

# Judicial Delegate Candidate Profiles

The following ten Club members have been nominated for 2023 Judicial Delegate or alternate Delegate.

**Sam Bartos** was a concert pianist and teacher when he moved into the neighborhood 25 years ago, Sam transitioned into a career in the law and is currently an active litigation attorney. He has served on numerous committees at the City Bar and the New York County Lawyers Association, and has also spent countless hours working pro bono to protect his clients' rights, including those of members of Three Parks. He believes fervently in the importance of an independent and highly qualified judiciary, and takes very seriously the essential role delegates from Three Parks play at the judicial conventions.

**Alan Flacks** is an experienced delegate to the judicial Nominating Convention, having served many times. He is conversant with the procedures, and delegates seek his guidance. He is committed to the merit screening panel process, which he helped to establish. After each convention, he writes a report of the proceedings for club members and other interested people. A long-time TPID member and Democratic County Committee member, Alan has also served as the Club's corresponding

secretary and membership secretary. His community and civic activities include his block association, the 24th Pct. Community Council, the NAACP, and the St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Community Advisory Board.

**Elizabeth Kellner** is a retired attorney, living in Manhattan Valley for 46 years. A member of TPID for 40 years, she has served as a Judicial Delegate or Alternate several times, as well as Club President and board member. In the 2021 Judicial Delegate Primary in the 69th AD she received more votes than any other candidate. As an attorney, her work involved litigation, i.e., disputes in court. Since retiring, in addition to various Democratic campaigns, Elizabeth has served on the board of a major network of community health care clinics, a public interest foundation affiliated with Columbia Law School (her alma mater), and a child advocacy policy not-for-profit. Since this last summer she has volunteered to support the hundreds of migrant families sent to a Manhattan Valley hotel after having been bused from southern states. Her husband maintains an active practice in the New York courts where he regularly follows developments. Her two adult children teach in New York.

**Susan Maderer** has lived on the Upper West Side for over 40 years. Prior to retiring, she was a manager in the garment industry and started her own business as a financial organizer. She is currently an active member of Three

Parks Independent Democrats and takes part in petitioning, writing postcards, and attending rallies and marches. In addition, she is a member of the Manhattan Democratic County Committee. Finally, she is Co-treasurer of 102nd-103rd Streets Block Association, building representative for Bloomingdale Aging in Place (BAIP), and serves on several volunteer committees of the New York City Ballet.

**Aaron Mendelsohn** has lived in Manhattan Valley with his wife, two daughters, and newly arrived baby boy since 2008. He's an attorney, life-long Democrat, committed public servant, and has been involved in politics and community organizing since working on the Clinton-Gore campaign in 1996. Aaron served for more than 10 years as a federal prosecutor at the U.S. Department of Justice, and has appeared before hundreds of federal, state, and local judges throughout his legal career. He's currently the Director of the NYC Council's Oversight & Investigations Division. Aaron is committed, among other issues, to equity in criminal justice, education, healthcare, and housing.

**Josh Pepper** is an attorney in private practice representing plaintiffs in civil-rights cases. Before moving to private practice, he spent many years in law practice for the state, including stints as an Assistant Attorney General and Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel to the NYS Office of Mental

Health. Josh is also a longtime club member and was president in 2007.

**Stephanie Tegnazian** has been a TPID member for approximately 30 years and involved in the judiciary selection process since Lloyd McAuley began the interview forums. She has visited Housing Court, Court of Claims, Family Court, Civil Court, Supreme Court, and Appellate Court to better understand how judges do their jobs. Stephanie worked on Gale Brewer's successful City Council and Borough President campaigns, and also campaigned for State Senator Robert Jackson and for Congresspersons Max Rose (Staten Island) and Jess King (PA). Last year she became involved with NY VOTES, a statewide grassroots advocacy group dedicated to guiding lawmakers in Albany on what needs to be changed in our NYS voting laws. She feels highly qualified to be a judicial representative and represent TPID in this highly important process.

**Deborah Thomas** has lived on the Upper West Side (Manhattan Valley) for 38 years, is a lifelong Democrat, and has served on the NY County Committee since 2006 and as a Judicial Delegate in 2020 and 2021. She is a former Board member and current club member of Three Parks Independent Democrats since 2004, and she has been active with TPID doing petitioning, tabling, phone banking for candidates, working at the Obama and Hillary storefronts in 2008, 2012 and 2016,

tabling for Biden in 2020, and fighting for health care reform and saving Social Security. An animal lover, she volunteers as a Cat Adoption Counselor at the NYC Animal Care Centers (City shelter) and is a dedicated advocate for animal welfare issues.

Outside of politics, she is an opera singer and a retired music and theater teacher in the NYC Public Schools, where she co-wrote curriculum for the “ESL through the Arts” program, which uses the Arts to help English Language Learners gain a greater command of the English language.

**Doug Whelan** grew up in western New York and has lived in the neighborhood since mid-2019, when he moved to the city shortly after college. He served as an alternate delegate for Three Parks last year and is currently a first-year law student at Fordham. Doug is very eager to continue learning more about the judicial selection process and help ensure that principled, compassionate, and well-qualified judges are selected for the bench, particularly at a time when New York's state courts are beginning to receive much-needed attention and heightened scrutiny.

**Lauren Williams** served as president of Three Parks Independent Democrats in 2015 and 2016 and was co-manager for the Clinton/Kaine Campaign Center in the fall of 2016. Also, she served as Three Parks’ membership director, corresponding secretary, newsletter editor, recording

secretary and Board member at large. She welcomes the opportunity to again serve as a Judicial Delegate, especially given the ongoing attacks to our judicial system and the increasing importance of the judicial system on our voting and other rights.