



BenchNOTES

Newsletter

September 2025

OATH News

We at OATH mark with great sadness the passing of the Honorable Donna R. Merris, a former OATH Administrative Law Judge and beloved colleague and friend. Judge Merris was born on November 25, 1939, in Bluffs, Illinois, and received degrees from Illinois State University, Northwestern University, and Brooklyn Law School. She had a diverse and illustrious career, working as a professional musician, a music educator, a prosecutor in the public corruption unit of the U. S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, an attorney for both the New York City Office of the Comptroller and the Mayor's Office of Contracts, and an Administrative Law Judge here at OATH. Judge Merris retired from OATH to become a full-time mother to her two daughters, a role that brought her immense joy and satisfaction. Her friends and colleagues remember her as remarkably hardworking, wise, lively, possessed of a subtle wit, and passionate about music. Judge Merris is survived by her wife, Robyn, two daughters, and a granddaughter. Judge Merris' full obituary is available [here](#).

Job opportunities at OATH:

OATH Trials Division is seeking a Supervising Law Clerk to head the legal research unit and oversee the Law Clerks. The Supervising Law Clerk position requires admission to the New York State Bar; four years of recent full-time responsible, relevant, satisfactory legal experience following admission to any bar, 18 months of which must have been in the supervision of other attorneys, in an administrative, managerial or executive capacity. Experience handling highly complex and significant legal work is a plus. Incumbents must remain members of the New York State Bar in good standing for the duration of this employment.

OATH is also seeking a lawyer to run its Pro Bono Program. The Pro Bono Counsel will help connect volunteer attorneys with low-income residents who appear before OATH to contest summonses issued by city agencies. The

Counsel will also recruit new lawyers, law firms, and legal service providers to participate in the program.

Both positions promote access to justice in New York City. For more details visit <https://cityjobs.nyc.gov/> and search for Job ID 720154 (Supervising Law Clerk) and Job ID 727204 (Pro Bono Counsel).

CityAdmin Notice:

Beginning September 26, 2025, OATH decisions will no longer be found on New York Law School's website. The *CityAdmin Document Repository* will instead be hosted by the City of New York. The City will have a new host site for this research database. You can access this new link through the OATH website once it has launched. We appreciate your patience during this transition.

Trials Division

Featured Agency Decision

Disciplinary Charges Dismissed.

ALJ Joycelyn McGeachy-Kuls recommended dismissal of disciplinary charges against a correction officer who failed to report for duty on 15 occasions. [*Dep't of Correction v. Lee*](#), OATH Index No. 3152/24 (Apr. 4, 2025), *adopted*, Comm'r Dec. (Aug. 11, 2025).

[Read more about *Dep't of Correction v. Lee*.](#)

Licensing

Revocation of License Recommended.

ALJ Charlotte E. Davidson recommended revocation of a respondent's Taxi & Limousine Commission Driver License after he tested positive for cocaine at his annual TLC drug test. [*Taxi & Limousine Comm'n v. Ahmed*](#), OATH Index No. 1412/25 (Aug. 21, 2025).

[Read more about *Taxi & Limousine Comm'n v. Ahmed*.](#)

Real Property

Granting of Application Recommended.

ALJ Jonathan Fogel recommended granting a protected occupancy application after finding that petitioners resided in the unit with the consent of the respondent landlord and occupied the unit as their primary residence. [*Matter of Leddington & McAuliffe*](#), OATH Index No. 2956/24 (Aug. 28, 2025).

[Read more about *Matter of Leddington & McAuliffe* and other Real Property cases.](#)

Vehicle Seizure

Police Department May Retain Seized Vehicle.

ALJ Julia Davis determined that the Police Department may retain a vehicle seized as an alleged instrumentality of a crime. [*Police Dep't v. Cortes*](#), OATH Index No. 150/26 (Aug. 27, 2025).

[Read more about *Police Dep't v. Cortes*.](#)

Appeals from the Hearings Division

Decision reversed.

An appellate decision reversed a hearing decision that sustained a violation of the New York City Administrative Code on the grounds of improper service. [*DOB v. Bazinova, Milena, Appeal No. 2500717*](#) (Aug. 28, 2025).

[Read more about *DOB v. Bazinova, Milena* and other Appeals from the Hearings Division.](#)

This is the NYC.gov news you
requested for: BenchNOTES

[Unsubscribe](#) or [Manage your email
preferences](#)

[Comment on this news service](#)

**PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS
MESSAGE!**