, they roll up their sleeves and do it. On the other hand, I have employees that do not want to come back to work because they're so used to staying home. It is a challenging situation.

John: What exactly does a Chief Clerk in Surrogate's Court do?

Elix: As a Chief Clerk, I am responsible for supervising the employees and ensuring the services we provide to the public are met. I am responsible for assisting and working with the employees in handling all the petitions. The petitions, which are e-filed, hand-delivered or mailed, are reviewed and processed in a timely manner in the various departments: accounting and miscellaneous, administration, guardianship, probate, and voluntary administration for small estates. My job is to make sure that everything that comes through that door is handled on a timely basis to the best of our abilities.

We also handle petitions or extraordinary situations on an emergency or expedited basis as well. The Surrogate, the attorneys, clerks, the staff and I work well together and accomplish these matters. We make sure the paperwork is in order and we process it expeditiously within our control. With COVID-19 pandemic, we have a lot of people that died in the Bronx. So, we are being inundated. But even though we have limited staff, like I said, we roll up our sleeves and work together to get the job done.

I am glad that we have good employees we can count on. Working together makes a big difference and ensures we comply with what is expected of us by guaranteeing that everybody who walks through that door leaves feeling that their petitions were handled expeditiously. We take pride and joy in representing the courts.

John: You've mentioned a few times the need to do things expeditiously. Of course, Surrogate Court handles some particularly sensitive and time-sensitive matters, like estates, guardianships, things that could dramatically affect the life of a child.

Elix: Correct.

John: There must be a constant sense of urgency in what you do. Is that accurate?

Elix: That is absolutely correct. I never say, "That's not my job." I have been promoted in the court system already seven times. That is why I am a jack-of-all-trades. I guess I inherited that from my father. If a person wants a bulletin board up, I go, and I hang it up for them. During the pandemic, I was picking up employees and bringing them to work because they did not want to deal with public transportation.

I was picking them up, bringing them to work, and making sure they did what they had to do. So, I became an Uber cab driver. I do what I need to do. The work must get done. At the end of the day, I take pride and joy in paying it forward.

We make sure that all those proceedings are done expeditiously to the best of abilities. We have a help center, which handles numerous cases. The Language Line is also an asset for the public who speak other languages. Although we don't have the public coming into our offices, we still provide services over the phone. We are handling the guardianships virtually right now. We want to make sure that everybody who needs our services are heard and still being taken care of during these unprecedented times.

I believe in cross training the staff; they should be moved from one department to the other and acquire the various skills. Staff members should be able to do more than one job if necessary. This is where it is a team effort. A team-oriented environment is the best to work in.

John: It sounds like you're good at keeping your eye on the goal and promoting an atmosphere where the objective is to get the job done.

Elix: Yes. Correct.

John: Now, a moment ago we talked about childhood role models and you singled out your mother in a very big and endearing way. What about adult or professional role models or mentors? Are there any of those?

Elix: In professional roles, there was Michael K. Burke, Chief Clerk, Walter J. Nicholson, Deputy Chief Clerk, Administrative Judge Barry Salman, and Administrative Judge John P. Collins. They gave me the opportunity to come into the court system, believed in me, and challenged me to keep learning the job. I would like to say personally and professionally, I want to thank my Surrogate Judge, Honorable Nelida Malavé-Gonzalez, who's a role model, has compassion, a huge heart and granted me the opportunity to work in Bronx Surrogate's Court.

Every day is an opportunity for me to pay it forward. What better place to do exactly that than in Surrogate's Court? In this court, we have empathy. We have understanding. We make sure that anyone, like I mentioned before, that comes through our court are taken care of.

John: Now, you are now in the position of a role model yourself. In that position, what would you tell someone who was thinking about a position in the courts? What would you tell someone in your own family? Would you tell them, "Come to work for the courts," or, "Go find a job elsewhere?"

Elix: I would say, never close the door on any opportunities. Working in the court system may not have the high salaries you are searching for, but they offer promotional opportunities and an abundance of knowledge in various fields. There are great benefits, structured hours, wonderful people, and plenty of challenges to take on. The experiences are endless.

John: Finally, and in keeping with the spirit and the theme of this program, Hispanic Heritage Month, are there cultural traditions that you and your family maintain that you'd like to share with the melting pot that is the American mosaic?

Elix: Thanksgiving is something that happens during November, but Thanksgiving is something that we always embrace in my house every day. We thank each other. Unfortunately, our nuclear family of seven is now down to three. I was the middle child. Now, I am the oldest, with two younger brothers. My mom always used to say I was a special child. I never understood that until now. I buried my older brother; may he rest in peace. I lost both of my sisters. This is all while my mother was alive. Then my mother was taken after her long and arduous battle with Alzheimer's. May she rest in peace. I have been married to my husband for almost 30 years. She died on my 26th Wedding Anniversary. And then recently last year I buried my second older brother, who was intellectually challenged. So, I think that is what she meant.

I was always educated. I was always a bookworm. When my father left the house, we all hit the streets. But I was always reading. I was always in my room doing my homework. My mother would say, "Go and play with your friends," and I would say, "No, Mommy. I have my homework to do." I wanted to make my mother proud of me for obtaining the education she never could.

So, when I got promoted to Deputy Chief Clerk, my mother had already passed. I buried her August 24th and I started my new role on August 25th, 2016 the very next day.

John: You just told me two things that sound completely inconsistent. One, you've had a life that's involved trauma, physical abuse, mental abuse, a great deal of tragedy

and loss in your family. And then you told me that in your life and in your mind, every day is Thanksgiving. How can that be?

Elix: Every day is Thanksgiving and I thank God. My older brother was the chef in the house. He would cook for us every day. When he got divorced from his wife, he had four children and moved in with my mother. So, he became the cook in my mother's house. He is the one that kept the family together. Even though they are not around, to me, Thanksgiving is the most precious, precious holiday. I have a tradition in my house and my tradition is Thanksgiving, always giving thanks.

I was able to survive harsh and tragic circumstances and build a life that is filled with happiness, stability and prosperity. I was fortunate enough to have a great family, a wonderful husband, children, grandsons, and a rewarding career. Not too bad for a kid from the Bronx!

John: What a wonderful memory and what a wonderful place to end. Elix, thank you so much for your time. Thank you for sharing what I know is some very personal information with our listeners.

Elix: Thank you so much for allowing me to share and tell my story. It was my pleasure in doing so!

John: Absolutely. Absolutely. All right. Thank you again so much for your time. Please stay safe and healthy and happy.

John: Thanks for listening to Amici. You can find all of our recent podcasts on the court system's website at www.nycourts.gov. You'll also find a transcript of each interview. If you have a suggestion for an Amici podcast, let me know. I'm John Caher and I can be reached at 518-453-8669 or jcaher@nycourts.gov. In the meantime, stay tuned.