



15th ANNUAL



# WORKERS' COMPENSATION & SAFETY CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 2, 2022 | DOUBLETREE HILTON | LISLE  
8:30 AM TO 3:00 PM



## Aaron Harris

*Executive Director, Illinois Chamber of Commerce Employment Law Council*

Aaron leverages his background and connections in Illinois state government to help clients further their business objectives. Before joining Michael Best Strategies, he held influential positions in Illinois' Office of the Governor, Department of Juvenile Justice, and State Police. Most recently, Aaron served as the Interim Legislative Director in the Office of Governor JB Pritzker where he managed the Governor's Office of Legislative Affairs staff and statewide legislative liaison workforce. In this role, he advised the Governor on proposed bills, regulatory and administrative procedure, and legislative strategy. Aaron assisted with the successful enactment of the Governor's landmark legislative agenda by securing support from members of the Illinois General Assembly. Prior to assuming this role, Aaron served as the First Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Legislative Affairs where he oversaw 16 state agencies legislative priorities, including energy, environment, infrastructure, public safety, and elections. Earlier in his career, Aaron was Chief of Intergovernmental Relations for the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice's Office of Governmental Relations. In that role he drafted, passed, and implemented criminal justice reform and other legislation to advance the department's legislative agenda, while securing a \$120 million annual budget appropriation.



## **Shuaib Ahmed**

***Owner and President, Illinois and California, ASA Law Group, LLC***

Prior to forming ASA Law Group, LLC, Mr. Ahmed represented clients in personal injury and medical malpractice cases wherein he tried cases before the jury, the bench (judge), and at Arbitration. Thereafter, he served as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Illinois defending various state departments in workers' compensation cases. He then spent numerous years engaged in private practice aggressively defending self-insured clients in workers' compensation cases in his capacity as a Partner.

Mr. Ahmed formed ASA Law Group, LLC, located in Oak Brook, Illinois, with a mission to partner with employers in not only the defense of workers compensation and civil cases, but also as legal consultants in advancing the employer's overall mission and corporate goals. Based upon client needs, Mr. Ahmed scaled the firm into California, forming ASA Law Group, Inc., which services employers in the entire state of California in the defense of workers compensation and civil cases.

Mr. Ahmed has authored numerous articles for the Illinois State Bar Association, the Business Leader and is the author of the book *Get a Grip: An Employer's Manual on How to Get A Grip on a Workers' Compensation Case before it Spirals Out of Control*. Mr. Ahmed is also a faculty member for the Illinois Continuing Legal Education, the Illinois State Bar Association and he actively serves on the Illinois Chamber of Commerce Employment Committee and on the Business Advisory Board for the Illinois Chamber of Commerce.



## **Jynnifer Cotharn**

***Partner, Inman & Fitzgibbons, Ltd.***

Jynnifer Cotharn has been with the firm since 2007 and practices in the areas of workers' compensation defense and general liability. Her practice includes client consultation on reporting and investigating claims as well as advising on strategic measures to reduce risk and liability for employers and insurance carriers. She represents clients at the arbitration, Commission and Circuit Court levels. Jynnifer received her Juris Doctor from The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law.



## **Kevin Deuschle**

***Partner, Inman & Fitzgibbons, Ltd.***

Kevin Deuschle has been with the firm since 2002. Kevin was named a partner in 2012 and a shareholder of the firm in 2015. His primary area of practice is workers' compensation defense, representing insurance carriers, self-insured businesses, risk management associations, third-party administrators, and municipalities across various industries including transportation, health care, food service, and manufacturing.

Kevin is the Chair of the firm's Client Education Committee and Information Technology Practice Management group, including the firm's Committee on Digital Ethics, and serves as the firm's Director of Digital Initiatives. Kevin recently completed his term as the Vice President of Kids' Chance of Illinois, the state chapter of a national organization that awards scholarships to children whose parents have been killed or seriously injured in work-related accidents.



## **Ben Friederich**

***Vice President of Corporations and Co-owner, Abacus Research, Inc.***

Ben Friederich joined Abacus Research, Inc. in 2008, partnering with Paul A. Seguin. Ben received a B.A. from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, with a major in Administration of Justice, secondary concentrations in Criminal Investigations and Aerospace Studies and a minor in Political Science. It was Ben and Paul's vision to grow Abacus Research, Inc. into not only a nationwide investigations contractor, but a premier investigations provider of superior quality to the insurance and corporate industries. Today, they provide services to some of the largest manufacturing, transportation and food/retail employers in the United States and a wide range of third-party administrators, workers' compensation, and auto-liability insurance providers.



## **Peter J. Stavropoulos**

***Senior Partner, BCM Law***

Peter J. Stavropoulos is a Senior Partner at BCM Law specializing in the defense of workers' compensation claims for employers, insurers and third-party administrators. Mr. Stavropoulos has secured numerous victories on behalf of employers and has been successful in defending high exposure cases with alleged permanent total disability and significant wage loss claims. Aside from several zero awards, he has secured an award that resulted in the petitioner owing the respondent a substantial amount of money after the application of a credit to the award. He is also a Past President of the Workers' Compensation Lawyers Association.



## **Jeffrey Gibellina**

***Partner, BCM Law***

Jeffrey is a partner at BCM Law with extensive experience in tirelessly defending Illinois employers, insurers and third-party administrators in workers' compensation cases in Illinois. Jeff has argued several cases in front of arbitrators at the Commission resulting in savings well in excess of \$1 million for his clients. Moreover, he has proceeded to oral arguments in front of the three-judge panel at the Commission on numerous occasions. His written and verbal communications with clients, opposing counsel, and judges have proven time and again to be invaluable in successfully defending cases. Further, his deep knowledge of workers' compensation matters has allowed him to present for the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and the Chicago Bar Association. He also serves as a dependable mentor to associates at the Firm.



**Douglas Craig, Psy.D.**  
***President, Atlantic OccPsych***

Douglas Craig, PsyD is a nationally recognized subject matter expert in psychological testing, forensic assessment and police psychology. Dr. Craig is considered a subject matter expert in occupational-related psychological evaluations, including but not limited to pre-employment, fitness for duty, and workers' compensation contexts.

A former police officer and university professor, Dr. Craig offers a deep, firsthand perspective on occupational medical and psychological wellness combined with a passion for advocacy and education. At Atlantic OccuPsych, he focuses on using scientifically validated methods for assessment and evaluation, as well as evidence-based interventions for anxiety, mood and trauma-related disorders.

In addition to contributing to current professional standards and guidelines, Dr. Craig has conducted more than 15,000 psychological evaluations and is expert in independent medical examinations. He has collaborated with a variety of organizations, from the Drug Enforcement Administration, United States Postal Inspection Service and Chicago Police Department to small private businesses.



**John Campbell**  
***Partner, Keefe Campbell Biery & Associates***

John Campbell received his JD from Chicago-Kent College of Law in 1999 and co-founded the Keefe, Campbell, Biery & Associates firm in 2003. John's area of concentration is in workers' compensation as well as employment and OSHA citation defense. John enjoys teaching as an adjunct professor of workers' compensation law as well. JD from Chicago-Kent College of Law in 1999 and co-founded the Keefe, Campbell, Biery & Associates firm in 2003. John's area of concentration is in workers' compensation as well as employment

and OSHA citation defense. John enjoys teaching as an adjunct professor of workers' compensation law as well. In addition to his work as a courtroom litigator, John is also an adjunct law professor and regular speaker regarding workers' compensation and employment law issues.



**Shawn Biery**  
***Partner, Keefe Campbell Biery & Associates***

Shawn Biery received his JD from Thomas Jefferson School of Law in 2001. He was a founding member of Keefe, Campbell, Biery & Associates in 2003 after practicing in employment law and patent law firms prior. Shawn utilizes strategies similar to those he developed while an active duty member of the US Marines conducting desert warfare training. In addition to his work as a courtroom litigator, Shawn is also an adjunct law professor and regular speaker regarding workers' compensation and employment law issues.



## **James Egan**

***Partner, Keefe Campbell Biery & Associates***

Jim Egan received his JD from John Marshall Law School in 1988. He is a thirty-year practitioner with extensive civil practice throughout the State of Illinois. Formerly managing partner of James F. Egan and Associates, Ltd., Jim was recruited to merge his practice with Keefe & Associates as of January 1, 2004. He has lectured frequently on the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act and is a contributing lecturer for Rosecrance Legal Considerations of Marijuana in the Workplace presentations and podcast.



## **Lisa Azoory-Keller**

***Partner, Nyhan, Bambrick Kinzie & Lowry, P.C.***

Lisa Azoory-Keller is a Partner at Nyhan, Bambrick, Kinzie & Lowry. She has been practicing workers' compensation law for approximately 12 years with emphasis on trial and appellate work. Lisa defends employers across Illinois and she has written extensively on a variety of topics relating to Illinois Workers' Compensation law. Lisa has also lectured for the Illinois Self-Insurers' Association and the Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education on the topics of

compensability of work injuries, and trial practices.



## **Adam Cox**

***Partner, Nyhan, Bambrick Kinzie & Lowry, P.C.***

Mr. Adam J. Cox, Esq. is the Executive Secretary of the Illinois Self Insurers Association and a practicing trial attorney, defending Illinois businesses in workers' compensation matters for the past two decades. He is a partner with the firm, Nyhan Bambrick Kinzie & Lowry, serving on its Diversity Committee and as the liaison for WGN's Kids Fair. Mr. Cox completed his undergraduate at the University of Iowa, and graduated from DePaul University College of Law. He is a

frequent lecturer for business-oriented groups, with particular interest in the areas of fraud and benefit entitlement.



## **Michael Brennan**

***Chairman, Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission***

Michael J. Brennan was appointed as Chairman of the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission by Governor JB Pritzker on March 15, 2019. He previously served as a Public Member Commissioner since 2013.

He co-chaired a Rules Committee which resulted in the first comprehensive review and modification of the IWCC Rules of Practice in decades. Revised Rules were unanimously approved by the Legislature and Commission in October of 2016.

Mr. Brennan earned both his Bachelor of Arts and Juris Doctorate Degrees at De Paul University. He has practiced law in Illinois and has litigated numerous cases reported by the Illinois Appellate Court, the



Illinois Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Mr. Brennan was engaged in private law practice from 1991 through 2013, with an emphasis on Workers' Compensation. He previously served as an Assistant Attorney General, from 1977 through 1991, where he prosecuted Civil Revenue and Criminal Medicaid Fraud cases, before becoming the Chief of the then Industrial Commission Division.

He was among the principal authors of the Larson's Illinois Workers' Compensation Handbook, and has published numerous articles dealing with Illinois Workers' Compensation issues for Quinlan's, Thomson West and Reuters. He has been qualified and testified as an expert on Workers' Compensation matters and has lectured extensively on the topic. He is a member of the Chicago Bar Association and Workers' Compensation Lawyers' Association. He has been elected by his peers as a Martindale-Hubbell Rated AV Preeminent Attorney for over Twenty Years, an Illinois Super Lawyer, an Illinois Leading Lawyer, named as among the Best Lawyers of America and among the Top Attorneys in Illinois by Chicago Magazine.



### **State Representative Bob Morgan**

***Representative, Illinois 58<sup>th</sup> District***

Bob Morgan was elected as Representative for Illinois' 58th District in 2018. Bob lives in Deerfield with his wife Sonya, and two children. As a father and attorney, Bob will advocate for fiscally and morally responsible state budgets that ensure Illinois remains a state with opportunities for future generations.

Bob served as the lead healthcare attorney for the State of Illinois where he was instrumental in securing health care for over 650,000 Illinois residents and ensured they were covered under ACA's Medicaid expansion. He was lauded for his efforts to implement the Affordable Care Act and the Illinois Medical Cannabis Program. The state's medical cannabis program has already helped over 45,000 residents struggling with debilitating medical conditions like cancer and PTSD, and Bob continues to advocate for patients still waiting for access to the program.

Active in the local community, Bob is a tireless advocate for those without a voice. He is an active Board Member of the Anti-Defamation League and serves on the Board of Trustees of Equip for Equality.



### **State Representative Dan Ugaste**

***Representative, Illinois 65<sup>th</sup> District***

A lifelong resident of Illinois, Representative Dan Ugaste was born and raised in the Chicago suburbs. He lived in Oak Park, Schiller Park and Lake Forest before graduating from Lake Forest High School in 1981. As the first person in his family to complete college, he graduated from Lake Forest College in 1985, and earned his Juris Doctor from DePaul University in 1988.

He is a 20-year employee and a shareholder in the Nyhan, Bambrick, Kinzie and Lowry Law Firm in Chicago, where he specializes in workers compensation defense. He and his wife Denise moved their family to Geneva in 1994. They are the parents of three adult daughters and currently have four grandchildren with five and six due in 2019.

Representative Ugaste served for many years on the Lake Forest College Alumni Board and as the Board President from April 2016 to April of 2018. He and his wife attend the United Methodist Church of Geneva and St. Athanosios Greek Orthodox Church in Aurora.

He was elected to the General Assembly in 2018.