

# member Spotlight



**Brian S. Cohen, Esq.**

**Tejash:** What are some of your contributions to the WCBA?

**Brian:** I am honored and proud to have been elected to the WCBA's Board of Directors. My term started on May 1, 2020. Our firm sponsors "Lunch with the Judges," a monthly series featuring Judge Jamieson and a special guest judge. This is a great program that makes the judiciary approachable and accessible and further promotes civility in our profession. We're also proud to be a WCBA Annual Silver Sponsor. In addition, in partnership with the WCBA and Haub Law, we organized a mental health symposium entitled "Swept Under the Rug: An Important and Honest Discussion About Mental Health and Well-Being in the Legal Profession" that I will be moderating. It was supposed to take place on March 9<sup>th</sup> but has been postponed due to COVID-19. We are in the process of rescheduling the program for a date in 2021. It will be a powerful presentation about depression, anxiety and stress and eliminating the stigma around mental health while also providing tips on how Westchester County lawyers, judges and

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

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law students can recognize and cope with these issues.

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

**Brian:** I am a partner and co-founder of Lachtman Cohen P.C., a full-service business and real estate law firm based in White Plains. My practice is dedicated to representing business and real estate entrepreneurs in complex commercial disputes and aggrieved consumers, investors, and other individuals in high-stakes and impact litigation. My partner, David Lachtman, heads our real estate and corporate group.

**Tejash:** How did you become focused on complex civil litigation?

**Brian:** I'm passionate about using the law as a positive force for change.

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

**Brian:** In 2012, after an extensive two-year investigation, I filed a groundbreaking lawsuit against Aspen Dental, the nation's largest corporate dentistry chain, which exposed rampant misconduct, patient abuse, and

the illegal corporate practice of medicine. The company opened dental clinics in low-income areas, targeted unwitting patients who are unfamiliar with proper dental care, and employed a profit-driven business model that incentivized and pressured dentists and staff to increase revenue in a manner that placed profits before quality of care. I shared the fruits of my investigation with, and provided substantial assistance to, the Office of the New York Attorney General, which then launched its own investigation. Though not a whistleblower case *per se*, my efforts were the catalyst for the NYAG's investigation into and ultimate settlement with the company, which paid material financial consideration and, more importantly, implemented substantial corporate reforms over a three-year period under the supervision of an independent monitor. This case had a profound impact on the well-being of dental patients and the integrity and reputation of the profession.

**Tejash:** Who do you consider your mentors?

**Brian:** My parents (who are not lawyers).

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

**Brian:** I published a novel, *The Life O'Reilly*.

**Tejash:** What is the best hour of your day?

**Brian:** 5:00 a.m. and dinnertime with my wife and daughters.

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

**Brian:** *Rocky*, *Hoosiers*, *Wall Street*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Pulp Fiction*, and *Caddyshack*.

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

**Brian:** Israel, Italy, and Amsterdam. I also love exploring and experiencing the American South. There are so many great historical sites and attractions to visit, and you can't beat the eclectic mix of amazing music and de-

licious food! Nashville, Memphis and New Orleans are my favorite Southern cities.

**Tejash:** What is one of your favorite things to do in Westchester?

**Brian:** Concerts at The Capitol Theatre. I love music and there's no better place to see shows than The Cap.

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

**Brian:** First, always stay true to your core values, no matter what. Second, if money can fix a problem, it's not a problem.

**Tejash:** When is the last time you were outside of your comfort zone?

**Brian:** Bobsledding and skeleton sledding on the Olympic Track at Lake Placid. I thrive on challenges and believe that taking risks are growth experiences, so I'm regularly outside my comfort zone.

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

**Brian:** First, as Rosa Parks said, "you must never be fearful about what you are doing when it is right." Second, figure out your lifestyle goals and then make your career fit your life, not the other way around. Third, make mental health and self-care a top priority.

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

**Brian:** Write a series of crime novels with a bad ass protagonist.

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

**Brian:** The people I've met and the friendships I've made. It's a collegial and talented group of professionals who, together, can make a positive impact on our community.

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