



2024 WINTER CONFERENCE

JANUARY 25-27

Fort Lauderdale, FL
The Westin Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort

FACULTY GUESTS

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



VANDANA M. ABRAMS

Senior Counsel – Litigation Maersk Agency USA, Inc.

Vandana Abrams is Litigation Counsel at Maersk and handles claims and litigation in North America. While she primarily handles personal injury matters, Vandana also manages contractual and commercial disputes as needed. Vandana began her legal career in the Chatham County District Attorney's Office, prosecuting intimate partner violence crimes. She then moved into private practice, handling the defense of transportation claims and medical malpractice claims. She lives in Savannah, Georgia with her husband, two young children (ages 4 and 2), 2 dogs, a cat and 6 chickens.



JULIE ADAMS

Sr. Counsel, Litigation & Employment Summit Materials, Inc.

Julie Adams has over twenty years of experience managing corporate litigation. Her career as an attorney has been spent as in-house counsel managing litigation. She joined Summit Materials over 2 ½ years ago at its HQ location in downtown Denver, Colorado. There is a high concentration of personal injury matters that Julie manages as Summit Materials business involves transportation of aggregates. The other litigation matters involve contract disputes, both as a plaintiff and defendant, and employment litigation (though currently even though Summit Materials has over 6,000 employees, there aren't any open employment matters). The majority of litigation is concentrated in Texas, Utah, Missouri and South Carolina. Julie is originally from Findlay, Ohio, played tennis at Ohio State, and went to law school at the University of Mississippi. Both she and her sponsor, Ruth Shapiro, spent some time at the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy in Bradenton, Florida.



EDIE CIMBA

AVP National Claims Aviva Protect

Edita (Edie) Cimba serves as the Assistant Vice President, National Claims at Aviva Canada Inc., Canada's second largest property and casualty insurance company with more than 4,000 employees and a wholly owned subsidiary of the UK-based Aviva plc. It provides home, personal, automobile, recreational vehicle, group and business insurance to more than three million customers. Having obtained her law degree, Edie's professional career has been split equally between insurance management and the practice of law as a civil litigator. In her current role she oversees \$1 billion in reserves and leads the following casualty operations: Major Case Unit, National Property Damage Liability Unit, Data Analytics, Risk & Control and Training & Development.



MEGAN DAAKE

Corporate Counsel Drury Hotels Company, LLC

Megan Daake joined Drury Hotels in 2019. Megan manages Drury's general liability litigation and provides advice and counsel on a variety of hospitality matters. Before joining Drury, Megan worked on civil litigation in private practice. She obtained her bachelor's from Stephens College and her J.D. from the University of Missouri in Columbia. Megan lives in St. Louis, Missouri, with her husband and two small children.



DAN DILLEN

Director of Risk Management & Real Estate

Ward Transport & Logistics

Dan Dillen is Director of Risk Management at Ward Transport & Logistics Corp., a role he has filled since 1990. Ward is a family owned, family operated company, based in Altoona, PA, which has trucking, warehousing, and freight brokerage components. It has over 1,500 employees in its 22 locations and operates over 600 trucks amassing around 40 million miles annually. Dan is responsible for procuring all of the various insurance coverages for the Ward companies, and perhaps more importantly, he oversees and directs all of Ward's liability and workers compensation claims and related litigation.



RICHARD J. FALCIGNO

Vice President, Claim Advocate Lead

Alliant Insurance Services

Richard Falcigno is a Vice President with Alliant Insurance Services, Inc., serving as a Claim Advocate Lead in Alliant's Mergers & Acquisitions practice. He works in collaboration with Alliant's clients, carriers, and business partners to manage claims and bring them to an efficient, effective and successful conclusion. Rich has over 20 years of insurance and claim management experience, having served in a similar role at a large international insurance carrier for many years. He has managed claims across various lines of business including property, casualty, employment practices, directors and officers and financial institutions E&O. Prior to embarking in the insurance industry, Rich was engaged in the practice of law for over 10 years in civil litigation, trials and appeals.



FRED GARRETT

Risk Manager

Coastal Waste & Recycling

Fred currently serves as corporate risk manager at Coastal Waste & Recycling base in Boca Raton, Florida. He has served in the position since 2022 and oversees the insurance and claims department for Coastal Waste & Recycling. Fred's insurance and transportation career extends over 30 years on both sides of the industry. He started his career with State Farm Insurance as a Claim Representative. He was also a Claim Administrator for Landair Transport, VP of Risk Management for PS Logistica, Excess Claims manager for Hudson Insurance and Senior VP of Risk Management for Volume Transportation. Fred is known for developing a strong claims department and solid self-insured insurance programs with professional respect in the transportation industry.

Fred holds a Masters and BS degree from East Tennessee State University and an associate in claims from the Insurance Institute of America. He has two wonderful daughters who followed his path to East Tennessee State where he played football and his daughters served as presidents of their sorority.



MEGHAN HVIZDOS

VP/Commercial Auto Claims (Trucking)

ISC - Integrated Specialty Coverages LLC

Meghan is the Vice President of Commercial Auto (Trucking) for Integrated Specialty Coverages, LLC (ISC). In this role, she reports to the Chief Underwriting Officer and is responsible for the oversight of all claims and TPA firms, in addition to management and due diligence of claims settlement and/or resolution for over 16,000 trucks. Additionally, Meghan is currently working to build a self-administration claims model. The type of claims handled and included are Long Haul & Domestic, PD, Cargo & Trailer Interchange, and Non-Trucking Liability. Prior to starting at ISC, Meghan was the Director of Claims for Daseke, Inc., the largest flatbed, specialized and logistics company in North America, overseeing 6000 + flatbed trucks. Meghan has over 14 years of diversified experience in the insurance industry leading people, processes, and technology in all aspects of claims management providing oversight. In addition, she collaborates with executive leadership to create and implement continuous improvement initiatives as well as cross-collaborates with multiple departments including risk management, underwriting, insurance programs, brokers and safety. Outside of work, she enjoys traveling, playing golf, and spending time with her family and two dogs.



THOMAS P. MARROS

Executive Vice President Alternative Risk Underwriting

In 2005, Tom Marros joined Aon Risk Services with the National Accounts division, serving as the principal client contact and overall Account Management. Following, he was promoted to the Aon Alternative Risk Division. In 2006, Aon Alternative Risk Underwriting (ARU) via a management buyout became a privately held independent company - Alternative Risk Underwriting (ARU).

Currently, as Executive Vice President, Mr. Marros oversees and manages Group Captives throughout the US and Canada for many industries, including Construction, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Distribution, Transportation, Property and Group Health Benefits. His responsibilities include oversight of broker relationships, underwriting, reinsurance & front placements, claims and loss control management, as well as sales and marketing.



MELISSA MATTHEWS

Senior Litigation Counsel Cintas Corporation

Melissa "Mel" Matthews is Senior Litigation Counsel for Cintas Corporation, a Fortune 500 company headquartered in Mason, Ohio. Cintas provides a range of products and services to businesses including uniforms, mats, mops, cleaning, and restroom supplies, first aid and safety products, fire extinguishers and testing, and safety courses. Cintas serves over one million customers and has one of the largest corporate fleets in North America. In her role as Senior Litigation Counsel, Mel is responsible for managing a wide variety of litigated and pre-litigated automobile and general liability claims. Mel also oversees and helps shape Cintas's strategy and defense in complex commercial litigation matters.

Mel has a Bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina and a J.D. from The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. In her free time, Mel enjoys spending time with her husband and two sons.



MARK MUNSEY

Senior Executive and Professional Liability Claims Specialist Brown & Brown

Mark's relationship with Brown & Brown began thirty years ago as a large account Risk Manager relying on Brown & Brown's superior market acumen and technical excellence. Through the years, he served as Risk Manager for a regional chain of twenty-six luxury department stores with unique retailer exposures in addition to actuarial oversight duties for a wholly-owned admitted Life Insurer. Following this work, he joined one of the world's largest multi-national insurance brokers auditing TPA and SIU vendors before leaving to liquidate an intergovernmental SIR fund and then serve as Risk Manager for a large U.S. City. In this role, he created the City's first in-house all-lines claims department, retained Defense Counsel, designed all SIR/risk transfer programs, attended all trials, and personally handled all high exposure 42 U.S.C. §1983 losses, inverse condemnation matters, Police Liability, and similarly unique sovereign exposures. The most dynamic fieldwork included extended deployments in mutual aid responses to hurricanes, regional wildfires, and high-risk SWAT and Arson/Bomb Squad team callouts.



ARIF PAL

AVP, Liability Claims Amerisure Companies

Arif Pal leads the auto, GL and umbrella lines of business claims in his role as Assistant Vice President of Liability Technical Claims at Amerisure. Leading a team of 11 across the home and field offices, Arif's role is to deliver superior technical claims outcomes, including high-severity and complex claims. Arif joined Amerisure in April of 2022. In 2023, Amerisure has more than doubled the number of cases tried to verdict from what the company averaged in prior years under Arif's leadership.

Arif earned his Bachelor of Laws from the University of London and a Master of Laws with a specialization in Insurance Law from the University of Connecticut School of Law.



JAMES PRUITT

Vice President, Risk Management GFL Environmental

James Pruitt is the Vice President of Risk Management for GFL Environmental and is responsible for the risk management strategy, claims management, and Enterprise Risk Management across North America. He joined GFL in Fall of 2021 but served as a consultant to the CFO in a risk management capacity from 2018 to 2021.

Prior to joining GFL, James was the Vice President of Private Equity Strategy at Risk International, a risk management consulting firm specializing in outsourced risk management for large public companies and Large Cap private equity firms. James holds an MBA from Indiana University's Kelley School of Business and a BBA in International Finance from the University of Akron.

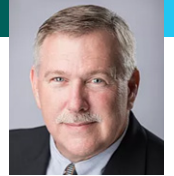


JIM ROBERT

Claims Rescue Specialists Best Foot 4Ward, LLC

As a certified trainer with experience in the insurance industry as an adjuster, field operations manager, product manager, system designer, and facilitator, Jim Robert delivers ongoing learning, needs analysis, design, scripting, development, assessment, implementation and evaluation of programs/processes to ensure alignment with business strategy. His 6+ years as part of the Human Resources department also afforded him the opportunity to develop performance management and succession planning processes. Jim also handles program claims, as well as oversight.

After 27 years with GAB and York Risk Services, he started his own company, Best Foot 4Ward, focused on the development of our industry's staff, both technical and soft skills. Also of key importance is the development of front-line leaders, who ensure that corporate targets are met by guiding their staff. His core leadership courses strengthen those skills and align management teams, resulting in more effective guidance and better results.



CINDI SKOWRONSKI

Vice President - Claims Old Republic Specialty Insurance Underwriters

Cindi Skowronski is the Vice President of Claims for ORSIU and manages several unique programs through program administrators. Some of the specialty programs include cranes, sports and entertainment, and commercial agriculture businesses. She joined ORSIU in 2018 but has over 25 years of extensive claim handling experience in the excess and surplus lines of the insurance industry. Ms. Skowronski has handled fatality and catastrophic injury claims along with significant coverage issues throughout her career.



MATTHEW STROMQUIST

General Counsel GEA

Matt is general counsel at GEA, responsible for legal operations in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. Prior to joining GEA in 2022, Matt was a partner at a litigation boutique firm in Chicago, specializing in financial services litigation. He also served as vice-chair of the ABA's International Task Force; and vice-chair of the ABA's Litigation and Arbitration Subcommittee. Matt began his legal career as an associate at a large law firm in Denver specializing in commercial and construction litigation. Matt received his JD with highest honors, Order of the Coif, from the University of Iowa College of Law, where he also served as an editor on the Iowa Law Review. After graduating he served as a law clerk on the DC Court of Appeals. Matt has a B.A. in anthropology from Haverford College and a Master's Degree in Ethnomusicology from the University of Texas at Austin.



SCOTT N. ULSH

Director, Transportation

Crum & Forster - Surplus & Specialty Lines



Scott Ulsh is the Director of Small Fleet Transportation and Sharing Economy Claims for Crum & Forster's Surplus & Specialty Lines division. Crum & Forster, which recently celebrated its 200th anniversary, is made up of nearly 2500 employees, provides market-leading property & casualty, accident & health and specialty insurance solutions. Prior to joining C&F, Mr. Ulsh held various leadership positions with Nationwide, Gallagher Bassett, Aegis, Custard Insurance Adjusters and Trident Engineering Associates. He brings a wealth of experience developing and managing teams handling commercial auto, personal auto, GL, umbrella/excess and homeowner claims. In his spare time, Scott enjoys camping, boating and travelling.

RENEE VANDERHAGEN

AVP and Coverage Counsel |

S&S Claims

Crum & Forster



Renee practiced law in metro Detroit for 20 years, defending hospitals and insurance companies before moving to First Mercury Insurance Company in 2009 in the claims department. She supervised teams of adjusters until moving into the Coverage Unit at Crum & Forster. Now, Renee oversees litigation by or against the Company across the country, collaborating with our legal counsels, claims teams and underwriting partners.

LAUREN WATSTEIN

Legal Services Director

Berkley Environmental | a Berkley Company



Lauren Watstein joined Berkley Environmental in the newly created role of Legal Services Director in May 2022. The role was created to bring the carrier's legal bill review in-house and provide guidance to claims in managing relationships with panel counsel. Her team provides bill review for other Berkley operating units and guidance regarding litigation and billing guidelines. Prior to joining Berkley Environmental, Lauren spent 2½ years at CNA as an Outside Counsel Manager and 16 years at Chubb managing their bill review team. She graduated from the University of Rochester with a BA in Psychology and earned her JD at Quinnipiac University School of Law. In addition, she holds CPCU and CLMP certifications, is an Advisory Board member of ClaimsXchange and instructor at the CLM School of Leadership. When she is not working, she enjoys going to Broadway shows, baking, and hiking throughout CT with her husband David.

BRIAN YOSHIKUNI

Berkley Canada

(a W. R. Berkley Company)



Brian Yoshikuni is employed by Berkley Canada which is an operating unit of the WR Berkley Corporation. He has been with Berkley Canada for almost 15 years. Brian was the first person hired in Claims and was tasked with building the department from the ground up. Berkley Canada's business is focused on writing Canadian domiciled risks. The initial lines of business consisted of Primary/Excess Casualty, Executive Risk, Professional Liability, Life Science, Tech E&O and Surety. In the later years, they added Cyber, Environmental, Construction and Fine Art.