

About Our Honoree

Eugene G. Eisner





Born and raised in Brooklyn, Gene was destined to be a labor lawyer dedicated to social and political causes. In his early years he fell under the spell of his late uncle, Irving Eisner, who was a passionate, committed trade unionist and socialist.

Gene received his undergraduate degree from the School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University and his law degree from NYU Law School.

Immediately after graduating from law school, Gene worked for the law firm that was representing District 65. One year later, he joined the staff of District 65, a large progressive union which was very active in the civil rights and anti-war movements. While he was on the staff at District 65, Gene worked extensively with Dave Feller on the historic Livingston v. Wiley, case.

After leaving the staff of District 65, Gene became a partner in Sipser, Weinstock, one of the prominent labor firms at that time. Two years later, Gene left to form a partnership with Richard Levy, which lasted over 20 years. Gene is now the senior partner of Eisner & Associates, a firm representing unions (and their Trust funds), as well as employees in employment discrimination cases and individuals in institutions of higher learning. The firm represents Local 813, Teamsters and its funds, Local 3, United Store Workers, 1199, SEIU and The American Stock Exchange Employee's Association. He served on National Labor Relations Board Advisory Committee of outstanding labor and management lawyers during the 1990s. He is founding member of the New York University Law School's Labor & Employment Center.

Gene has done extensive teaching, speaking and writing in the field of labor law. He taught labor law and arbitration to workers pursuing undergraduate degrees at the Hofstra University/District 65 Institute, as well as collective bargaining courses at the Cornell ILR Extension Division in New York City. Gene has published articles on lawyers right



to strike, the effect of globalization on workers in the American economy, plant closings and affirmative action in various law journals and books. He has been a guest speaker and panelist in forums and conferences sponsored by the NYU Annual Conference on Labor, American Arbitration Association, the National Labor Relations Board and the Industrial Relations Research Association. He has been a guest lecturer in law schools dealing with labor law issues. In 1990, Gene helped organize, and participated in, seminars in Moscow and the United States focusing on the impact on workers during the transition to a market economy in the former Soviet countries.

Gene is a long-standing member of the National Lawyers Guild where he has conducted workshops and training sessions for rank and file workers, young lawyers and law students. Gene has done considerable *pro bono* legal work for civil liberties organizations and individuals, including successfully prosecuting the landmark case of Wolin vs. Port Authority in the Federal Courts, which established the right of anti-Vietnam protesters to leaflet inside the Port Authority Bus Terminal during the 1960's.

Gene has been active politically, recently spending six days in Miami, Florida this past November working with other labor lawyers and trade unionists in the effort to win the State of Florida for the Democrats. He has been involved in many progressive causes, including successful campaigns of Attorney General Robert Abrams, Mayor David Dinkins, Borough President Ruth Messinger and Public Advocate Mark Green. He has served as an official observer in Nicaraguan elections and also flew down to the Dominican Republic to obtain the release of striking workers who were unlawfully arrested.

Gene is an ardent advocate for peace in the Middle East. He and his wife, Laurel, a public interest lawyer and social worker who is now the Executive Director of Sanctuary for Families, assisting victims of domestic violence and their children, frequently host meetings for local, national and international causes. They have two wonderful children, Sascha and Rachel, who are already demonstrating their commitment to progressive causes: Sascha is a labor organizer in Redwood City, California with the SEIU, and Rachel works as a fund raiser with the 92nd Street Y here in New York.

