

Court Information Release



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Chief Judge Castillo swears-in new Federal Bar Association President at Annual Convention

On September 15, 2018, Chief Judge Rubén Castillo, representing the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, swore in Maria Z. Vathis as the new President of the Federal Bar Association (FBA) at the FBA's Annual Meeting and Convention in New York City.

“Congratulations to the FBA Chicago Chapter’s own Maria Vathis as she takes the helm of the FBA. Maria’s dedication, initiative, and outstanding leadership to our Chicago Chapter will now benefit FBA members across the country,” said Chief Judge Castillo.

Maria is the 13th woman to serve as president of the FBA in the FBA’s almost 100 year history. She is also among the youngest presidents to serve the FBA. In 2006, Maria was elected Treasurer of the Chicago Chapter, and, in successive years, served as Secretary, Second Vice President, and First Vice President. In 2010, she had the honor of becoming the youngest person to serve as President of the Chicago Chapter.

Carol Brook, the recently retired Executive Director of the Federal Defender Program in Chicago was also honored at the convention. The FBA presented Carol the Hon. Sarah T. Hughes Civil Rights Award. Named after the renowned federal district judge from Dallas, Texas, the Sarah T. Hughes Civil Rights Award was created to honor that man or woman who promotes the advancement of civil and human rights and who exemplifies Judge Hughes’ spirit and legacy of devoted service and leadership in the cause of equality.

“Congratulations to Carol on receiving this prestigious award. Carol has dedicated her life’s work to defending the indigent, serving in the Chicago Office of the Federal Defender since 1976 and leading the Chicago Office with distinction to become the gold standard of federal defender programs in the nation,” said Chief Judge Castillo.

In addition, the Chicago Chapter of the FBA was selected as the FBA's Chapter of the Year. "Congratulations to Chapter President Jordan Vick, President-elect Michael Rothstein, and the entire board and membership of the Chicago Chapter for their excellent work. Our Chicago Chapter and its members truly dominated the spotlight this weekend at our FBA Convention," said Chief Judge Castillo.

The FBA represents the federal legal profession, consisting of more than 16,000 federal lawyers, including 1,200 federal judges. The Chicago Chapter has over 550 members. The mission of the FBA is to strengthen the federal legal system and administration of justice by serving the interests and the needs of the federal practitioner, both public and private, the federal judiciary and the public they serve.

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