



2024

SPRING CONFERENCE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

APRIL 18-20

The Langham, Chicago

*Thought Leadership in
Claims and Litigation*

 THE HARMONIE GROUP®

 CANADIAN LITIGATION COUNSEL

FACULTY GUESTS

The Harmonie Group & Canadian Litigation Counsel would like to thank the following industry leaders for their participation in our 2024 Spring Conference. We are especially appreciative of them sharing their knowledge and insights into their respective fields and areas of expertise.



CHARLES H. CRAWFORD, III

Lead Counsel – Litigation Assurant

Chas Crawford is Lead Counsel for Litigation at Assurant, Inc., where he manages first party property and third-party liability claims litigation. Chas oversees a wide range of matters throughout the country for Assurant, from auto and appliance service contract disputes to multimillion dollar commercial property matters, to catastrophic personal injury cases arising in the gig economy. Prior to joining Assurant, Chas practiced law in Atlanta, Georgia, where he specialized in complex civil litigation within the construction, real estate, finance, and banking industries. Chas graduated magna cum laude with a BA in Political Science from Furman University in 1999 and received his JD from the University of Georgia School of Law in 2005, where he served on the *Georgia Law Review*.



GREGORY W. GIEL

Executive General Adjuster Sedgwick

Greg Giel is an Executive General Adjuster for Sedgwick Claims Management Services, Inc. Prior to this, he was an Executive General Adjuster for the international claims adjusters Cunningham Lindsey and GAB Robins. Mr. Giel specializes in United States products liability claims, representing manufacturers and insurers domiciled outside the United States. Mr. Giel has over 45 years in the insurance claims adjusting industry. He resides in the Chicago area with his wife Mary Pat and family.



SARAH HOLZHAUER

Senior Financial Products Claims Specialist Great American Insurance Group

Sarah Holzhauser is a Senior Financial Products Claims Specialist in the Professional Liability Claims Division at Great American Insurance Group, where she primarily handles miscellaneous professional liability claims. Sarah has a B.S. in Psychology from Drexel University and graduated from Villanova Law School in 2017. Prior to her work at Great American, she practiced as a medical malpractice and legal malpractice defense attorney in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Sarah enjoys cooking, traveling, and spending time with family, including her 18-month-old twin boys.



JOHN KELLY

Claim Director - Casualty Church Mutual Insurance Company

John is a Casualty Claim Director with Church Mutual Insurance. He has been with Church Mutual for 5 years. He started as the Litigation and Large Loss Manager before becoming a director in mid- 2021. John has been in the insurance claim field for 35 years, primarily in commercial property/casualty. He started out as a multi-line field adjuster in Colorado. He has worked for several large organizations, standard market, E&S, smaller companies and a TPA. He has held a variety of roles from claim adjuster, Director of Auto (Travelers), Litigation Manager (Travelers, Nationwide, Church), Complex claim specialist (Liberty Mutual), Director of Casualty (Church Mutual).



MARTHA S. KERSEY

Director – Casualty Claims
Church Mutual Insurance Company

Martha is a Director of Casualty at Church Mutual Insurance Company located in WI. She leads a team of 21 members and manages complex litigated claims Nationwide. She is an Illinois licensed attorney and has over 30 years of experience in Claims and Coverage in the insurance industry and has worked for several major carriers in different roles throughout the years including State Farm, QBE, and Amerisure. She authored New Appleman on Insurance Law Library Edition, Ch. 18. Duty to Indemnify – Bodily Injury and Property Damages (July 2, 2010), cited in Schinner v. Gundrum, 349 Wis.2d 529 (WI Supreme Court, June 2013) and is a member of DRI and FDCC. For many years, she has been very active in CLM. Martha resides outside of Madison WI and enjoys rescuing dogs, riding horses and all things outdoors in WI with her close friends and neighbors.



MICHAEL MCCOOL

Managing Director - US Casualty Claims Leader, Claims Solutions, Marsh Advisory
Marsh

Mike McCool serves as the US Casualty Claim Leader, based in our Atlanta office. In this role, Mike is responsible for casualty claims advocacy across the US for all clients. He manages a team of approximately 100 colleagues. Mike's background and areas of focus include casualty, property, professional, financial, and international claims. Mike has over 32 years of claims experience in various technical and leadership positions. Mike has worked with many Fortune 100 clients throughout his career and helped develop, in partnership with those clients, programs and tools that have enabled them to reduce their claims costs and improve their bottom lines. He has developed and implemented national litigation management, subrogation, and legal bill review programs as well as helped develop claims analytics reporting tools.



ALEXIS NARANJO

Claims Consultant, Casualty
Nationwide E&S Specialty Claims

With over 15 years of industry expertise, Alexis has navigated the complex landscape of insurance and litigation. His journey began at Nationwide Insurance Company, where he honed my skills across various roles including MedPay Adjuster, Liability Adjuster, Bodily Injury Adjuster, IT and Claim Support Supervisor, and Field Property Claim Manager. At FedEx Ground, Alexis worked as a Risk Manager and Litigations where he safeguarded against potential risks and managed the litigations process of my assigned territory. Alexis is currently working as Claim Consultant in Scottsdale Insurance, a Nationwide Company. He serves as a litigations consultant handling and assigning litigated files across all 50 States.



JOSEPH ONOFRIO

Sr. Claim Director, Chubb North American Claims, Casualty, Direct West Chubb

Joseph Onofrio has over three decades of experience in insurance and claims management. He currently serves as Sr. Director of Chubb North American Claims, a position he's held since July 2022. Before that, he was Assistant Vice President of Claims at Buckle from November 2020 to January 2022. Earlier in his career, he spent 35 years at Atlas Financial Holdings, Inc., working in various roles in claims management, including time at American Service Insurance and American Country Insurance Co. He earned his Master of Science in Insurance Management from Boston University and his Bachelor of Science in Political Science from Western Illinois University.



CATHY PADULA

Senior Litigation Specialist
Builders Mutual Insurance Company



Cathy Padula has worked in the insurance industry for over 30 years. She has served in various roles including claims handling, operations, and claims management positions. For the past six years, she has worked as a Litigation Specialist/Senior Litigation Specialist for Builders Mutual Insurance Company. The Senior Litigation Specialist role handles severe and complex commercial auto and general liability claims while working with counsel to provide coverage analysis. Cathy is originally from Bayshore, NY and graduated from SUNY Old Westbury, NY. Her designations include AIS and AIC from the Institutes. She moved to Raleigh, NC in 1993, where she still resides. In her free time, she enjoys the outdoors, especially hiking in the Blue Ridge Mountains of NC.

RODNEY PATTERSON

Vice President
Seneca Insurance Company



Rod Patterson is a results-driven industry executive who is passionate about insurance, DEI, and leadership. He has an insatiable appetite for progress and works hard at leading himself and developing team members into self-managed, self-motivated, and highly productive professionals. Rod leads the Property Claims Unit at Seneca Insurance Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Crum and Forster. Rod is also the Internship Lead for claims introducing college students to the world of insurance. He serves on the Advisory Board of the National African American Insurance Association's NYC Chapter and the CLM NYC Chapter. Rod also serves on the Property and Liability Research Bureau (PLRB) Planning Committee. As a Distinguished Toastmaster, he is a sought-after presenter and keynote speaker. He is the author of "Guard Your Gates: Simple Steps to High Productivity". Rod is the irresistible husband of his wife of 32 years, Katrina, and father to their two adult children.

MISTI RAMIREZ

Co-Founder and COO
EMA Risk Services



Since September 2020, Misti has been the Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer at EMA Risk Services. Prior to this role, Misti spent over a decade at Gallagher Bassett, where she specialized in transportation claims. She joined Gallagher Bassett as the Transportation Practice Specialist Lead in October 2008, having transitioned from National Transportation Adjusters, where she built a solid foundation in transportation-related risk management.

STEVEN SCHAAL

Vice President and General Counsel
Ruan Transportation Management Systems



Steve Schaal is the Vice President and General Counsel of Ruan Transport Corporation. Prior to joining Ruan, Steve served as General Counsel for OK Foods, Inc., a poultry processor in Arkansas. He also managed the Legal and Compliance function of Great West Casualty Company. Prior to these positions, he was at Tyson Foods, Inc. for 22 years, the last seven as the Vice President and Associate General Counsel in charge of the company's claims department. In his current position, he handles all legal affairs for the corporation and has recently become responsible for oversight of the casualty and workers' compensation claims of the company.

SAMI SHAKER

Director, Accounts Strategic
JS Held



Sami Shaker joined J.S. Held in July of 2022 as part of J.S. Held's acquisition of Kodsí Forensic Engineering. Sami Shaker graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree (Honours Physics co-op) from McMaster University and has versatile industrial experience in nuclear energy, radiation health and safety, and has recently been conducting medical research in the field of rheumatology. He has conducted damage consistency analysis, vehicle examinations (including black box data imaging and analysis), accident site survey as well as accident reconstruction including determining speed calculations/estimates, collision severity, computer simulations, vehicle and occupant kinematics, injury biomechanics, and slip, trip and fall investigations. Sami's personal interests include live jazz and classical music, trying new restaurants with his wife, and playing video games with his daughter.

DEREK SNEAD

Director – Claims
Costco Wholesale Corporation



Derek Snead is Costco's Claims Director. He is a 32-year Costco employee, including 21 years as corporate counsel. When not grinding his teeth over claims, Derek spends time with his wife and daughters, attends Mariners baseball games, listens to jazz, and plans his family's next vacation.

CHERI K. TRITES-VERSLUIS

Chief Claims Officer
Vault



Cheri Trites-Versluis is the Chief Claims Officer of Plutus Insurance Holdings, LLC, Vault Risk Management Services, LLC, and Vault E&S Insurance Company. She is an experienced insurance executive with over 25 years of expertise focused on legal, claims management, and technology innovation. Her experience includes serving as an insurance coverage and extra-contractual litigation attorney and leading claims innovation at EMC Insurance Companies. She significantly contributed to the development of AI-driven technologies as Head of Product Development at a leading insurtech company. Ms. Trites-Versluis holds a JD from DePaul University College of Law and a fellowship at Stanford University Law School, demonstrating her commitment to legal excellence and technological advancement in insurance.