



**Steven D. Benathen**  
**Civil Court Candidate**  
**347-446-9205**  
**Steve.benathen@gmail.com**

Dear Honorable District Leaders, Community Members, and Friends,

I am honored to have been found “Most Highly Qualified” by the 2026 Independent Judicial Screening Panel as a candidate for Civil Court. It is a pleasure to further introduce myself to you and I hope to earn your support.

I first became interested in serving as a judge when I began my career out of law school as a public defender at The Bronx Defenders. Appearing nearly daily in court in our nation’s poorest congressional district showed me just how important good judges are. Judges made decisions that impacted my clients’ freedom, employment, housing, parental rights, and ability to remain in this country. I became inspired to bring what I learned as a public defender at The Bronx Defenders to the bench.

I have had the privilege of serving as a court attorney for three phenomenal women who showed me firsthand what it means to be a good judge: The Honorable Ellen Gesmer and The Honorable Lizbeth González of the Appellate Division, First Department, and The Honorable Audrey Stone, who presides in a specialized felony domestic violence court in Bronx County Supreme Court. I have worked on some of the most legally complex cases in our courts as well as cases addressing incredibly sensitive, human issues.

While I am proud of what I have accomplished as a public defender and court attorney, I am also an everyday New Yorker. I grew up in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn. My father taught biology at Kingsborough Community College and my mother, who overcame a childhood of poverty, worked in the home raising me and my brother. I attended New York City public schools K-12 and my uncle resides in a NYCHA building. My husband and I live on the Upper East Side, as do my brother and his wife and children.

We need judges who have the professional experience and legal skills, but also the ability to connect with New York City’s diverse array of litigants. I believe that I possess all those traits. Please do not hesitate to contact me at the phone number or email address listed above. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Steven D. Benathen

# Steven Benathen

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## EXPERIENCE

### **University of Illinois College of Law**

Champaign, IL

*Adjunct Professor*, January 2026 - Present

- Serve part-time as adjunct faculty member coaching moot court competition teams

### **Chambers of the Honorable Audrey E. Stone**

Bronx, NY

**Acting Justice of the Supreme Court, Bronx County-Criminal Term (Part 27/DV)**

*Principal Court Attorney to Acting Justice*, June 2023 – Present

- Draft opinions and orders resolving motions in dedicated felony domestic violence part
- Draft opinions and orders in post-conviction motions assigned by the Administrative Judge's office
- Assist judge at trial with evidentiary rulings; draft jury instructions and verdict sheets
- Conference cases with parties and aid in resolving disputes
- Supervise interns

*Associate Court Attorney to Judge*, February 2023- June 2023

- Drafted opinions and orders related to motions brought in misdemeanor domestic violence and sex crime cases
- Assisted judge at jury trials for misdemeanor domestic violence and sex crime cases
- Conferenced cases with parties and aided in calendar management

### **The Bronx Defenders**

Bronx, NY

*Staff Attorney, Criminal Defense Practice*, June 2022 – February 2023

- Served as lateral staff attorney in the Criminal Defense Practice carrying caseload with multiple indictments including multiple indicted gun felonies under the New York Gun Court Initiative
- Wrote respondent's brief and argued in opposition to People's appeal in the Appellate Term, First Department related to novel discovery reform issues; prevailed in unanimous opinion
- Co-wrote opposition brief responding to original special proceeding commenced by the Bronx County District Attorney's Office in the Appellate Division, First Department; orally argued the opposition in the First Department; prevailed in unanimous opinion; successfully opposed the People's leave application

### **Cohen Clair Lans Greifer Thorpe & Rottenstreich LLP**

New York, NY

*Associate*, February 2022 – May 2022

- Drafted motion papers in multiple complex, high net-worth divorce actions including motions for temporary child support and maintenance and a motion for an interim restraint against the dissipation of a marital asset
- Drafted application for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeals relating to an issue of religious arbitration in matrimonial cases
- Assisted in settlement negotiations and preparation for court conferences and depositions

### **Chambers of the Honorable Lizbeth González**

New York, NY

**Associate Justice, New York State Supreme Court Appellate Division, First Department**

*Principal Law Clerk to Associate Justice*, September 2020 – February 2022

- Drafted majority opinions, dissents, and confidential reports in a wide variety of civil and criminal cases
- Conferenced appeals with Justice González and conducted legal research in preparation for oral argument
- Reviewed and edited draft opinions and reports prepared by the Assistant Law Clerk; supervised Assistant Law Clerk

### **The Center for Appellate Litigation**

New York, NY

*Appellate Counsel*, September 2019 – September 2020

- Provided appellate and post-conviction representation to indigent clients convicted of felony and misdemeanor offenses; perfected four appeals; argued one appeal in the First Department; assisted trial attorney with post-verdict motion; filed post-conviction motion and obtained vacatur of client's sentence
- Co-coached high school mock trial students as part of the office's mock trial program

**Chambers of the Honorable Ellen Gesmer**

New York, NY

**Associate Justice, New York State Supreme Court Appellate Division, First Department***Assistant Law Clerk to Associate Justice, September 2016 – August 2019*

- Drafted majority opinions, dissents, and confidential reports in a wide variety of civil and criminal cases
- Conferenced appeals with Justice Gesmer and conducted legal research in preparation for oral argument
- Assigned and reviewed legal interns' research and writing projects

**The Bronx Defenders**

Bronx, NY

*Staff Attorney, Criminal Defense Practice, September 2013 – September 2016*

- Represented felony and misdemeanor clients from arraignment through final resolution of case
- Extensive substantive motion practice; obtained favorable decisions in felony and misdemeanor cases
- Tried five cases to verdict (four bench, one jury); conducted 12 suppression hearings
- Represented three clients in the Grand Jury
- Counseled clients in connection with cooperation agreements and proffer sessions
- Served on specialized forensic practice group as forensic driving while intoxicated defense specialist

**EDUCATION****University of Illinois College of Law**

Champaign, IL

J.D. May 2013

GPA: 3.54/4.0, *magna cum laude*

- Editor, Moot Court Board
- Member, Illinois Business Law Journal
- Rickert Award for Excellence in Advocacy (Graduation award for excellence in advocacy)
- CALI Excellence for the Future Award (Highest Grade) earned in: "Professional Responsibility," "Domestic Violence Clinic," "Introduction to Intellectual Property," and "Comparative Criminal Procedure"

**New York University**

New York, NY

B.S. with honors in Media, Culture, and Communication, Irish Studies minor May 2010

GPA: 3.81/4.0, *magna cum laude***Bar Admission:** New York**Bar Association and Volunteer Activities:**

- New York County Lawyers' Association, Appellate Courts Committee, Co-Chair
- New York County Lawyers' Association, LGBTQ+ Issues in the Law Committee, Co-Chair
- Four Freedoms Democratic Club, Alternate Judicial Delegate and Diversity Committee Co-Chair
- The LGBT Bar Association of Greater New York (LeGal), Member and Law Student Mentor
- The New York City Bar Association, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Rights Committee, Member
- Gender Fairness Committee, 12th Judicial District, Member
- Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial Program, Courtroom Coordinator
- Appellate Division First Department Attorney Grievance Committee, Member, 2022-2025

**Speaking Engagements:**

- Moderated panel discussion entitled, "Weaving the Fabric of Pride Generation by Generation" at Bronx County Supreme Court on June 23, 2025
- Moderated panel discussion entitled, "LGBTQ+ Representation and the Federal Judiciary" at the New York City Bar Association on June 3, 2024

**Reported Decisions as Counsel:**

- *People v. Simmons*, 78 Misc.3d 544 (Sup. Ct., Bronx Co. 2023)
- *People v. Rodriguez*, 77 Misc.3d 23 (App Term, 1st Dept. 2022)
- *Matter of Clark v. Boyle*, 210 A.D.3d 463 (1st Dept. 2022)
- *People v. Pierre*, 185 A.D.3d 485 (1st Dept. 2020)