Happy 2019 to our LICONY member companies. We are underway in an eventful year that has brought us a new Superintendent of the Department of Financial Services, a new Senate majority and a number of new staffers in the Governor’s office.

Please join me in congratulating LICONY counsel, Kate Herlihy on the arrival of a new a healthy and happy baby boy, Alexander.

Maria T. Vullo has left her position as Superintendent of DFS and is reported to be in line for a position on the board of the State of New York Mortgage agency. Governor Cuomo’s chief of staff, Linda Lacewell has replaced Vullo as Superintendent. Ms. Lacewell has also served as Chief Risk Officer and Counselor to Governor Cuomo where she built and implemented the first statewide system for ethics, risk and compliance in agencies and authorities. We congratulate Ms. Lacewell on her appointment and wish Superintendent Vullo well in her future endeavors.

The last election cycle brought considerable change to the legislative landscape. The Democrats took control of the NYS Senate and now hold 39 of the 63 seats. Andrea Stewart Cousins (D-Yonkers) who served as leader of the Democratic conference was unanimously selected to serve as Senate Majority leader. Stewart-Cousins is the first woman to have a seat “in the room” giving her a powerful voice in state budget negotiations and the shaping of final legislation. Stewart Cousins released Senate Committee chair appointments and as we expected Senator Neil Breslin (D-Albany) is now chair the Insurance Committee. Senator Breslin is well known to LICONY and is knowledgeable on industry positions and concerns.

For the first time, LICONY will initiate a grassroots plan in 2019 and will be seeking your assistance as we build a network to supplement our advocacy efforts. We hope to have company and/or agent contacts in various areas of the state that we can then “pair up” with individual legislators. Stay tuned as we will be asking for your help.

Please check out page 2 & 4 for pictures from our February anniversary celebration. We look forward to a productive and successful year advocating for our membership!
LICONY Celebrates Anniversary at MetLife

On February 7, LICONY staff and member companies came together at MetLife for a full day of activities and to celebrate LICONY’s 51st Anniversary.

The day included a full briefing to the membership on LICONY’s Legislative program and Regulatory agenda for 2019. Assembly Insurance Committee chair Kevin A. Cahill spoke to membership about the new climate in the Legislature. LICONY president and CEO Mary Griffin also moderated a Regulatory conversation with Department of Financial Services staff members Laura Evangelista, Executive Deputy Superintendent, and James Regalbuto, Deputy Superintendent for Life.

The evening culminated in a reception in the historic MetLife board room. New Acting DFS Superintendent Linda Lacewell was in attendance as well as Assembly Insurance Committee ranker, Andrew R. Garbarino and member, Kevin Byrne. LICONY past president, Thomas E. Workman also joined in the celebration. Tom now serves as an Independent Member of the Financial Stability Oversight Council.

MetLife Executive VP of Corporate Affairs and Chief of Staff, Michael Zarcone introduced Senate Deputy Majority Leader, Michael Gianaris. Senator Gianaris spoke to those gathered about the flurry of legislative activity and took questions from the audience.
Many of you know Mary Lanning from her work consulting and advocating for the insurance industry. Mary pours much of her heart into her charity Yes! Solutions and its partnership with Boys Hope Girls Hope (BHGH).

The partnership with BHGH includes an Enrichment Academy for a dozen college-bound teens each Summer that offers them a unique experience inside the companies that make up NYC’s financial community.

The interns spend 6 intensive weeks visiting many companies and are given opportunities that can help them throughout college and open doors to professional careers.

Many insurance companies take part in the program and offer these kids valuable experience inside the insurance world.

Mary Lanning knows that a successful career in New York will probably touch a financial institution. “I tell kids, financial transactions are to New York what oil wells are to Texas.”

From a young age, Mary had a personal connection to God and sought ways to help bring people a sense of belonging. After high school, Mary entered the covenant to give to her community. She helped in many ways in her own neighborhoods in the Bronx and later Harlem offering hospice care, serving Thanksgiving dinner on the streets, and caring for patients during the AIDS crisis.

Her mission was fulfilling but Mary always knew she wanted to use her education and intellect in the professional world. She took a job with CT Corporation and impressed senior executives with her hard work and growing acumen -- eventually becoming an officer of the company.

“In the business world people have low expectations of nuns. They certainly don’t expect you to understand profit motivation, economics, business development but that’s what I became good at. “

In her 30s Mary entered the Insurance industry with Skandia America, a growing reinsurance company. There she built strong relationships with government officials in er compliance work.

Her experience and motivation to keep improving lead to more work in the industry, including becoming the first female Executive Director of the Insurance Brokers Association of New York.

Mary started her own company, ML&G Associates, 25 years ago built on her skill set, disposition, and strong relationships, but most of all on her faith. “When I thought about who was my best associate it was Mary Lanning and God, don’t mess with me. And that’s what it became.”

In business, Mary highlights the importance of recognizing the other point of view and presenting new information firmly but gently.

“Part of what made me effective here and in other states was the ability to explain things in a way a non-insurance professional would understand. I don’t always get everything, but I earn their trust.”

She has earned her clients trust as well and sometimes has to manage expectations. “I spend as much time educating my client as I do educating the regulator or legislator,” she says.

Mary is now in her 80s and has built an impressive career and a lasting legacy in her charitable work.

“I’m just Mary. In my deepest core, I recognize us ‘together’. We belong to each other. I just do what I can to bring belonging back. It's there. Once we recognize each other, we are changed.”

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How You Can Help

• Come to dinner at Boys Hope Girls Hope.
• Host GFS Interns team at your company for one day of Summer
• Chip in to cover transportation, meals, and a few cultural and recreational fees for On-the-Road Interns and their mentors travelling throughout the tri-state NYC Metro area as GFS Interns for 30 days of summer. Average daily cost for our road team of 12 is $300.
• Volunteer as a mentor or tutor, or a reading-writing partner, weekly for at least one semester.
• Help us build our Young Americans Close-the-Gap Scholarship Fund to help our GFS Interns alumni with housing and other unfunded college expenses that are not covered by their earned scholarships to private 4-year colleges.

Visit: www.yes-solutions.org for more information

Anniversary Photos continued