

Advocacy in Domestic Violence Cases: A View from the Bench

Hon. Lisa Bloch-Rodwin

Erie County Family Court

Hon. Lisa Bloch Rodwin

Judge Bloch Rodwin was appointed by the Governor as Erie County Family Court Judge, unanimously confirmed by the New York State Senate, and was elected to a full term in 2008. She specializes in matters of abuse, neglect, juvenile justice, custody and family violence. Prior to this appointment, Judge Bloch Rodwin worked with the Erie County District Attorney's Office from 1985 to 2008, and served as Chief of the Domestic Violence Unit from 1995 through 2008.

Judge Bloch Rodwin is one of a select few judges chosen to be on the New York State Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee which is responsible for drafting and reviewing new legislation on Family Law and she is also a Director of the New York State Family Court Judges' Association. She has recently been appointed to the NYS Advisory Council on Immigration Issues in Family Court. During her tenure as Family Court Judge, she has directed a collaborative with the Department of Social Services focused on the reduction of the disproportionate number of minority children placed in foster care. Additionally Judge Bloch Rodwin created the first local collaborative in New York State designed to provide outreach and education to Muslim, immigrant and refugee families connected to the Civil and Criminal Court systems while concurrently training professionals from the Child Welfare and Criminal Justice systems about cultural competency issues. Judge Bloch Rodwin also served on the statewide committee which drafted the Judicial Guide to Domestic Violence Risk Factors for Family And Supreme Court Judges throughout New York State. .

Judge Bloch Rodwin was the founder of New York State's first Domestic Violence Bureau outside of New York City, and was responsible for the prosecution of over 4,000 family violence and child abuse cases annually. While at the District Attorney's Office, Judge Bloch Rodwin developed protocols for the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence crimes for local police agencies and developed interview and investigation policies for child abuse investigations at the Child Advocacy Center in Buffalo.

Judge Bloch Rodwin has worked endlessly serving domestic violence awareness causes, and has appeared on national television as a domestic violence expert on *20/20 with Diane Sawyer* and on three occasions on *Oprah*. She has served as a keynote speaker at national conferences on family violence in Houston, Atlanta, Tulsa, Jackson, Orlando and Long Beach, and has lectured at SUNY Buffalo School of Law, Canisius College, the National College of District Attorneys, New York State Prosecutor's Training Institute, and the Erie County Police Academy. The Judge has developed and conducted training on child abuse and domestic violence laws, the Indian Child Welfare Act, the over-

representation of minority children in foster care, Best Practices in working with immigrant and refugee families, Internet crimes against children, elder abuse, stalking and cyber-stalking. She has also edited "*Supporting Family Safety, A Resource Guide for Erie County Family Court*".

As a volunteer, Judge Bloch Rodwin was the founder and first Board President of the Erie County Family Justice Center, as well as a founder of the Alexa Foundation which serves child abuse and sexual assault survivors. Judge Bloch Rodwin served as a State Director and Committee Chair for the New York State Women's Bar Association. In addition, she has been a Board Member of the YWCA and Child Advocacy Center.

Judge Bloch Rodwin has received numerous acknowledgments for her ongoing efforts, including the FBI National Community Leaders Award, Women Lawyers of Western New York's Lawyer of the Year Award, the Susan Still Profile in Courage Award from the Family Justice Center, the President's Award and Kupferman Juvenile Justice Award from the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, the SUNY Law School Distinguished Alumna Award, the Award for Excellence from Everywoman Opportunity Center, and was one of five lawyers selected by *The Daily Record* for the Leaders in Law Award. Judge Bloch Rodwin has received other service awards from *The Buffalo News*, the National Federation for Just Communities, the Alexa Foundation, the Erie County Coalition Against Family Violence, Hispanics United, New York State Crime Prevention Coalition, Prevention Focus and Time Warner's Western New York Local Hero nomination.

Lisa lives in Amherst NY with her husband Michael, a researcher at Roswell Park. Her son David is an attorney working with the Baltimore Public Justice Center, her son Benjamin is a medical resident at Yale New Haven Hospital.