

Judicial Delegate Candidate Profiles

The following Club members have been nominated for 2024 Judicial Delegate or alternate Delegate.

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.

Elaine Hazzard is a longtime UpperWest Sider of more than 27 years. A licensed NY attorney, she has appeared at both civil and criminal trials and hearings in Federal and State courts, and is admitted to the bars of four states and to the U.S. Supreme Court. Elaine has been a court-appointed arbitrator in civil cases and taught law to university students. She has served as a public defender. As a Judicial Delegate and

Alternate since 2019, Elaine seeks to choose more excellent judges to safeguard our threatened democracy. She will choose strong, independent judges who counter injustice, kleptocrats, and organized crime and who will stand up for the rights of individuals.

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. Her husband maintains an active practice in the New York courts where he regularly follows developments. Her two adult children and daughter-in-law are educators in New York.

Susan Maderer has lived on the Upper West Side for over 40 years. She was a manager in the garment industry before leaving to start her own business as a financial organizer. She has been a member of Three Parks, active in activities such as petitioning, postcard writing, attending rallies and marches.

She is a member of the Democratic County Committee. Since retiring, she has been an active volunteer, as a co-treasurer of 102nd-103rd Streets Block Association, building rep for BAIP, as well as several committees of the New York City Ballet.

Aaron Mendelsohn has lived in Manhattan Valley with his wife and three children since 2008. He is an attorney, life-long Democrat and 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 is 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.

Alfred Placeres was formerly a staff attorney for Harlem Legal Services and

maintained a law office at 2710 Broadway from 1982 to 2015. He is a former Board Member of Community Board 7, former President and board member of the NYS Federation of Hispanic Chambers of Commerce, former Chair, Immigration Law Committee, of the Hispanic National Bar Association, and author of "Como Conseguir Los Papeles." Civic Awards include Mayor Bloomberg's Small Business Advocate Award, NYS Comptroller H. Carl McCall Civic Service Award, and the Greater NY Chamber of Commerce Small Business Advocate Award. Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer proclaimed July 15, 2019, Alfred Placeres Appreciation Day.

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 in 2022 and 2023, and has been a member of the Three Parks board during the past year. Outside of the club, Doug is a second-year law student at Fordham. He 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.

Anthony (Tony) Zak is a long-time Upper West Sider, having resided in the same UWS zip code since 1953 and the same building since 1992, where he lives with his wife and where they raised their three children. He has been a registered Democrat since 1966. He was elected twice to the NY County Democratic Committee, once in the early 1970s and again last year. Now retired, he worked for approximately 50 years in mainframe IT. He has been a member of TPID since 2018 and has solicited nominating petition signatures multiple times. He also serves as a poll worker on election days in various inspector positions. He served as a petit juror on several federal and NY county criminal trials. He served as a NY County grand juror twice and appeared as a witness once. The qualities he looks for in a judge include analytic skills, attention to detail, communication skills, critical thinking skills, and decision-making skills.