

# The Judicial Delegate Primary and the Judicial Convention

By Elizabeth Kellner

***The Primary.*** On June 22 election day, the slate of 18 Judicial Delegates (the full number to which the 69th AD was entitled) endorsed by the three reform clubs, Three Parks, Broadway and West Side Democrats (6 from each club), faced a primary challenge. There were 4 unaffiliated challengers. Three of the challengers were elected. Each club lost 1 of the 6 slots on their slate.

Experience tells us that when primary voters are faced with a long list of unfamiliar names competing for an unfamiliar position and the opportunity to vote for 18 people, only the most highly informed and engaged voters will do that. So what happens time and again--and it happened on June 22--is that women outpoll men, and

the random luck of your ballot position is also significant, with those at the top of a long list of candidates consistently doing better than those at the bottom. The 3 club-endorsed delegates who lost out were all men with long records of service to the Democratic Party on the Upper West Side. The top 15 finishers among the 18 delegates elected were all women. Interestingly, the internal rankings of the 15 women finishers changed a bit after the absentee ballots were counted, with the club-endorsed candidates doing better. Of the 3 challengers who were elected, only 1 actually showed up at the August 5 Judicial Convention held at the School of Visual Arts on W. 23rd St. All Delegate candidates were sent notice mailed to the address they gave on the nominating petitions filed with the Board of Elections with the convention date, time, location and other information provided.

### ***The Judicial***

**Convention.** There were only two vacancies to be filled this year, but there were 17 candidates who were eligible because they had been reported as qualified by New York County's Independent Screening Panel. Eleven of the 17 had been reported as qualified in prior years, so the County's rules permit them to compete for a seat without having to go through the panel again. The rules also provide that the screening panel may report up to three people for each vacancy, and that's what they did —  $11 + 6 = 17$ . Acting Supreme Court Justices Margaret Chan and John J. Kelley (formerly a Three Parks member before he joined the bench) were elected. The other 15 candidates withdrew after they were nominated, realizing they did not have a sufficient number of committed votes to mount a challenge. Last year the convention was held via Zoom. This year it was in-

person with proof of vaccination required by the venue. The time length of speeches permitted was significantly shortened so the process moved faster. Almost all of the candidates had sent out materials about their qualifications and record before the convention. They had also called many of the delegates personally or hosted social events to meet and talk.

Thank you to the Three Parks Delegates and Alternates who attended and were prepared for a roll call vote if necessary: Elizabeth Kellner, Audrey Isaacs, Deborah Thomas, Alan Flacks, Elaine Hazzard and Sam Bartos. We have two great jurists to elect as full Supreme Court Justices in November.