



April 30, 2026
Midyear Report
Report from District 2 – CT, NY, VT
Honorable Yadhira Gonzalez-Taylor – District 2 Director

I am happy to provide this report on behalf of activities and events that have taken place in District 2 in anticipation of the Mid-Year Meeting in Alaska. District 2 will be represented at the meeting which is scheduled to take place aboard the beautiful Holland America Cruise with all our sisters-in-law.

We are happy to report that District 2 has been represented at various events in support of our sister-in-law.

District 2 was well represented at the City University of New York in December, when the Hon. Carmen Velazquez received the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Belle Zeller Scholarship Trust of the City University of New York. We were glad to be present to witness the induction to Supreme Court of our member and sister-in-law, the Hon. Soma Syed in December!

At the beginning of the year, we welcomed new members to our district. Judges Shakera Algarin (Bronx County Civil Court), Lauvienska Polanco (Bronx County Criminal Court), Fiordaliza Rodriguez (Bronx County Family Court) and Catherine Schaeewe (New York Court of Claims) joined our sisterhood in law. We were then joined by judges Edit Shkreli (Bronx County Civil Court), and Crystal Villaseñor (New York County Family court).

We are grateful to see our District members growing and look forward to welcoming many more.

In January District 2 Director and other members of NAWJ were present at the inductions of the Hon. Shakera Algarin, Hon. Lauvienska Polanco.

In February, our Chair of Projects, Hon. Carmen Velazquez received the Global Distinguished Leadership Award at the United Nations. She was recognized for her extraordinary leadership, unwavering commitment to justice and lifelong dedication to advancing the rule of law on a global stage.

On February 21, the District was also represented at the 10th Annual Prevention of Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse Symposium hosted by the Foundation for the Prevention of Addictions and Domestic Violence, Inc.

We gathered as sisters-in-law at the Annual NYSBA year. This year was specifically meaningful as the NYSBA celebrated its 150th anniversary.

We were happy to welcome our very own President Pam Washington in commemorating Women's History Month at the New York City Bar where President Washington and Past President Michelle Rick received recognitions from the New York City Bar Association for their contributions to the advancement of women and the bench. We also participated in the IAWJ's power hour networking reception at the Rockefeller Foundation where we heard from President – Hon. Mina Sougrati on the growing leadership of women in the judiciary and the role they play in strengthening access to justice.

Our Immediate Past President – Hon. Bianka Perez was elected and sworn in as President of the New York State Supreme Court Justices Association and she was also recognized by the Bronx Borough President for her contributions to the Bar and Bench during the Borough President's Dominican Heritage Month Celebration.

We were blessed with a visit from IAWJ members from Tanzania who were visiting New York City and were hosted by the Hon. Cynthia Isales who introduced the visiting group to the Hall of Justice where Supreme Court matters are heard. The group was able to observe various proceedings taking place during their visit.

Big thanks to our newest member, Hon. Crystal Villasenor who together with the New York City Chapter of the New York State Women's Bar Association collaborated with NAWJ in sponsoring and participating in a mentor jet session at Cardozo School of Law this past month. Several NAWJ Members were in attendance – Judges Sophia Hershman, Crystal Villasenor, Anna Mikhaleva, Mary Davis, Cynthia Isales, and District 2 Director Yadhira Gonzalez-Taylor.

We are pleased to report that we will be hosting and sponsoring a Law Day event at New York City Civil Court on May 7, 2026 in collaboration with New York City Chapter of the New York State Women's Bar Association, The Puerto Rican Bar Association, The New York City Bar, New York State Academy of Trial Lawyers, Brooklyn Bar Association, and the New York State Unified Court System. We are thankful to the committee members, Hon. Kathy King (past District 2 Director) and Hon. Crystal Villasenor as well as NYSBA New York Chapter President, Lisett Ferreira in helping us put this meaningful Law Day event in place.

We look forward to more events around the district and will be planning a mentor jet program with Mount St. Vincents School in Bronx County and John Jay College as well as a Color of Justice Program to be hosted by Monroe University.

