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FROM THE SPECIAL EDITOR

Striving for Well-Being in the Legal Community

By Lori Ann Buza

It has been my pleasure to serve as special editor of the first ever edition of *New Jersey Lawyer* dedicated exclusively to the subject of lawyer well-being. I have been advocating for more attention to this very important subject for over a decade. Thankfully, many devoted attorneys near and far have joined me in this quest, and we have seen an incredible and steady growth in the areas of well-being education and assistance for lawyers in New Jersey.

Well-being is not just physical or mental health; it encompasses many dimensions of wellness. According to both the American Bar Association and the Institute for Well-Being in the Law, well-being encompasses the following six parts: emotional wellness, occupational wellness, intellectual wellness, spiritual wellness, physical wellness, and social wellness. The Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services includes the first five of the six mentioned above and adds both environmental wellness and financial wellness aspects to overall well-being. In addition to these, I include two more dimensions to well-being when I teach in my class, *Wellness to the Legal Community* at Rutgers Law School—and that is cultural wellness and grateful wellness.

Why am I so passionate about this subject and why should it be important to lawyers? First and paramount is that I imagine we all strive for methods of achieving well-being, peace, and happiness in both our legal professions as well as our private lives. Like many of my colleagues, I have had my share of pressure and stress in the 25-plus years I have practiced law—working in both a large and small firm, in academia and management, as well in my role as an arbitrator. Through it all, I valued (and still value) my well-being and good health, which I have come to realize has not only brought me personal joy but has also made me a better attorney. Indeed, I have been humbly proposing to my colleagues for many years that being a “well” attorney (including living more mindfully), makes one a more focused, competent, and even masterful attorney.



LORI ANN BUZA is a law professor at Saint Peter's University and Rutgers Law School, counsel to KS Branigan Law, P.C., and an arbitrator with the AAA for employment matters. She has been on the editorial board of *New Jersey Lawyer* for over two years, serving also as its Working Well editor. Further, Lori has served as the Chair of the Lawyer Well-Being Committee of the NJSBA, is the Chair of the Hunterdon County Lawyer Wellness Committee, and is the creator of the first ever lawyer wellness course for Rutgers Law School in Camden. She is a prolific writer and speaker on lawyer well-being issues and acts as a mindfulness coach and well-being advocate with various organizations throughout the country. Living the life she preaches, she also is certified in mindfulness (Levels I, II, III, Master), personal training, group fitness, yoga, and various martial arts and meditation techniques.