

The Activist Ombudsman: A Discussion

2014 Annual Conference of the Coalition of
Federal Ombudsman

Towards An Activist Ombudsman: An Introduction

Howard Gadlin

This introduction frames the following articles in this mini-colloquy on the work of the Office of the Ombudsman at the NIH, Center for cooperative Resolution. The office is unique in its size, experience, and approach to the work of the organizational ombudsman. Through this series of articles, we share our understandings of the potential for the role of the organizational conflict management specialist called ombudsmen and to assist other organizations and practitioners as they consider and enact similar roles within their workplaces

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Identity and Culture in Ombudsman Practice

Linda M. Brothers

Most of us in the fields of conflict resolution recognize that we live in an increasingly diverse world, one wherein we seek to understand and resolve conflicts between individuals and groups possessing complex and disparate identities. This article explores the salience of identity and culture within ombuds practice, also referencing recent social science research to examine how implicit bias affects both our understanding of a situation and our conflict resolution strategies. Finally, the article explores possible strategies for isolating and decreasing unconscious ombudsman bias.

The Reflective Observer Model

J. Kathleen Moore

The reflective observer (RO) model is a unique process that incorporates live observation by a trained observer of an ombudsman during a mediation session, followed by an in-depth debriefing between the ombudsman and the RO. The clinical goals is to explore cognitive schema used by the ombudsman in decision making during critical moments of the mediation and to describe the underrecognized rationale behind seemingly intuitive expertise.

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Two Perspectives on Learning the Organizational Ombudsman Role

Linda Myers & Lisa Witzler

This article explores the challenges in learning the role of the organizational ombudsman from the perspectives of two practitioners - one an experienced workplace mediator, the other a student of conflict resolution. The discussion of the shift in thinking, as well as skills needed to transition into the various facets of organizational ombudsman work, combines concepts from ombudsman theory with insights on enhancing ombudsman practice.

Stretching the Coaching Model

Samantha Levine-Finley

This article provides an orientation to a general coaching model employed within the NIH OO/CCR, and explains how it fits within the framework of our interpretation of the ombudsman role and compares to other approaches in the coaching field.

The article describes steps that ombudsmen may employ as the coaching relationship becomes more established and as trust develops between the ombudsman and visitor. It also describes indicators of potential problems in coaching and how an ombudsman might respond to them.

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Prioritizing Practice in Ombudsman and ADR Programs

David E. Michael

This article examines ways in which the OO/CCR at the NIH pursues activities that comprise an orientation toward practice and supports development of an "activist" ombudsman orientation. The article opens by describing challenges that alternative dispute resolution (ADR) organizations face, contrasts them with the experience of OO/CCR, details elements of a practice orientation as experienced at OO/CCR, and suggests ways in which ADR and ombudsman organizations may address their own challenges and pursue a practice orientation.

Workplace Coaching: Models and Resources

GORF

- G** What is the Goal of the conversation?
- O** What is the Other person's POV?
- R** Rehearse the conversation
- F** Feedback from the coach throughout the discussion

Source: Mazur, C. "Coaching Will Be the Most Important ADR Tool in the Coming Decades—Is Your Workplace Positioned to Take Advantage of It?" *Cutting Edge Advances in Resolving Workplace Disputes*. Ed. CPR. New York, NY: CPR, 2014

Ombuds Tool Kit during the Coaching Relationship

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Higher | <p>Provide challenging or critical feedback; explore the person's contribution to the conflict</p> <p>Observe person's behavior and style and share impact</p> <p>Probe the interrelatedness of behaviors and impacts in the workplace</p> <p>Encourage perspective-taking/self-awareness</p> <p>Encourage organizational and systemic awareness</p> <p>Ask elicitive questions and begin to dissect situation to understand complexities, dynamics, and context</p> <p>Actively listen (summarize, paraphrase, ask open-ended questions)</p> |
| Level of Trust | |
| Lower | <p>Clarify the ombudsman's role</p> |
| | <p>Less Established More Established</p> <p>Status of Coaching Relationship</p> |

Source: Levine-Finley, S. (2014). "Stretching the Coaching Model." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 31(4)

The Federal Coaching Network provides resources for federal coaches:

<https://max.omb.gov/community/display/CrossAgency/Federal+Coaching+Network>

There are two opportunities to join a Federal Coaching Community of Practice (COP):

- **M. Katherine Manderson**, an Associate Ombudsman at the State Department, runs a community of practice for conflict coaches every other month (mandersonmk@state.gov). Email for more information.
- **Larry Westberg**, Executive Coach, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, runs a Government Coaching COP at 7:00pm ET on the second Wednesday of each month. Bridge: 424-203-8075, code 548301# (larry.a.westberg2.civ@mail.mil). Open to all.

Coaching Bibliography

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Office of the Ombudsman

Coalition of Federal Ombudsman – Annual Conference
September 30, 2014

Cindy Foster, Ombudsman
Jasmine Abraham, Associate Director



Agenda

- **Overview of FINRA**
- **Overview of FINRA's Ombuds Office**
 - Constituents
 - Goals
 - How We Work
- **Serving Internal & External Constituents**
 - Similarities
 - Differences
 - Challenges
- **An Integrated USOA/IOA Model**
- **Hypothetical Case Scenarios**



What is FINRA?

- **The Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA)—is an independent, non-governmental regulator for all securities firms doing business with the public in the United States.**
- **Approximately 3,400 employees in 17 cities across the U.S.**
- **FINRA protects investors by regulating brokers and brokerage firms and by monitoring trading in the U.S. stock markets.**
- **FINRA's mission is investor protection and market integrity.**
 - Deter misconduct by enforcing rules
 - Detection and prevention
 - Disciplinary action against those who break the rules



What does FINRA do?

- **Oversee 4,100 brokerage firm, 160,000 branch offices, and almost 636,000 registered representatives.**
- **Write and enforce rules governing the activities of securities firms and brokers.**
- **Examines broker-dealers for compliance with its own rules and with federal securities laws and rules of the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board.**
- **Regulate the markets**
- **Educates investors**
- **Operates a forum to help resolve disputes between investors and investment professionals.**

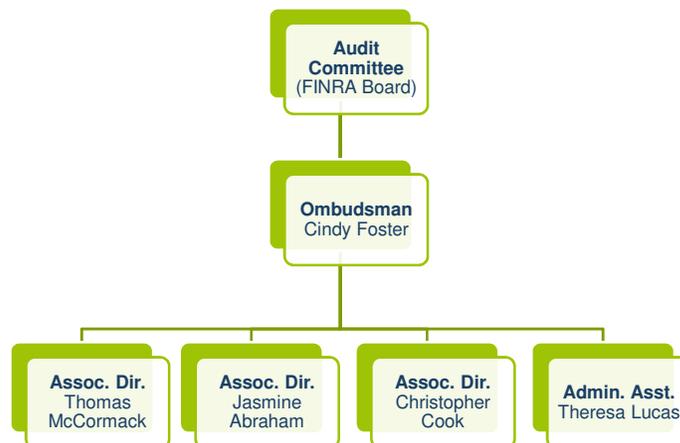


FINRA's Office of the Ombudsman

- **The Ombudsman's Office is an independent, neutral, informal and confidential office that works informally to assist FINRA constituents in finding solutions to issues and concerns they have with FINRA. Constituents contact our Office if:**
 - They cannot resolve the issue through normal channels
 - Cannot determine the proper channel to get the issue addressed
 - Require anonymity or confidentiality
 - A formal process does not exist to address the issue
- **Confidentiality is preserved unless:**
 - There is a risk of imminent risk or serious harm, or
 - When legal requirements require FINRA to take action



Ombudsman Staff



Who are FINRA's Constituents?

External

- Investors
- Brokerage firms
- Issuers
- Brokers (current and former)
- Attorneys
- Arbitrators and Mediators

Internal

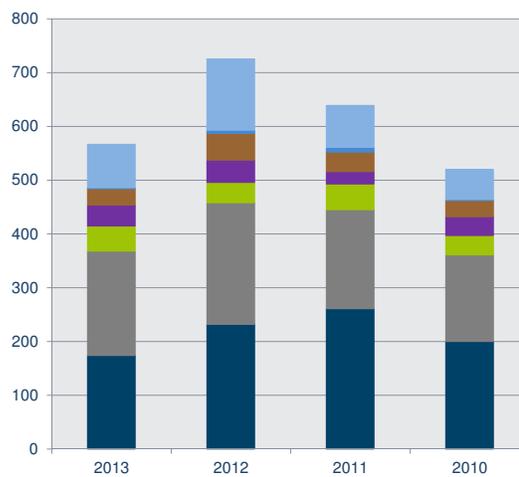
- Employees
- Contractors



Ombudsman Constituents

Cases by Visitor Type

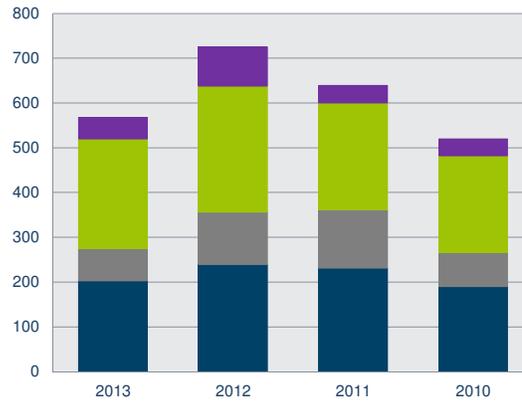
- Anonymous/Other
- Issuer
- FINRA Employee
- Attorney
- Member Firm
- Associated Person
- Public Investor



Ombudsman Inquiries and Complaints

Visits by Case Type

- Miscellaneous
- Information Requests
- Other Complaints
- FINRA Complaints



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Role of the FINRA Ombudsman

- Advocate for fair process
- Mitigate risks and avoid litigation
- Serve as an early warning system
- Relay concerns and upward feedback from constituents
- Direct constituents to resources and established channels for grievances
- Review complaints to determine whether regulatory action is consistent with pertinent policies and procedures
- Resolve issues and concerns at the lowest level possible
- Make informal suggestions for improving policies, procedures and practices



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The FINRA Ombudsman Toolkit

- Listening
- Identifying & evaluating options
- Clarifying decisions, policies & practices
- Facilitation
- Pointing to helpful resources
- Alternative communication channel
- Taking actions to resolve issues that fall outside of normal forums/procedures
- Advocating for fair practices



The FINRA Ombudsman Toolkit Cont'd.

- Review pertinent documents
- Interview the involved parties
- Research similar matters
- Consult subject matter experts
- Escalate the matter to business line management
- Monitor resolution of the concern
- Provide a final response to the constituent
- Facilitate escalation by the constituent
- Suggest policy or procedure change, if applicable



Serving Internal & External Constituents

■ Similarities

- Active listening and issue identification
- Exploring and evaluating options
- Clarifying policies and procedures
- Providing anonymous upward feedback to FINRA
- Providing access to resources

Serving Internal & External Constituents Cont'd.

■ Differences

| OMB Toolkit | External | Internal |
|------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Facilitation | Medium | Low |
| Confidentiality | Low | High |
| Coaching | Low | High |
| Trend Identification | High | Low |
| Responsive Suggestions | Medium - High | Low |
| Research | High | Low |

Challenges

▪ IOA vs. USOA

- Oversight
 - Record-keeping
 - Preserving Confidentiality
- Being an office of Notice
- Conducting in-depth Reviews
- Initiating independent Reviews

Challenges Cont'd.

▪ External

- Calls may be recorded
- The “real” identity of the visitor
- Missing details
- Serial visitors
- Spam/Phishing
- Misquotes by visitors (blog posts, media outlets)
- Ongoing regulatory matters must be kept confidential

▪ Internal

- Office of last resort
- Exposure
- Missing details

Hypothetical Case #1

An external visitor contacted the Ombudsman's Office stating an employee may be engaging in outside employment activities that may present a conflict.

Hypothetical Case #2

A chief compliance officer of a brokerage firm expressed concerns about the severity of disciplinary actions for certain regulatory misconduct. The brokerage firm had no prior disciplinary history.

Hypothetical Case #3

An arbitration claimant, a former broker, involved in an ongoing arbitration believed the respondent brokerage firm introduced regulatory information inappropriately in the proceeding. The claimant requested the Ombudsman's assistance.



Questions?



FINRA Ombudsman's Office

Address: 9509 Key West Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Telephone: (240) 386-6270
(888) 700-0028 (Toll Free)
9am to 5pm Eastern

Web: <http://www.finra.org/AboutFINRA/Ombudsman/>

Email: Ombuds@FINRA.org

Fax: (240) 386-6271



***Office of the National
Ombudsman***



**Coalition of Federal Ombudsmen
2014 Conference**

Brian Castro

*National Ombudsman and Assistant Administrator for
Regulatory Enforcement Fairness*

***External Ombuds:
Challenges and Opportunities***

- 1. Demystifying "Ombudsman" --
Reaching Stakeholders on Their Terms***
- 2. Leveraging Impact Multipliers***
 - a. Partnerships***
 - b. Lasting Solutions***



A Brief Background

- The **Office of the National Ombudsman** was created by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA) in 1996 **to help level the regulatory playing field for small business.**
- Too often, even **well-intentioned rules** or the enforcement of these rules **can have unintended consequences** that create unnecessary barriers to small business success. **And that's where the National Ombudsman comes in.**



Assisting America's Small Businesses Through Collaboration

As part of President Obama's mandate to promote a level playing field for small business, **we work directly with federal regulators to facilitate** practical and timely **resolutions** of Regulatory Enforcement Fairness (*REF*) matters impacting small businesses.



REF: How We Deliver

The National Ombudsman **oversees fair enforcement** of small business regulation by:

- **Providing** small business owners a **confidential way to report and resolve** federal REF **problems**, like excessive enforcement action or disproportionate fines
- **Escalating small business concerns** to federal agencies for fairness review & resolution
- **Grading federal agencies** on their small business policies and practices



***DEMYSTIFYING
THE OMBUDS FUNCTION:
REACHING STAKEHOLDERS ON
THEIR TERMS***



What's An Ombudsman?

Challenges

- “Ombudsman” – What is that? Why should stakeholders care?
- Attitudes toward government (e.g., fear, apathy)

Opportunities

- Align simple and memorable messaging with customer perspective
- Demonstrate benefits
 - “Testimonials” that tell the story
 - Accountability



Connecting with Stakeholders

- Language of message
- New, diverse channels
- Removing barriers
- Delivering on commitments



Demonstrating Value: Results

We've helped thousands of small businesses save time and money by resolving difficult regulatory compliance & enforcement issues.



Saving Time and Money for Small Business Owners

Case Study: Regulatory Fines

| COMPANY & INITIAL FINES | INTERVENTION & RESOLUTION | OUTCOME |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Logging company ✓ 50-99 employees ✓ Two violations ✓ \$14,000 in total fines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OSHA worked with company to correct issues 2. Cut to \$ 2,950 with 12 interest free installments | <p>79% ↓</p> <p><i>Fine reduction</i></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Roofing company ✓ Less than five employees ✓ Three violations ✓ \$7,600 in total fines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OSHA counseled owner 2. Reduced to \$2,300 with interest free payment plan | <p>70% ↓</p> <p><i>Fine reduction</i></p> |



***LEVERAGING IMPACT MULTIPLIERS:
PARTNERSHIPS &
LASTING SOLUTIONS***



Partnering to Reach Shared Objectives

- Internal partners
- External partners
 - Government Agencies
 - Associations and Trade Groups
 - Stakeholder advisory boards



Institutionalizing Solutions to Recurrent Issues

- Inter-Agency Initiatives
- Agency Guidance to Field
- Formal Recommendations
- Review and Accountability



Experiential Review and Accountability

Annual Evaluation of Agency REF policies and practices
Example from Report to Congress

| Cabinet | Comments ^ | | Non-Retali-ation Policy | Compliance Assistance | Provision of SBREFA Information | Overall |
|--|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---------|
| | Response Timeliness | Response Quality | | | | |
| Agency (enforcement action-related comments) | | | | | | |
| LABOR | | | | | | |
| Occupational Safety & Health Administration (24) | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| Wage & Hour Division (4) | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| Mine Safety & Health Administration (9) | B | A | A | A | A | A |
| Employee Benefits Security Administration (1) | A | A | A | A | A | A |
| Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program (1) | F | A | A | A | C | B |
| STATE | N/C | N/C | A | A | A | A |
| TRANSPORTATION | | | | | | |
| Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (1) | A | A | A | A | A | A |



Accountability Measures

Responsiveness to Small Business Regulatory Concerns

- Grades response for:
 - Timeliness
 - Substance

SBREFA Compliance

- Grades policies for:
 - Non-retaliation against stakeholders
 - Providing compliance assistance
 - Providing notice of SBREFA rights



Fostering New External Partnerships

- Stakeholder advisory groups
- Associations and trade groups
- Non-profits and foundations



How to Reach the Ombudsman Office

www.sba.gov/ombudsman

ombudsman@sba.gov

888-REG-FAIR

*Brian Castro
National Ombudsman
and Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Enforcement Fairness
U.S. Small Business Administration*

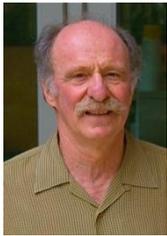




COALITION OF FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN

2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE BIOGRAPHIES

Tuesday, September 30, 2014



Howard Gadlin, Ph.D. has been Ombudsman and Director of the Center for Cooperative Resolution at the National Institutes of Health since the beginning of 1999. From 1992 through 1998 he was University Ombudsperson at UCLA. He was also director of the UCLA Conflict Mediation Program and co-director of the Center for the Study and Resolution of Interethnic/Interracial Conflict. While in Los Angeles, Dr. Gadlin served as consulting Ombudsman to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Prior to coming to UCLA, Dr. Gadlin was Ombudsperson and Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. At present Dr. Gadlin is studying the dynamics of scientific teams and collaborations and developing new approaches to addressing conflicts among scientists. He is the author of, among other writings, "Bargaining in the Shadow of Management: Integrated Conflict Management Systems," "Conflict, Cultural Differences, and the Culture of Racism," and "Mediating Sexual Harassment." He is the co-author of "Neutrality: What an organizational ombudsperson might want to know" and "Conflict Resolution and Systemic Change." Most recently he has co-authored "Collaboration & Team Science: A Field Guide."



David E. Michael, J.D. is the Deputy Ombudsman for the Office of the Ombudsman, Center for Cooperative Resolution at the National Institutes of Health. David's experience includes conflict engagement work and leadership roles with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, the Northern Virginia Mediation Service, the Multi-Door Dispute Resolution Division of the DC Superior Court, and Consensusworks. David has served on national and local boards of directors, and participates in nonprofit governance initiatives within his community. He is a member of the International Ombudsman Association and its Finance Committee, the Association for Conflict Resolution, the American Bar Association Section of Dispute Resolution, and the Virginia Mediation Network. He participates on local and national conference panels about program design, management, marketing, training, assuring program integrity, and reflective practice.



Kathleen Moore, Ph.D. has been an associate ombudsman at NIH for 10 years. Prior to this position, she spent more than 10 years as an EAP provider and 2 years as an Employee Relations Specialist in OD Human Resources at NIH. Kathleen has clinical training and her experience prior to NIH includes that of outpatient therapist at Western State Hospital, Roanoke, VA; Student/Faculty counselor at the University of Virginia Counseling Center, and family therapist at the Ft. Leavenworth, KS, Army Medical Hospital. Kathleen earned a Ph.D. in Human and Organizational Development from George Mason University in 2000. Kathleen has developed a particular interest in the area of mental health issues and their effects in the workplace, especially with respect to reasonable accommodation.



Linda M. Brothers, J.D. is an associate ombudsman at the Center for Cooperative Resolution, Office of the Ombudsman. Prior to coming to NIH, she was Director of Equal Opportunity and Ombudsperson at Wellesley College, where she established the college's first ombuds office and served as the co-director of MERI (the Multicultural Education Research Initiative). A conflict analyst and ADR practitioner, her areas of special focus include perceived difference and racial /intercultural conflict, systems change, and role boundary conflation. She has designed numerous systemic interventions for corporations, universities, and federal offices and is the author of many training and educational programs addressing interpersonal and institutional dispute resolution. She also teaches negotiation at the Foundation for Education in the Sciences.



Linda Myers, J.D. is an associate ombudsman at the NIH Office of the Ombudsman. She has worked as an ADR program manager, mediator, and facilitator for the federal government since 1994. Her ADR and mediation background includes work in equal employment opportunity cases, prohibited personnel practices complaints, including whistleblower reprisal, labor-management disputes, and organizational conflict resolution. Linda has extensive experience in conducting training and education programs in interest-based negotiation; communication and conflict resolution; and providing advice and guidance to organizations on the development of workplace ADR programs. Immediately prior to joining the NIH Office of the Ombudsman, Linda served as Deputy Director of the U.S. Army ADR Program in the Office of the Army General Counsel. While at the Army ADR Program, Linda designed and delivered ADR and negotiation training and education programs at Army installations worldwide. Linda is a graduate of Loyola University of Chicago and received her J.D. from Chicago-Kent College of Law.



Lisa Witzler, Ph.D. is an associate ombudsman in the Office of the Ombudsman/Center for Cooperative Resolution at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), where she has practiced since 2010. She earned her Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from Nova Southeastern University and holds a Master's Degree in Dispute Resolution from the University of Massachusetts. She is interested in group dynamics, negotiation, communication, dispute system design, conflict coaching, and training. Lisa is an instructor for the Foundation for the Advancement of Education in the Sciences (FAES) and has taught the "Introduction to Negotiation" course. Lisa is a trained mediator and facilitator and mediated for the Middlesex County Small Claims court in Cambridge, MA. Prior to moving to Washington, D.C., Lisa lived in Cambridge, MA, where she worked for the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School as a Web and Program Coordinator. She currently serves as Vice President of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA), where she previously served as co-chair of their annual conference planning committee and member of the communications committee.



Tyler Smith, M.A. is the newest Associate Ombudsman at the NIH OO/CCR. Smith has a M.A. in Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution from Salisbury University and was a graduate intern with the NIH OO/CCR from January to May of 2014. Prior to coming to the NIH, Smith spent several years at The Bosserman Center for Conflict Resolution in Salisbury, MD providing community mediation and conflict resolution training in prisons, courts and the general community.



Brian M. Castro, J.D. was appointed National Ombudsman and Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Enforcement Fairness at the U.S. Small Business Administration in August 2013. The Office of the National Ombudsman assists small businesses facing unfair enforcement actions, excessive fines, retaliation, or disproportionately burdensome regulations involving federal agencies. The Ombudsman provides an independent channel for reporting such problems, an impartial liaison between the business and the agency in question, and the opportunity to obtain high-level agency review of the regulatory action or issue impacting small business. Prior to his appointment at the SBA, Brian worked as an attorney and advocate in Washington, DC, helping clients including small businesses and non-profit organizations succeed in heavily regulated environments. Previously, he served as Senior Counsel to the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority Department of Enforcement, a Congressional aide, and a law clerk in U.S. District Court. As counsel to regulated businesses, regulators, and members of the judicial and legislative branches, he has participated directly in all phases of the federal regulatory process: from legislative drafting and enactment, to proposed regulation and agency rule, to government investigation and enforcement action, and, ultimately, to judicial resolution. With that perspective, Brian brings to the Office of the National Ombudsman profound appreciation for the unintended burdens that even well-intentioned government requirements can put on small business success, and a commitment to a regulatory system that strikes the right balance.



Cindy Foster, M.B.A., M.S. is Vice President and Ombudsman for the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA). As Ombudsman, Ms. Foster and her team work informally to assist FINRA constituents in finding solutions to issues, or concerns. Since becoming Ombudsman in 2009, Ms. Foster has significantly increased transparency, engagement, and dialogue with both FINRA management and constituents about the work of the Ombudsman's Office. Ms. Foster was also responsible for the publication of the inaugural Ombudsman Annual Report and implementing the ombudsman suggestion program, which has resulted in many procedural and policy changes at FINRA. Ms. Foster has more than 20 years of experience with FINRA in various capacities, including as a senior analyst responsible for investigating manipulation and fraud in the securities markets and as Associate Director responsible for assisting broker-dealers to comply with new FINRA rules. In 2000, Ms. Foster joined SunGuard Trading Systems as Chief Compliance Officer, a financial software development company, where she advised executive management and clients on regulatory issues and helped to enhance compliance functionality in software products. In 2003, she was promoted to Executive Vice President and in addition to her role as Chief Compliance Officer, she assumed responsibility for Product Management, Technology, Quality Assurance, and Client Services. Ms. Foster returned to FINRA in 2006. Prior to her appointment to the role of Ombudsman, Ms. Foster was a Senior Director in FINRA's Member Relations Department where she was responsible for implementing the department's operational plan, program oversight, and helping to enhance FINRA's relationship with firms. Ms. Foster has both Master of Business Administration and Master of Science degrees from the University of Maryland University College.



Jasmine Abraham, J.D. is an Associate Director and an Ombudsman with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), an independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to investor protection and market integrity through effective and efficient regulation of the securities industry. As an Ombudsman with FINRA since 2010, Ms. Abraham works informally to assist investors, employees, registered representatives, and broker-dealers in finding solutions to issues, or concerns they may have with FINRA. Ms. Abraham entered the conflict resolution field in 2004 as a volunteer mediator with the Wake County District Court in Raleigh, NC where she mediated diverse small claims disputes. Ms. Abraham has mediation training from Carolina Dispute Settlement Services and the Center for Alternative Dispute Resolution; and Ombudsman training from the International Ombudsman Association (IOA). In addition to being an associate member of IOA, she is a member of the U.S. Ombudsman Association. Ms. Abraham has a Master of Arts in Conflict Resolution from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a Juris Doctorate from Howard University School of Law. She is a member of the state bars of New York and New Jersey.



Cynthia Mazur, M Div, JD, LLM, PhD, ACC (Associate Certified Coach) is the ADR Director for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. She has a PhD in conflict resolution (2011) from George Mason's School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (SCAR). Cindy has developed and taught four different courses on conflict and leadership coaching and teaches one at SCAR. Cindy is a mentor coach in three coach-training programs. Cindy is involved in OPM's Federal Coaching Network. She participates on the federal design team to train coaches for every federal agency. This team develops policy, definitive training, ROI, and a nation-wide coach credentialing database.



Samantha Levine-Finley, M.S. is the deputy ombudsman for the American Red Cross. Prior to joining the Red Cross in 2013, Samantha served for five years as an associate ombudsman for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD, where she provided confidential, neutral assistance to NIH employees and leaders. In that role, she served as a mediator, trainer and facilitator and provided coaching and consultation on a wide array of workplace issues. Samantha earned a master's degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University. She has served as a small claims mediator for the City of Alexandria General District Court and was trained through the Northern Virginia Mediation Service. In 2008, Samantha supported the facilitation of high-level meetings of the Congressionally chartered National Committee on Levee Safety. While at NIH, Samantha co-authored the award-winning publication "Team Science & Collaboration: A Field Guide" and published articles in academic journals about the ombudsman profession. She is a volunteer mediator for the federal Interagency Shared Neutrals program. Samantha has co-chaired the International Ombudsman Association's (IOA) Communications Committee since 2009 and serves on the Editorial Board of the Journal of the IOA. Prior to her work in the conflict resolution field, Samantha spent more than ten years as a professional journalist covering national politics, homeland security, and breaking news for several leading print publications in the Washington, DC, area. She has also been interviewed on national radio and television broadcasts. She earned a bachelor's degree in environmental science from the College of William & Mary.



William (Bill) Maurer, MPA is the Associate Ombudsman at the Department of Energy. In related positions with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the United States National Park Service, Bill served as an Organizational Transformation Specialist, Alternative Dispute Resolution Specialist, and Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor. He is the current Vice Chair of the Coalition of Federal Ombudsman. Bill was a Shared Neutral/Mediator for four Federal Government conflict resolution programs (Health and Human Services Sharing Neutrals, Department of Interior CORE Plus, the Greater Boston Federal Executive Board's Shared Neutrals, and directly for the National Park Service's Equal Employment Opportunity Office). Bill held additional positions with the Federal Government including as Administrative Officer for two National Parks. For six years Bill presided as Vice President on the Board of Directors for Cape Mediation, a private non-profit community mediation center located in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Bill also held positions in the health care industry and in the field of educational reform. He served two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nepal. Bill received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Massachusetts and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from The George Washington University. Bill completed the Leadership Coaching for Organizational Performance Certificate Program at the George Mason University and is a certified Executive Leadership Coach.



Cheryl Diane Reese, MHS is a retired Marine Master Sergeant, Vietnam era veteran, having served more than 22 years in the Marine Corps. She is the first African American woman Public Affairs and Combat Correspondent in the Marine Corps. She graduated from the esteemed Department of Defense Information School (DINFOS) in Indiana in 1969. As a journalist she covered stories from Camp Pendleton to Okinawa, Japan; often looking at the humane side of war during the Viet Nam conflict. Cheryl felt a deeper need to assist military men, women and their families and transitioned into a new career track when she completed the Navy Drug and Alcohol School in Monterey, California in 1984. She began counseling Marines, Sailors and their families regarding drugs and alcohol in Okinawa, Japan following graduation. As a counselor she often assisted hundreds of Marines and sailors where the population base swelled from 5,000-20,000 Marines in peace time. Cheryl served as the Director and Associate Director of Substance Abuse programs in Okinawa, Japan as well as Headquarters Marine Corps in Washington, DC. Cheryl established the only substance abuse inpatient program for Marines and sailors in Okinawa in 1986.

Cheryl earned a Masters Degree in Human Services from Lincoln University, prior to retiring in 1991. She is co-principal in EDUCARE Systems, Inc. a healing and training center located in the DC metro area. Her focus for years is specializing in trauma resolution for women who are victims of domestic violence and childhood sexual abuse. Cheryl served as the Deputy Director and Clinical Program Manager for Whitman-Walker Lesbian Services Program for five years and developed a Trauma Resolution Program for women recovering from childhood abuse. Cheryl has served as program director for several community based alcohol and drug counselor training programs and written drug and alcohol curriculum for George Mason University and HIV and health care givers curriculum for Washington DC HIV support services. She served as an adjunct professor at Rutgers Summer School for Alcohol Studies for ten years and recently left the faculty. Cheryl co-wrote a companion workbook for Prime Time: The African American Woman's Complete Guide to Midlife Health and Wellness and co-facilitated Prime Time Sister Circles (PTSC)™ in the Washington metro area until recently. These circles are centered on health promotion for African American women in their middle years. Cheryl has worked in the field of Employee Assistance since the early 80's and with the Department of Energy as the Employee Assistance Program Specialist since 2006.



Wendy Kamenshine, J.D. serves as the first Ombudsman for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Wendy setup the CFPB Ombudsman's Office, which provides an independent, impartial, and confidential resource to informally assist consumers and financial entities in resolving issues with the CFPB. In the spring she completed serving two terms as Chair of the Coalition of Federal Ombudsmen and previously organized the DC Ombuds Discussion Group. Before joining the CFPB, Wendy served as the Senior Ombudsman for the Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman's Office. Prior to joining the federal government, Wendy practiced international trade law with the law firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP and was a Research Associate at the economics consulting firm, Economists Incorporated. Wendy earned her A.B. in Economics with departmental and general honors from the University of Chicago and her J.D. from Duke University School of Law. She also has ombudsman training from the U.S. Ombudsman's Association and International Ombudsman Association as well as mediation training from Harvard's Program of Instruction for Lawyers, the Northern Virginia Mediation Service, and Duke's Private Adjudication Center.



Scott M. Deyo, M.S., CO-OP® began serving as Ombudsman for the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency on April 25, 2011. Prior to joining the NGA community, Mr. Deyo served as Ombudsman for the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DoD IG) (from 2009 – 2011). Prior to his assignment at the DoD IG, he served the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and a number of Defense agencies through Washington Headquarters Services – first as the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Advisor (from 2001–2007) and later as the Deputy, then Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (from 2007–2009). Mr. Deyo earned a bachelor of science in Psychology with honors from James Madison University and a master of science from the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University. He is an expert mediator, facilitator, trainer and consultant regarding conflict resolution within complex organizational systems. Mr. Deyo was the first Federal employee to earn the credential Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner® by the International Ombudsman Association (IOA). Mr. Deyo has mediated over 200 cases. As an Ombudsman, he has met with 1,500 employees who shared over 5,600 workplace issues. In March 2014, Mr. Deyo was elected to serve a two year term as Chair, Coalition of Federal Ombudsman, which is the principal interagency forum that provides collaboration, advice, and guidance to Ombuds serving United States government agencies. He also serves as Chair of the IOA Professional Practices Committee, which investigates complaints of professional misconduct and alleged ethics violations of certified ombuds, is a member of the Interagency ADR Working Group, DoD ADR Coordinating Committee, and co-founder of the Intelligence Community Ombuds Forum.