

# member Spotlight



## Michael Reed, Esq.

**Tejash:** How long have you been a member of the WCBA and what are some of your contributions?

**Michael:** Although I have been a member for less than five years, I have been very active. I have attended many WCBA events and meetings and written articles for Westchester Lawyer magazine on emerging issues in employment law, including, overtime, arbitration, and federal court procedure.

**Tejash:** What is your current job and practice area?

**Michael:** In May, I joined White Plains-based Yankwitt LLP as a Counsel. Yankwitt LLP is a boutique litigation firm that handles every kind of litigation except family law. Half of my practice is comprised of employment cases, and the other half is a variety of complex litigation matters ranging from commercial to personal injury cases.

**Tejash:** How did you come to your current position?

In this feature, Tejash V. Sanchala, Esq., interviews WCBA members about their experiences and insights. Tejash is Co-Chair of the Employment Law Committee and Law Day Committee and a member of the Nominating Committee.

He welcomes any comments and suggestions for future columns. Tejash's contact information can be found at: <http://www.villanuevalaw.com/tejash-v-sanchala.html>



**Michael:** After working for Kirkland & Ellis and clerking for a federal judge, I worked at a boutique plaintiffs' firm in Rye Brook that specializes in class actions and collective actions. I was really impressed when I learned about Yankwitt LLP, and I jumped at the opportunity to work there. At Yankwitt, I primarily represent defendants. My time representing plaintiffs provided me with insights that will benefit my defendant clients.

**Tejash:** What is one of your favorite legal success stories?

**Michael:** It is hard to pick. Recently, I tried a wage and hour case in arbitration that went on for years. I think a lot of lawyers would have pegged us for defeat, but I had been reading and litigating wage and hours cases for many years so I was looking at it from a different perspective. I decided to focus on a seldom-used provision of the statute, which would give us our best shot to win. The trial featured its share of surprises and I had to react in the moment. Fortunately, we prevailed.

**Tejash:** Who were some of your legal mentors?

**Michael:** I would start with Judge William Martini of the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey. My two years clerking for Judge Martini were an amazing, inside look at lawyering and judging in the federal courts. Then I would have to say Vickie Reznik and Katherine McDaniel from my days at Kirkland & Ellis. I worked with them on a class action that fought to preserve Medicaid services for children in Tennessee. At NYU, my mentors were Professors Helen Hershkoff and Linda Silberman, who taught civil procedure, choice of law, and federal jurisdiction. They made me realize that those subjects, while they might seem dull, are some of the most fascinating and consequential areas of law. My current mentor is Russell Yankwitt, who has helped me balance the compassion necessary to work with individual defendants and small business owners, with the aggressiveness to battle the top plaintiffs' attorneys.

**Tejash:** What might people be surprised to learn about you?

**Michael:** I was a physics major in college. I did theoretical research on the foundations of quantum mechanics and experimental research on a type of matter believed to be the coldest thing in the universe. After college, I studied history and philosophy of science in graduate school.

**Tejash:** What do you splurge on?

**Michael:** A few times a year, some friends and I head into New York City for top notch sushi. Recent gems were Sushi Azabu, Sushi Inoue, and Kosaka. We are always on the lookout for new places.

**Tejash:** What are some of your favorite movies?

**Michael:** *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Field of Dreams*, and *Good Will Hunting*.

**Tejash:** What is your favorite meal?

**Michael:** Pizza. My favorite, for sentimental reasons (and also because it is the best), is Antonio's in Amherst, Massachusetts. Closer to home, my vote for best pizza is Burrata in Eastchester.

**Tejash:** What are some of your favorite vacation trips ?

**Michael :** Before kids, it was my bar trip to Montana, where my wife and I visited Glacier National Park and rode on the Going to the Sun Road. With kids, it would be our family trips to Stone Harbor, New Jersey.

**Tejash:** What is the best advice you have ever received?

**Michael:** When I worked at Kirkland & Ellis, one of the partners told me that what set Kirkland apart was that clients didn't come to Kirkland to be told how they would lose, they came to be told how they would win. The mindset that even difficult cases are not hopeless, and that smart, aggressive lawyering can make a difference has stuck with me throughout my career.

**Tejash:** What advice would you give to new lawyers?

**Michael:** Never give anyone a first draft; think and talk through ideas. Write a lot. Be firm with your adversaries but always be polite. And if you can, try to clerk for a judge. In my opinion there is no better training.

**Tejash:** What is one of your future ambitions?

**Michael:** Having just started working for a firm in White Plains, I would like to cultivate more relationships with lawyers in the area. I have been giving CLEs to lawyers for some time, but I would also like to teach law.

**Tejash:** What is your favorite part of being involved with the WCBA?

**Michael:** Making new friends and learning new things. It is a pleasure to be part of a community of smart, dedicated lawyers.

## Westchester County Bar Association's

# LAWYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

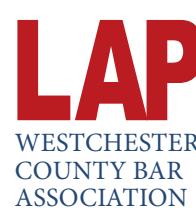
### The WCBA Offers Free Confidential Help For the Problems Lawyers, Judges and Law Students Face

The demands of the legal profession are known to contribute to the substantially greater risk for alcoholism and depression suffered by lawyers over that of the general population.

Shame, fear and stigma often make it difficult to seek help, but it is important to act when the signs of impairment begin.

**Contact WCBA's Lawyer Assistance Committee Chair Daniel Seymour  
914-262-0548  
dseymouresq@aol.com**

All LAP services are confidential and protected under Section 499 of the Judiciary Law as amended by Chapter 327 of the Laws of 1993.



**A call can  
save a career.  
A call can  
save a life.**