

## Ida Klaus (Chair, 1998-2006)

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Born in 1905, Ida Klaus was a pioneer in a multitude of ways. At the age of 19, she organized waitstaff at a hotel in upstate New York. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Hunter College, but was initially denied admission to Columbia Law School because she was a woman. She was finally admitted to the law school in 1928, one of the six women enrolled in Columbia's first coed class.

Following her graduation from law school, Miss Klaus worked as an attorney at the National Labor Relations Board, becoming the NLRB's Solicitor in 1948. Her position made her the highest level female attorney in the federal government at the time. During the course of her career, she was responsible for drafting New York City's Little Wagner Act which and the Mayor's executive order establishing a comprehensive code of labor relations for City employees; served in the Kennedy Administration as chief advisor for the first labor relations task force for federal employees; served as chief labor negotiator for the New York City Board of Education, negotiating the first citywide teachers' contract in the country, and as its director of staff relations from 1962 until 1975.

In 1976, Miss Klaus was appointed to the NYS Public Employment Relations Board, the first woman to serve on the Board. Her strong lifelong commitment to collective bargaining rights made her a force to be reckoned with on the Board, where she engaged in spirited debates with her Board colleagues, Robert Helsby and Joseph Crowley, and later, Harold Newman and David Randles. When she was unable to agree with their positions on cases before them, or persuade them to adopt her views, she wrote blunt dissents, clearly articulating the reasons for her disagreement. Although Miss Klaus dissented from her fellow Board members in nine cases, more than any other in the Board's 50-year history, she was nevertheless always willing to collaborate on crafting decisions that all sitting members could support. She understood the importance of assuring that parties and their representatives have confidence in the decisions affecting their rights and obligations.

Miss Klaus' knowledge of, and experience with, the National Labor Relations Act often informed her analysis of public sector labor relations issues. In *East Ramapo CSD*, 11 PERB 3075 (1978), for example, she wrote that school district department chairs should be excluded from a teachers' bargaining unit—no doubt reflecting NLRA policy relating to supervisory duties. Similarly, it may be inferred that her dissent in *Niagara County*, 16 PERB 3071 (1983), relating to the power of the employer to change the status quo following expiration of the parties' collective bargaining agreement, reflected to some extent private sector post-contract expiration law, notwithstanding legislative history surrounding adoption of Sec. 209-a(l)(e) of the Act (known as the Triborough Amendment). In another example, Miss Klaus deplored the Board's movement away from NLRB precedent under *Borg Warner* when it found, in *Monroe Woodbury TA*, 10 PERB 3029 (1977) that insistence on a nonmandatory subject of

negotiations at factfinding constituted a failure to negotiate in good faith. Miss Klaus would have found otherwise.

The richness of Miss Klaus' training and experience made her a powerful voice at PERB, and her contributions to the thoughtful legal analysis and public policy considerations necessary for balanced decision-making and support for the principles of collective bargaining required by the Act, continue to be felt today.

Miss Klaus died in 1999 at the age of 94.

Pauline R. Kinsella, Chairwoman 1991-1998,  
NYS Public Employment Relations Board