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Foreword

Honorable Sol Wachtler

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FOREWORD

*Honorable Sol Wachtler**

New York's Chief Judge has the responsibility of not only presiding over the New York Court of Appeals, but also managing the state's court system. With over 1,300 state judges and 2,300 town and village judges in 62 counties, it is the largest unified court system in the nation, processing in one year the same number of cases the federal courts process in ten years.

With these enormous responsibilities, it is remarkable that two Chief Judges of this state, starting with Chief Judge Judith Kaye in 1993, and continuing under Chief Judge Jonathon Lippman in 2009, have been able to establish, implement, and maintain a system of "problem-solving courts."

It was Chief Judge Judith Kaye who pioneered the utilization of problem-solving courts, not only in New York State, but in the United States. She also founded the Center for Court Innovation, headquartered in New York, which has helped courts and criminal justice agencies nationwide to structure systems and modalities designed to decrease crime and prevent recidivism. As noted in a Bureau of Justice Assistance publication:

It was while describing these various court initiatives that New York State's Chief Judge, Judith S. Kaye, catapulted the idea of "problem-solving justice" to a national audience. Kaye, in a column in Newsweek in 1999, extolled the virtues of these problem-solving courts for their ability to address problems like drug

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addiction, mental illness, and homelessness. The Conference of Chief Judges and Conference of State Court Administrator soon passed resolutions endorsing continued experimentation in this area. The American Bar Association quickly followed suit.¹

And there has been a continuum—Chief Judge Lippman has done a remarkable job of growing and maintaining New York’s system of problem-solving courts. I can recall attending his announcement of the establishment of the Veterans Court Program some years ago. It was all together fitting that New York took the lead in this enterprise given that Judge Robert Russell, who writes in this issue of the *Law Review*, established the first such court in the nation. The effect of Chief Judge Lippman’s initiative in this one area alone has resulted in the creation of some 18 of these Veterans Treatment Courts in New York State.

In his 2015 State of the Judiciary message, Chief Judge Lippman announced the establishment of the County Justice Center of Brownsville² as well as the creation of the Human Trafficking Intervention Courts.³

The problem-solving courts of New York State with their diversity, proliferation, and effectiveness can be directly attributed to the extraordinary vision and commitment of Chief Judges Kaye and Lippman. This issue of the *Law Review* is a testament to both their creativity and recognition that court intervention can mend and strengthen society’s torn fabric.

¹ ROBERT V. WOLF, PRINCIPLES OF PROBLEM-SOLVING JUSTICE 1 (2007), available at <http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/Principles.pdf>.

² Jonathan Lippman, Chief Judge of the State of New York, Speech at The State of the Judiciary 2015, Access to Justice: Making the Ideal a Reality (Feb. 17, 2015), available at <http://www.nycourts.gov/ctapps/news/SOJ-2015.pdf>.

³ *Id.*