

Momentum Builds for MBBA's 42nd Anniversary Awards Gala as Partner Community Grows

Growing Roster of Partners Reflects the Legal Community's Commitment to Black Excellence, Access to Justice, and the MBBA Mission



**METROPOLITAN
BLACK BAR ASSOCIATION**

MBBA Primary Logo

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, April 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the [Metropolitan Black Bar Association](#)

(MBBA) prepares to celebrate its 42nd Anniversary Awards Gala on Friday, May 15, 2026, at Pier Sixty, Chelsea Piers in New York City, a distinguished and growing community of law firms, financial institutions, and corporate partners has stepped forward in support — affirming, in the most concrete terms possible, their commitment to Black legal excellence and the advancement of justice.



Partnership support is the engine behind MBBA's year-round work"

Nicole Lester Arrindell

Partnership is not simply a box to check. It is a declaration of values. The partners who have joined MBBA for Gala 2026 are making that statement clearly.

A Historic First: Guardian Life Joins as Inaugural Multi-Year Strategic Partner

Guardian Life has made history as MBBA's first-ever Multi-Year Strategic Partner, committing at the Platinum level across both the 2026 and 2027 Galas. This landmark commitment — led by Kermitt Brooks, Esq., Guardian's Chief Legal Officer and himself a 2026 Gala honoree — signals something larger than a single-year sponsorship. It is an investment in MBBA's continuity, its capacity, and its future. Guardian's multi-year commitment reflects the kind of institutional partnership that allows MBBA not simply to produce a remarkable evening, but to plan, grow, and deepen its impact year over year. MBBA is proud to recognize Guardian Life as a cornerstone of this work.

A Community of Partners

Guardian Life is joined by a remarkable roster of partners whose names represent some of the most respected institutions in the legal and financial landscape:

A&O Shearman, Beacon Hill Legal, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, BNY Mellon, Bryant Rabbino, Clyde & Co., Equitable, HAYNES BOONE, Hinshaw & Culbertson, JAMS, Littler, Northwestern Mutual | Vivid Advisory Partners, Perkins Coie LLP, Proskauer Rose LLP, Riley Safer Holmes & Cancila LLP (RSHC), Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, Steno, Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP, and Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP.

What Partnership Makes Possible

Partnership support is the engine behind MBBA's year-round work. It funds the free legal clinics that bring access to justice to communities who need it most. It supports the Trial Academy, which prepares the next generation of litigators with the skills and confidence to compete at the highest levels. It underwrites the leadership development and pipeline initiatives that ensure the profession's future is as diverse and excellent as its present demands.

The Gala, now in its 42nd year, is the celebration of that work. It is where the legal community gathers to honor those who have given the most, to welcome the partners who make it possible, and to recommit, collectively, to the mission that has defined MBBA since 1984.

2026 Honorees

The 2026 Gala will honor a distinguished class of leaders whose careers span the full arc of the legal profession. Honorees include:

□ Kermitt Brooks, Esq., Chief Legal Officer, Guardian — Corporate Counsel of the Year Award

□ Deborah Enix-Ross, Esq., Senior Advisor, Global Engagement, Debevoise & Plimpton; Past President, American Bar Association — Private Practitioner of the Year Award

□ Janai Nelson, Esq., President & Director-Counsel, NAACP Legal Defense Fund — Public Servant of the Year Award

□ Hon. Dianne T. Renwick, Presiding Justice, Appellate Division, First Department — Jurist of the



MBBA 42nd Annual Gala



MBBA 42nd Annual Gala Honorees

Year Award

□Robert Grey, Esq., President, LCLD; Past President, American Bar Association, and LCLD (Leadership Council on Legal Diversity) Trailblazers of the Year Award.

Partnership opportunities for Gala 2026 are available at mbbanyc.org or by contacting Monique Brizz-Walker at Monique@Eventstrategies4success.com.

About the Metropolitan Black Bar Association

The Metropolitan Black Bar Association (MBBA) is the largest unified association of Black legal professionals in New York State. Founded in 1984, MBBA serves as a resource and advocate for Black lawyers and the communities they serve, providing programming that includes free legal clinics, the Trial Academy, leadership and pipeline development initiatives, and substantive engagement with the courts, legislature, and the broader legal community.

For more information, visit mbbanyc.org.

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