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JOHN T. DUFFY, ESQ.

**Lawyer, Author, Marketing Consultant,
Former Legal Journalist**

EDUCATION

- **J.D., Syracuse University College of Law**
- **B.A., magna cum laude, Boston College**

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

ACADEMIC

- **Intellectual Disability Law**
- **Immigration and Nationality Law**
- **Legal History**

PROFESSIONAL

Legal Marketing

John T. Duffy first became interested in disability law while working at the John E. Fogarty Center in Providence during the 1970s. Founded by parents of children with intellectual disabilities in the 1950s, he was deeply influenced by the ways in which these parents developed innovative community programs, enlisted the support of an important member of Congress from their own state, John E. Fogarty, and refused to place their children in institutions, despite the insistence of family, friends, and professionals.

As his interest in the field grew, he received a grant from the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities to chronicle the inspiring story of the parents who helped establish the John E. Fogarty Center. The project resulted in the publication of two special editions of *Rhode Island History*. His efforts were bolstered by the support of Yale University Professor Seymour B. Sarason, a renowned figure in the field.

During the project, he learned of three immigration cases from the 1920s before the U.S. Supreme Court that involved teenage girls labeled mentally deficient who faced imminent deportation. These children received widespread community support despite the government's repeated efforts to deport them and at a time when the eugenics movement was at its zenith. He has since written about these and similar cases in the *Journal of Social History* and given presentations at bar associations in New York and Philadelphia, as well as at a judicial conference in New England.

Professionally, he has decades of experience in law, press relations, public relations, social media, sales training, educational programming, and strategic planning. *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly* once chose him as the #1 marketing consultant to the legal profession, and *Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly* has named him a Readers' Choice Award winner on multiple occasions.

In addition, he has produced educational seminars in Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Germany, and Japan for U.S.-based intellectual property law firms. He has also written two books, co-authored another, and has penned more than 75 articles on law firm marketing.

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SELECTED PUBLICATIONS: ACADEMIC

Janet Golden, John T. Duffy, "Normal Enough: Paula Patton, Intellectually Disabled Immigrant Children, and the 1924 Immigration Act," *Journal of Social History*, Volume 53, Issue 3, Spring 2020
<https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/8/article/752139/pdf>

John T. Duffy, Seymour B. Sarason, et al., "Days of Darkness, Days of Hope: The Care of Mentally Disabled People," *Rhode Island History*/ Rhode Island Historical Society, Volume 40, Number 4
https://www.rihs.org/history_journal/rhodeisland-history-journal-vol-40-november-1981/

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS: ACADEMIC

"The Pauline Fink Story and the Pursuit of Justice: A Historical Look into the Legal Rights of Immigrants with Intellectual Disabilities," Rhode Island Judicial Conference, Providence, (March 12, 2024) John T. Duffy, Esq., with Andrea G. Savoca, New York attorney and Pauline Fink's grandniece, and Jody Fink Lippman, former attorney with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission

"Legal Rights of Intellectually Disabled Immigrants: The Paula Patton Story," Bar Association of Erie County (June 23, 2022) John T. Duffy, Esq., with Janet Golden, Ph.D., Professor Emerita, Rutgers University, The Honorable Eugene M. Fahey, recently retired from the New York Court of Appeals, and Paula Patton's niece, former Philadelphia Assistant District Attorney Julie Patton Currie

"Un-American: The Revolt Against 1920s Immigration Officials to Separate Intellectually Disabled Children from Their Families," Philadelphia Bar Association (May 29, 2020) John T. Duffy, Esq., with Janet Golden, Ph.D., Professor Emerita, Rutgers University

"Intellectually Disabled Immigrant Children, the 1924 Immigration Act, Federal Courts, and Community Activism," New York City Bar Association (October 16, 2019) John T. Duffy, Esq., with Janet Golden, Ph.D., Professor Emerita, Rutgers University

REFLECTIONS FROM LEADING JURISTS ON ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

EDUCATION

- J.D., Syracuse University
College of Law
- B.A., magna cum laude,
Boston College

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

ACADEMIC

- Intellectual Disability
Law
- Immigration and
Nationality Law
- Legal History

PROFESSIONAL

Legal Marketing

"In my 41 plus years as a lawyer (including 30 as a judge), today's program was one of the best I ever have attended."

"You have done significant work to advance the cause of justice."

"This session was absolutely outstanding!"

"Great presentation."

"Terrific!"



LEGAL RIGHTS OF INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED IMMIGRANTS:

The Paula Patton Story



Like so many tragic family separation cases today, this case, from upstate New York, received attention from the press and the legal community. It offers insight into the larger consequences of both the 1924 Immigration Act and the political efforts to protect a small group of children from the consequences of that legislation.

This program provides a micro-history of Paula Patton, a poor, mildly intellectually disabled, nine-year-old child, who arrived at Ellis Island with her family in 1914. Judged by medical authorities as an “imbecile,” she was sent back to Lithuania but due to the outbreak of World War I and the closure of the sea lanes, her ship returned to port. She then entered the United States on bond.

Multiple attempts for her arrest and deportation followed over the next ten years. Appeals by community leaders to two U.S. Presidents, as well as litigation in the federal courts including the U.S. Supreme Court, thwarted deportation efforts time and time again. All the while, allies condemned her torment as “unAmerican.” In the end, Paula’s fate and that of others hinged on a single paragraph in the 1924 Immigration Act. These developments occurred against the backdrop of widespread nativism and anti-Semitic sentiment, while the eugenics movement was at its height. Though her childhood was spent in Olean, her network of supporters included women in Buffalo.

Rutgers Professor Emerita Janet Golden and John T. Duffy, Esq. of Riverside, R.I. analyzed this case in an article for the *Journal of Social History*. They will present their findings through an analysis of legal cases, upstate New York political activism, and the history of disability. Sources include federal court cases, Presidential correspondence, Congressional hearings, and accounts in the local press.

Any discussion about the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities in the 1920s would be incomplete without addressing *Buck v. Bell*, 274 U.S. 200 (1927). **The Honorable Eugene M. Fahey, recently retired from the New York Court of Appeals (New York state’s highest court)**, will explain and provide context. **Paula Patton’s niece, former Philadelphia assistant district attorney Julie Patton Currie**, will also be participating.

This program, inspired by events in Rhode Island, will be presented remotely and in person on June 23rd from 4pm – 6 pm. To learn more, contact John T. Duffy, program chair, at jduffy@johntduffy.com

Co-sponsored by the Bar Association of Erie County’s Human Rights Committee and the Olean, N.Y. Historical Society, the program will be held at the Bar Association’s headquarters in Buffalo. Previous versions of this presentation have been delivered at the New York City Bar Association and the Philadelphia Bar Association.



President Coolidge Signs the 1924 Immigration Act.



Patton v. Todd 267 U.S. 607 (1925)



THE PAULINE FINK STORY AND THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE: A HISTORICAL LOOK INTO THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF IMMIGRANTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

The Pauline Fink Story

Like so many tragic family separation cases today, this case from New York received attention from the national press and the legal community. It offers insight into the larger consequences of the 1924 Immigration Act and the political efforts to protect a small group of children from the consequences of that legislation.

This program offers a micro-history of Pauline Fink, a poor, 13-year-old child who arrived at Ellis Island with her family in 1920. Unable to hear or speak and judged by medical authorities as “feeble-minded,” she was ordered deported back to Poland. However, due to political pressure and the ravages of World War I on her native land, she entered the United States on bond.

Government officials instigated multiple attempts for her arrest and deportation over the next four years. Appeals by community leaders to President Harding, as well as litigation in the federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, thwarted deportation efforts time and time again. These developments occurred against widespread nativism and anti-Semitic sentiment while the eugenics movement was at its height. At the same time, allies condemned her torment as “un-American.”

In the end, Pauline's fate hinged on her remarkable network of supporters that included devoted family members, Congressman Nathan D. Perlman (pictured above with Pauline), Miss Effie Cosgrove, her fearless teacher, leading civil rights attorneys, and even William “Wild Bill” Donovan - long before he founded the OSS.

Rutgers Professor Emerita Janet Golden and **Rhode Island attorney John T. Duffy** analyzed this case in an article for the **Journal of Social History**. Mr. Duffy will present these findings. **Andrea G. Savoca**, Pauline's grandniece, and **Jody Fink Lippman**, the granddaughter of Pauline's cousin and benefactor, have conducted their own exhaustive research and will also be participating. Ms. Savoca was formerly in private practice in Long Island, New York; Ms. Lippman once served as an attorney in the Enforcement Division for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Sources to be discussed include federal court cases, Presidential correspondence, Congressional testimony, immigration records, interdepartmental memoranda, accounts in the national press, and family histories.

The social activism chronicled in the **Journal of Social History** was inspired by the efforts of parents of intellectually disabled children here in Rhode Island decades later. A version of this seminar has already been presented at the Philadelphia Bar Association, the New York City Bar Association, and the Bar Association of Erie County.



President Coolidge Signs the 1924 Immigration Act



United States v. Tod 267 U.S. 698 (1925) (Pauline Fink)