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Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

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## **“Cocktails & Conversation,” An Evening with Real Estate Power Players Robert Lapidus '86 and Board Member Stephen Siegel, Raises Funds for Cardozo Student Scholarships**



**Stephen Siegel, Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, Robert Lapidus '86 and Dean Melanie Leslie at "Cocktails & Conversation"**

Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, President of Yeshiva University, and Dean Melanie Leslie welcomed guests to Cardozo’s first in-person event since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, featuring two Cardozo community members who have shaped the New York City commercial real estate market. Cardozo’s “Cocktails and Conversation” at City Winery in Manhattan featured Robert T. Lapidus '86, President & Chief Investment Officer at L&L Holding Company, and Cardozo Board of Overseers member Stephen B. Siegel, Chairman of Global Brokerage at CBRE Group. Seeger Weiss LLP was the Presenting Sponsor for the event. Contributing Sponsors included CBRE Group, Cole Schotz P.C., Fried Frank, Madison Realty Capital and Meltzer Lippe. Their generosity raised \$55,000 for student scholarships at the law school, kicking off a new comprehensive capital campaign at Yeshiva University. YU’s campaign, launched on December 5th, aims to raise \$613 million over the upcoming years to ensure student success in a changing world.

Dean Leslie opened the formal program with a warm welcome to attendees and then introduced the President of Yeshiva University, Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman. He spoke to Cardozo’s importance in both the campaign and the rich academic landscape of YU. “I’m so proud to be President of a University with an accomplished and prestigious law school like Cardozo,” said President Berman.

President Berman introduced the two guest speakers for the evening, Robert Lapidus '86 and Stephen Siegel, both of whom are titans of New York real estate and exemplify the prestige of Cardozo and its real estate connections.

Lapidus and Siegel drew on their decades of experience to provide insightful wisdom on the New York market and how the industry is responding to the pandemic. Lapidus recalled how he gravitated toward the real estate industry after graduating from Cardozo. Upon founding L&L Holdings, the company took on 200 Fifth Avenue once an old toy building that was not particularly desirable and transformed it to be used by a variety of different businesses. Siegel expressed his admiration for L&L's creativity in how they approached the project.

Lapidus said he believed New York City has a bright future ahead, especially with the recent uptick in visitors and foot traffic. Still, he cautioned, rent has become too high for businesses that need a physical presence. Siegel suggested that retail companies need to rethink how customers use their space.

Lapidus stressed the importance of continuing to invest in New York City and retaining its intellectual capital. "New York needs to be a place where young people want to live," he said. When asked about the emergence of more flexible office spaces, Siegel remained confident that employees will continue to return to their original spaces. Lapidus agreed that while hybrid models are popular, the majority of people still need to be able to be physically together to work creatively. Both recognized that the old office building model, with low ceilings and poor lighting, needs to be reimaged.

Siegel concluded the conversation by addressing the success of Cardozo under Dean Leslie and its growth in national and New York rankings in recent years. He urged the audience to support the school building through giving. Dean Leslie closed out the event: "Thank you all for attending. As you can tell from tonight's program, Cardozo is perfectly poised for its next phase of greatness and achievement."







