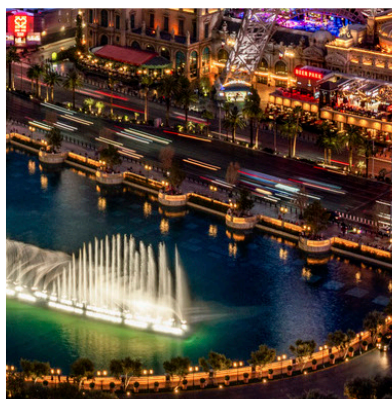
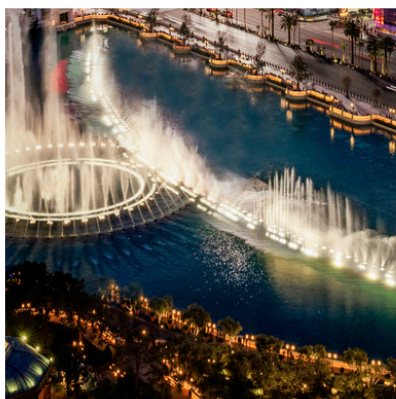
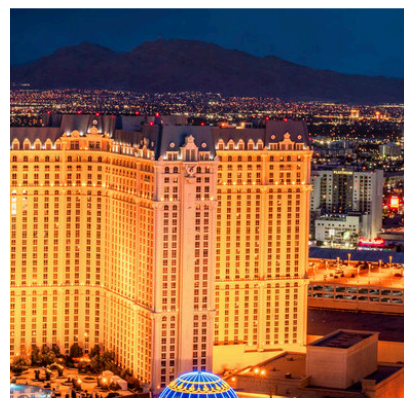
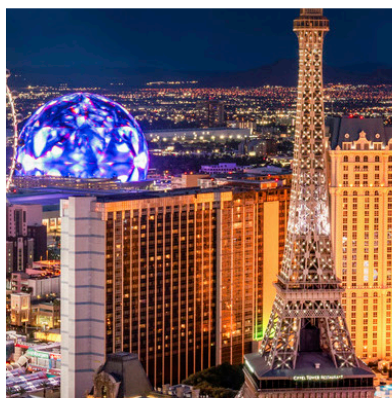


2026

Fall Conference

September 24 – 26



Las Vegas,
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FONTAINEBLEAU
LAS VEGAS



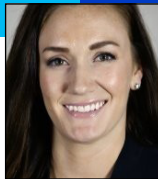
FACULTY GUESTS

The Harmonie Group and Canadian Litigation Counsel would like to thank the following industry leaders for their participation in our 2026 Fall Conference. We are especially appreciative of them sharing their knowledge and insights into their respective fields and areas of expertise.

CASSANDRA BAIN

Senior Corporate Counsel Performance Contracting Group

Cassandra "Cassie" Bain is Senior Corporate Counsel at Performance Contracting Group (PCG), where she provides strategic legal guidance on construction contracting, risk management, and compliance across a national portfolio of projects. PCG's legal group partners closely with business and operations teams to navigate complex commercial issues, mitigate risk, and support successful project execution. Cassie's background includes significant experience in construction-related litigation and dispute management, including overseeing claims, coordinating with outside counsel, and developing strategies to resolve complex disputes efficiently. She leverages this litigation experience to proactively advise project teams on claims prevention, contract strategy, and risk allocation. In addition to her legal advisory work, Cassie leads internal initiatives focused on legal training, litigation readiness, and effective business communications, helping teams operate with greater awareness of legal risk.



XAVIER BALDERAS

Associate General Counsel CRH Americas Law Group

Xavier Balderas joined CRH Americas in 2017 and currently serves as Associate General Counsel. In this capacity, he oversees CRH's litigation in the western half of the U.S., which includes actively litigating cases as lead counsel. Xavier's practice includes commercial disputes, construction defects and accidents, product liability, and trucking accidents. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry. After completing his military service, he transitioned into the civilian world to attend law school at the University of Florida. Prior to his tenure at CRH, Xavier practiced commercial and construction law in Atlanta, Georgia.



XAVIER BLUM

AVP of Casualty Claims Golden Bear Insurance Company

Xavier Blum is a senior insurance executive and attorney with more than 25 years of experience managing complex casualty, environmental, and excess liability claims across the United States. He currently serves as an AVP of Casualty Claim at Golden Bear Insurance company, where he manages a group of Claims Consultants who handle primary and excess GL losses throughout the US. Prior to arriving at Golden Bear he was a Director of Complex Claims at Everest, where he was also responsible for the management of high-profile excess policy claims involving catastrophic losses, class actions, multidistrict litigation (MDLs), and other complex exposures. He began his professional career with Deloitte & Touche LLP, advising clients on tax planning and corporate transactions.



CORNELIUS BRISCOE

Vice President, Claims American Claims Management, Inc.

Cornelius R. Briscoe, MBA, SCLA, is a senior claims executive with more than 25 years of progressive leadership experience directing complex professional liability claims organizations and delivering strategic claims solutions for carriers, brokers, insureds, and healthcare organizations nationwide. As Vice President, Claims and Head of Claims for PPCM Protect Professionals Claims Management under Davies North America / American Claims Management, Inc., Cornelius provides leadership for the organization's Professional Liability Claims Division. He oversees a portfolio of more than 2,500 claims while managing approximately \$40 million in aggregate indemnity reserves and \$5–8 million in annual outside counsel expenditures. His responsibilities include claims strategy, litigation management, reserve governance, financial stewardship, operational excellence, regulatory compliance, client service, and executive reporting. He partners closely with underwriting, risk management, carrier partners, brokers, and executive leadership to improve portfolio performance, support business development, and deliver exceptional client service.



STEPHANIE DENT

Litigation Supervisor ECM Insurance Group

Stephanie Dent is the Litigation Supervisor at ECM Insurance Group. She has 12 years of experience in the insurance industry. Stephanie graduated *cum laude* from Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1997 and from there attended the University of Missouri School of Law in Columbia, Missouri. After earning her JD, she worked in private practice for 12 years. Stephanie has earned her Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriter designation and is a member of her local CPCU chapter, as well as the Missouri Bar. She has previously served as a board member of Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Central Missouri. She is the proud mother of four children and resides in Columbia, Missouri.



JAMES EVERETT

Vice President of Claims ECM Insurance Group

Jim Everett joined the ECM Insurance Group in 2017 and leads the Insurance Claims Division. Jim began his insurance career in 1985 after graduating from Trenton State College in NJ with a Degree in Business Administration and Marketing. During his career he has held various domestic and international P&C claims positions including, Claim Adjuster, Subrogation Manager, District Claim Manager, Claim Auditor, Major Case Claim Consultant, Claim Director and VP of Claims. Jim has earned his Associates in Claims, Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriter designations and is an active member of the CLM organization.



KELLY GARY

Vice President, Global Litigation Assurant, Inc.

Kelly leads Assurant's global litigation and complex investigations functions, overseeing teams of highly experienced professionals responsible for managing enterprise litigation, significant business and claims-related investigations, and emerging legal risk across the organization. Kelly is recognized for delivering exceptional litigation outcomes through early resolution strategies, disciplined risk management, and practical business-focused legal counsel. Kelly joined Assurant in 2011 and has more than 15 years of experience leading enterprise-wide litigation and investigations. Prior to joining Assurant, Kelly spent 13 years at Alston & Bird, where she was a partner in the Securities Litigation Practice, representing Fortune 500 companies and their officers and directors in high-stakes securities, governance, regulatory, and litigation matters. She also advised clients on complex transactional and governance matters, including SEC reporting and disclosure obligations, regulatory strategy, enterprise risk management, and D&O insurance coverage.



REBECCA GREGG

Director of Claims EAS Entrusted Administrators & Subrogation

Rebecca Gregg is the Director of Claims at Entrusted Administrators & Subrogation (EAS), with nearly 20 years of experience in commercial insurance claims. Throughout her career, she has developed and led comprehensive Third-Party Administrator programs, managed complex claims, and designed customized service models for clients across transportation, professional liability, municipal, tribal, sexual abuse and molestation, entertainment, sports, and other specialized markets. Rebecca serves as Co-Chair of the TIDA Marketing Committee and is a member of the CLM Transportation Committee. She is also a professor for ClaimsAcademy and has participated in industry conferences, workshops, podcasts, and panel discussions on claims, litigation, leadership, and professional development. A lifelong Hoosier, Rebecca lives in the Indianapolis area.



PATRICK GUINNESS

Senior Claims Counsel Black & Veatch

Patrick currently serves as Senior Claims Counsel for Kansas City based EPC contractor, Black & Veatch Corporation. Black & Veatch, a top ten ENR design firm in Power & Water, provides engineering, construction, and procurement services globally, with an emphasis on energy markets. Prior to joining Black & Veatch, Patrick was an equity shareholder with McDowell, Rice, Smith & Buchanan P.C., representing engineers, architects, and construction professionals in complex litigation.



JOHN HARDAGE

Executive Vice President TransEleven Claims Managers, Inc.

As Executive Vice President, John is a member of the Executive Team and assists with supervisory oversight and leadership of TransEleven attorneys, claims operations, business development, London Market relations and management of certain client programs. John also oversees claims administration and litigation from initial coverage and claims analysis through resolution, including management of outside counsel negotiations, mediations and reporting. Prior to joining TransEleven, John worked as an insurance defense attorney where he handled a wide variety of first- and third-party claims and matters, including personal injury, professional liability, construction defects, oil and gas, property damage and coverage opinions. He has additional experience handling sexual abuse cases. John has worked for TransEleven since 2017, first serving as Senior Claims Counsel and then as Managing Counsel and Vice President.



DAVID HERSHEY

Risk Manager Lexa International / Axel Johnson, Inc.

A risk manager for over 20 years, David's perspective brings a different dimension to the risk management field. As the Risk Manager for Lexa International, a diverse and once public (SRLP before the sale of this subsidiary in 2021), and privately held \$6B global company specializing in petroleum wholesale, ocean marine terminal management, residential and commercial water treatment, recycled lumber, medical & pharmaceutical device manufacturing and student housing, he is a frequent speaker for National and Regional RIMS, a past CPCU Chapter President, and the Massachusetts RIMS president and speaker chairman. He holds a BS degree from Bentley University, Chartered Property & Casualty Underwriter, Associates Risk Management, Certified Risk Manager, Associates in Marine Insurance Management, Associates in Risk Management, Management Liability Insurance Specialist, Transportation Risk Insurance Specialist, Certifies Professional Service Representative and is a Construction Risk Insurance Specialist.



MACHELLE JAMES

Vice President and General Counsel Atlas Copco Group

Machelle James is Vice President and General Counsel of Atlas Copco North America Inc. She has over two decades of legal experience. In her current role she has oversight of all North American legal matters for a Swedish-based industrial manufacturing company. Her expertise with Atlas Copco spans over a decade where her responsibilities encompass a broad spectrum, including mergers and acquisitions, compliance, employment matters, real estate transactions, and general corporate governance. Machelle currently serves as a Board Member of the New Jersey Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel and is Chair of the General Counsel committee. Prior to joining Atlas Copco, Machelle was a practicing lawyer in Atlanta, Georgia where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Spelman College and her Juris Doctorate from Georgia State University College of Law.



MARTHA KERSEY

Assistant Vice President of Casualty Claims

Frank Winston Crum Insurance

Martha S. Kersey is an Assistant Vice President of Casualty Claims for FrankCrum General Agency Inc., servicing claims for Frank Winston Crum Insurance and Clear Blue Insurance. She is an Illinois licensed attorney with over 35 years of experience in Claims and Corporate Legal, bringing extensive expertise from leadership roles at Church Mutual as Director of Large Loss Casualty Claims, Amerisure managing an Environmental Large Loss team, and QBE's General Counsel office handling extra-contractual litigation and coverage on a nationwide basis. Martha reports to the Senior Vice President of FWCI and manages the FCGA Casualty Claims team, oversees complex casualty matters and brings significant legal expertise to claims handling operations. Martha has served as a guest speaker for the Defense Research Institute, Alpha International and CLM, and held leadership positions as past vice-president of the Champaign County Bar Association and past President of the East-Central Illinois Women Attorneys Association.



TARA PALMER

Claims Manager

BITCO Insurance Companies

Tara Palmer is a Claims Manager at Old Republic Bitco with over 30 years of experience adjusting commercial aviation, auto, and general liability claims across domestic and international jurisdictions. She has spent more than a decade handling claims teams while continuing to manage her own caseload, bringing hands-on experience in exposure evaluation and litigation claims management. Tara's career includes senior roles at AIG, where she managed a team that handled 150 passenger claims from US Airways Flight 1549 ("Miracle on the Hudson"), and at Delta Air Lines, where she handled passenger claims, including litigation involving 9/11 and other high-profile cases. She holds a BBA in Marketing from Georgia Southern University.



MISTI RAMIREZ

Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer

EMA Risk Services

Misti Ramirez is the Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer of EMA Risk Services, where she leads claims operations, litigation strategy, compliance initiatives, and client services. Throughout her career, she has built and led high-performing claims teams while managing complex, high-exposure transportation and commercial auto claims. With a passion for problem-solving and relationship-building, Misti has spent her career working alongside carriers, transportation companies, self-insured organizations, defense counsel, and risk management professionals to navigate challenging claims and litigation matters. Her experience spans catastrophic injury claims, mediation strategy, regulatory compliance, trials and operations within the transportation industry. Outside of the day-to-day complexities of claims and litigation, Misti is passionate about strengthening industry partnerships and advancing the professionalism of the claims, risk management, and the transportation industry.



SAMI SHAKER

Senior Director, Accident Reconstruction

J.S. Held

Sami Shaker joined J.S. Held in July of 2022 as part of J.S. Held's acquisition of Kodosi Forensic Engineering. Sami 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. Mr. Shaker has been able to use these past experiences and apply much of what he has learned to his current work. 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.



 **THE HARMONIE GROUP®**

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JEFFREY STUPP

Associate General Counsel Schneider

Jeffrey Stupp serves as Associate General Counsel for Schneider National Carriers, while acting as divisional General Counsel for their affiliate Cowan Systems. Jeff manages pending litigation involving the company, assists in negotiating contracts, and provides legal counsel to the company's numerous departments and executives, as well as the brokerage and truckload divisions. Prior to joining Schneider, Jeff worked in many legal capacities for Cardinal Logistics for ten years, and he also worked in private practice with Gallagher Sharp in Cleveland, Ohio, where he represented a variety of motor carriers, brokers, and logistics providers.



STEPHEN WEBB

RLI Insurance Company

Stephen W. Webb, Jr., Esq., is Assistant Vice President of Claim Transportation at RLI Insurance Company, where he directs claims handling for the Transportation Claim Group. Mr. Webb has more than two decades of insurance, legal, and claims leadership experience. Before joining RLI, he served as Assistant Vice President of Professional Liability and General Liability Claims at Hiscox USA and held several leadership positions during a 12-year career with Farmers Insurance, including Director of National Commercial Auto Claims. His multidisciplinary approach focuses on assembling the right team, testing the evidence, and maintaining a clear, persuasive strategy from initial investigation through resolution. Mr. Webb earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Richmond School of Law and holds bachelor's and master's degrees in chemistry from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.



TERRA WILHELM

Frank Winston Crum Insurance

Terra Wilhelm serves as Senior Vice President of Casualty Claims for Frank Winston Crum Insurance. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, summa cum laude, from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and her Juris Doctor from Stetson University College of Law in 2003. A Florida-licensed attorney with more than 23 years of experience in private practice and the insurance industry, Terra provides executive leadership for the company's in-house casualty claims organization, overseeing construction defect, first-party and third-party property, bodily injury, and coverage claims. She is responsible for strategic claims oversight, complex litigation management, financial stewardship, and the resolution of high-exposure claims. Terra partners closely with underwriting and executive leadership to align claims strategy with business objectives, enhance claim outcomes, control indemnity and legal expenses, and support the company's overall risk management and financial performance.



ERIN WRIGHT

Senior Leader, Western Auto Property Damage Claims & Western Casualty Claims Aviva Canada

Erin is a seasoned claims leader with 20 years of experience in the insurance industry, and currently is the Senior Leader of both the Western Auto Property Damage Claims group and the Western Casualty Claims group at Aviva Canada. She brings deep expertise in leading high-performing teams, managing large and complex claims portfolios, and driving strong financial and customer outcomes. She is known for her collaborative leadership style, ability to build technical capability, and focus on delivering consistent, measurable results in a fast-paced, evolving environment. Erin has played a key role in advancing training and onboarding programs, supporting workforce growth, and partnering across national teams to streamline processes and improve operational effectiveness all in the Claims space.



ALEKSANDRA ZIVANOVIC

Vice President, Legal SGI Canada



Aleks Zivanovic is a seasoned legal executive with over 20 years of experience in the insurance sector. She currently serves as Vice President, Legal at SGI CANADA, where she leads all SGI Canada litigation, provides strategic legal leadership across risk, compliance, governance, and privacy domains. Her role includes advising the Executive, Board, and management teams, and she is a key member of SGI's Senior Leadership Team. Aleks is known for her transformational leadership, fostering a collaborative "speak up" culture rooted in trust and fairness. She aligns legal strategy with business goals and is recognized for delivering practical, business-focused legal solutions.