Part 1: A Retrospective on the Corey H. Litigation

Hillary Weis Coustan is of counsel to Agrawal Evans LLP, where she specializes in complex litigation. She also serves as adjunct faculty at Loyola University Chicago School of Law and Northwestern University School of Law, where she teaches education law and disability law. She previously served as Associate Director of Loyola’s Education Law and Policy Institute.

Professor Coustan received her JD from Stanford Law School, where she was a Public Interest Fellow and worked in the Youth and Education Law Clinic. Prior to law school, she worked as a program coordinator for a national scholarship program and as a policy associate for a charter school organization. After law school, she clerked for the Honorable Robert W. Gettleman, United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. She has published articles regarding access to educational resources and has advocated on behalf of the educational rights of children.

The Honorable Robert W. Gettleman was appointed to the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois in October of 1994. After graduating from Northwestern University School of Law in 1968, he served as a law clerk for two Chief Judges of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, Latham Castle and Luther M. Swygert, Jr. After his clerkships, he joined the law firm of D’Ancona & Pflaum LLC, where he specialized in complex litigation, litigating both major commercial and pro bono cases, including a number of landmark disability rights cases. He remained with the firm, serving on its Executive Committee and chairing its Litigation Department, until his appointment to the Federal Bench. Judge Gettleman has served on many boards, including the boards of Access Living and the John Howard Association, and the American Bar Association’s Litigation journal, for which he has written numerous articles. He assumed senior status in May of 2009.

Sharon Weitzman Soltman is an attorney who advocates for children on issues involving elementary and secondary school students, with a focus on students with disabilities and those who are poor and/or minority. She has represented individual children as well as plaintiffs in two class actions involving the education of children with disabilities in the Chicago Public Schools. Ms. Soltman worked closely for three decades with Designs for Change, a non-profit educational research, advocacy, and assistance group focused on researching and implementing elementary and secondary school reform strategies in Chicago and nationwide. She helped to found the organization in 1977, first serving as the DFC’s Research Director and then as staff or consulting attorney. She has also served on numerous local and national advisory groups, committees and panels since the 1980s.

Ms. Soltman served as class co-counsel in the landmark Corey H. lawsuit, brought on behalf of the more than 40,000 students with disabilities then enrolled in Chicago Public Schools, which
charged the Chicago Public Schools and the Illinois State Board of Education with illegally segregating special education students in violation of the 1975 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This lawsuit was filed in 1992 in collaboration with co-counsel from Northwestern University Legal Clinic, and came to an end in 2014. For her work on Corey H., Ms. Soltman received the David Iris Award for Child Advocacy from the Council for Disability Rights and Distinguished Alumni Award from her alma mater Northwestern University School of Law.

**Kathleen C. Yannias** has maintained a private practice since 1994 specializing in disability issues and administrative law. She serves as a hearing officer and conciliator for the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, hearing cases involving allegations of discrimination in housing, public accommodations, and employment. She also provides accessibility consulting services, in which capacity she has conducted ADA trainings and reviewed policies and procedures to assure ADA compliance for government and private entities. Prior to starting her private practice, Ms. Yannias served as director of the Legal Center of the Council for Disability Rights and associate director and staff attorney with the Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Inc. She received her JD from Northwestern University School of Law.

Ms. Yannias was appointed by Judge Gettleman to serve as a monitor in the Corey H. litigation from 2004 to 2013. In that capacity, she monitored two consent decrees involving issues of the provision of special education services in Chicago Public Schools and the monitoring obligations of the Illinois State Board of Education. She advised the Court of the status of implementation by the parties, reviewed reports from the Chicago Public Schools and the Illinois State Board of Education, prepared written reports to the Court on progress, and filed motions where necessary to ensure compliance.

**Part 2:** Education Law: A Year in Review (2nd Annual)

**Nicki Bazer** is of counsel to Franczek Radelet P.C., where she focuses her legal practice on special education, teacher misconduct issues, educator licensure compliance, student assessment, English Language learners, and general public school compliance, as well as charter schools. She previously served as the General Counsel of the Illinois State Board of Education, where she oversaw the Legal staff, the Government Relations staff, the Public School Recognition Division and the Rules and Waivers Division.

Prior to joining the Illinois State Board of Education, Ms. Bazer was the Chief of the Disability Rights Bureau at the Illinois Attorney General’s Office. Before taking the position at the Attorney General’s Office, Ms. Bazer was a senior attorney in the Housing Law Project at the Legal Assistance Foundation. She began her legal career as a law clerk to the Honorable Janet C. Hall, Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut. Ms. Bazer graduated from New York University School of Law, where she was a recipient of the Root-Tilden-Kern Public Interest Scholarship.

**Gery Chico** combines an accomplished background in city government and education, law and business. He served as Chairman of the Illinois State Board of Education from June 2011 to
January 2015 and as President of the Board of Trustees for the Chicago Public Schools from 1995 to 2001. He has also served as Chairman of the City Colleges of Chicago, President of the Board of Commissioners of the Chicago Park District and a Commissioner of the Public Building Commission of Chicago. From 1992 to 1995, Mr. Chico served as Chief of Staff to Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley. He previously worked for the City of Chicago Department of Planning and the Chicago City Council - Committee on Finance.

In addition to Mr. Chico’s government service, he has practiced law and represented leading companies in Chicago and the nation over the past 28 years, principally in the areas of real estate and land use, government regulation and business counseling. Since April 2004, Mr. Chico has been a Senior Partner at the Chicago law firm of Chico & Nunes, P.C. He previously served as special counsel to the law firm of Arnstein & Lehr LLP, senior partner in the law firm of Altheimer & Gray, and partner at Sidley Austin LLP. Mr. Chico received his JD from Loyola University Chicago School of Law in 1985. He has been a candidate for the U.S. Senate and for Mayor of the City of Chicago.

Amy Kosanovich Dickerson is a partner at the law firm Franczek Radelet P.C., where she represents educational institutions, including public school districts, charter schools, private schools and higher education institutions, in a variety of general education law matters. She counsels clients in the areas of special education, student rights, student discipline, school board policy and governance, and a wide range of labor and employment matters. Ms. Dickerson represents public school districts in individual educational program (IEP) meetings, due process matters, and residency and discipline hearings. She also represents clients in state and federal court litigation and before the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights and various Illinois state agencies.

Ms. Dickerson received her JD from Loyola University Chicago School of Law. She leads the Firm’s Education Law Practicum program with Loyola, serves as a faculty member for Loyola’s Childlaw Trial Practice course, and has previously served as a legal writing professor for Loyola. She has been recognized by Illinois Super Lawyers as a Rising Star in Schools and Education.

Miranda Johnson became the associate director of Loyola’s Education Law and Policy Institute following a clinical teaching fellowship in the law school’s Civitas ChildLaw Clinic. Prior to working at Loyola, she was a staff attorney at Advocates for Children of New York, an organization promoting access to better educational services for New York City school children. She previously served as a law clerk to the Honorable Allyne R. Ross, United States District Court of the Eastern District of New York. She holds a JD from New York University School of Law and a Master in Public Affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University. Prior to law school, she taught high school social studies at a residential high school in Colorado and conducted research in Tanzania on a Fulbright Scholarship.

Timothy Love is the Associate Dean of Students for Loyola University Chicago and a proud Rambler double-alumnus (BA 2003; JD 2013). In addition, Mr. Love holds a Master of Science in Higher Education Administration from Colorado State University. Since returning to his alma mater in 2008 to work in the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, Mr. Love has
collaborated with campus and community partners to seek innovative ways to address the problem of sexual misconduct on campus. In his present role, Mr. Love oversees the University’s response to several types of "critical incidents," including sexual violence, behavioral and mental health crises, high-profile student conduct matters, and whatever else the students throw at him on any given day. Mr. Love has also taught Legal Aspects of Higher Education as adjunct faculty, and he often presents and consults on the topics of Title IX, student conduct, conflict resolution, and cultural competence.

**Sarah Schriber** is the director of Prevent School Violence Illinois, a broad-based coalition of school stakeholders that partners with schools to prevent bias-based bullying and violence and improve school climate through a process of Comprehensive School Transformation. PSVI, in collaboration with the National School Climate Center, is currently working with five Illinois middle schools to pilot the process. PSVI also partners with the University of Illinois at Chicago to advocate that schools administer the Bias-Based Bullying Survey, a survey the team developed to help schools understand their students’ experiences with bullying in which power differences based on personal characteristics play a role.

Ms. Schriber is working on chapters for two books: one about comprehensive school transformation and the other about listening to the experiences of LGB/T and gender non-conforming youth with bullying and school discipline to inform efforts at reform. Previously, she served as the policy director of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance and was a staff attorney at the ACLU of Illinois. She received her JD from Northwestern University School of Law.

**Mark Weber** is the Vincent de Paul Professor of Law at DePaul University College of Law. Professor Weber’s main professional interests are disability rights and complex tort litigation. He is the author of *Disability Harassment* (NYU Press 2007), *Understanding Disability Law* (Lexis-Nexis 2d ed. 2012), *Special Education Law Cases and Material* (Lexis-Nexis 4th ed. 2013) (with Sarah Redfield and Ralph Mawdsley), and *Special Education Law and Litigation Treatise* (LRP Pubs. 3d ed. 2008). He frequently speaks on disability law issues at national and international programs. He has presented testimony on the implementation of the ADA to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, and is active in community service and legislative initiatives on disability matters.

Professor Weber began his career as a staff attorney at the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago and then worked as a clinical fellow at University of Chicago Law School. At DePaul, he has served as Associate Dean and Acting Dean of the College of Law. He received his JD from Yale University.