



# ALFA International

THE GLOBAL LEGAL NETWORK



## **STRONGER TOGETHER**

**BUILDING AN IN-HOUSE AND OUTSIDE COUNSEL TEAM  
TO MEET TODAY'S LEGAL CHALLENGES**

**2024 PRODUCT LIABILITY & COMPLEX TORTS PRACTICE GROUP SEMINAR  
SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2024 | THE LODGE AT SPRUCE PEAK | STOWE, VERMONT**

[www.ALFAInternational.com](http://www.ALFAInternational.com)



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## BUILDING AN IN-HOUSE AND OUTSIDE COUNSEL TEAM TO MEET TODAY'S LEGAL CHALLENGES

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Legal challenges abound. Curve balls are thrown at in-house and outside counsel regularly, requiring a nimble, yet cohesive and thoughtful response. Often the best defense is offense. The importance of having the "right team" in place to confront these challenges and formulate next steps cannot be overstated.

The programs will conclude before lunch each day, giving attendees time to catch up on other events of the day, network with colleagues and enjoy the fall foliage that is unique to Stowe. Be sure to sign up for one of the optional activities to breathe in the fresh Vermont air and reconnect with peers.

The ALFA International Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group has prepared a game plan to navigate new and old challenges to stay one step ahead of the competition. Our seminar will open with a general session exploring mitigation strategies when the regulators come knocking. Attendees will then have their choice of a variety of roundtable discussions addressing cutting edge topics such as "Forever Chemicals," selecting and preparing a corporate representative for deposition, "optional" safety devices, and artificial intelligence in the workplace. We conclude day one with a general session on crisis management and communications. Day two opens with a tutorial on effective company communications, followed by roundtable discussions on "Hot Topics" such as the new federal rules regarding admissibility of expert testimony, general jurisdiction by consent and novel class actions as well as relationships between and among co-defendants. We wrap up our program with a discussion of nuclear verdicts and strategies to minimize them.

Welcome again to the 2024 ALFA International Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group Seminar. We look forward to seeing you in the mountains!

### About Stowe & The Lodge at Spruce Peak

Nestled in the picturesque town of Stowe, Vermont, The Lodge at Spruce Peak offers unparalleled luxury and comfort against the backdrop of stunning fall foliage. After an afternoon of exploring whether it be on foot, by bike, or via a zipline, indulge in farm-to-table cuisine, showcasing the best of Vermont's culinary delights. Whether seeking adventure or relaxation, The Lodge at Spruce Peak provides an idyllic haven for experiencing the magic of fall in Vermont.

Attendees are invited to fly into Burlington International Airport (BTV) before making the 1-hour drive to The Lodge at Spruce Peak.

### What is ALFA International?

ALFA International is the premier network of independent law firms. Founded in 1980, ALFA International was the first and continues to be one of the largest and strongest legal networks. We have 140 member firms throughout the world. Our 80 U.S. firms represent 95 of the 100 largest metropolitan areas. Our 60 international firms are located throughout Europe, Asia, Australia/New Zealand, Africa, Canada, Mexico and South America.

ALFA International's mission is to provide high quality, cost efficient legal services wherever our clients need them. The ALFA International model enables our members to use their local expertise to deliver highly effective legal solutions, often drawing upon the collective wisdom and experience of other member firms. ALFA International clients benefit from a geographically comprehensive network of exceptional law firms and accomplished trial and business counsel. Our member firms meet high standards to be part of the ALFA International network and are well respected by their peers in the legal and business community.



**Beth Rose**  
*Chair, Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group*  
SILLS CUMMIS & GROSS P.C.  
Newark, New Jersey



**Colleen Murnane**  
*Vice Chair, Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group*  
FRANTZ WARD LLP  
Cleveland, Ohio



**Matt Stanczyk**  
*Chair Emeritus, ALFA International Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group*  
PLUNKETT COONEY  
Detroit, Michigan

### 2022-2024 PRODUCT LIABILITY & COMPLEX TORTS PRACTICE GROUP LEADERSHIP



**Eddy Hayes**  
*Chair, ALFA International Board of Directors*  
LEAKE & ANDERSSON, L.L.P.  
New Orleans, Louisiana



**Adam Cooper**  
*Regional Chair, Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group*  
MONACO COOPER LAMME & CARR, PLLC  
Albany, New York



**Beth Rose**  
*Chair, Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group*  
SILLS CUMMIS & GROSS P.C.  
Newark, New Jersey



**Robert Hebb**  
*Course Book Editor*  
SEMMEs, BOWEN & SEMMEs  
Baltimore, Maryland



**Colleen Murnane**  
*Vice Chair, Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group*  
FRANTZ WARD LLP  
Cleveland, Ohio



**Elizabeth Davis McCoy**  
*Course Book Editor*  
HUIE, FERNAMBUCQ & STEWART, LLP  
Birmingham, Alabama



**Matt Stanczyk**  
*Chair Emeritus, ALFA International Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group*  
PLUNKETT COONEY  
Detroit, Michigan



**Alan Easterly**  
*Compendia Editor*  
LEITNER, WILLIAMS, DOOLEY & NAPOLITAN, PLLC  
Chattanooga, Tennessee



**Nick Wheeler**  
*Marketing Chair, ALFA International Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group*  
COSGRAVE VERGEER KESTER LLP  
Portland, Oregon



**Mark Hayes**  
*Compendia Editor*  
ROBINSON & MCELWEE PLLC  
Charleston, West Virginia

**2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**  
**EARLY REGISTRATION**

Tamarack Foyer

**2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**  
**FACULTY REHEARSAL**

Sugar Maple & Oak

All moderators are encouraged to use this time to set-up a meeting with their panelists to review their session materials.

**4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**  
**CLIENT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

Mountain Birch

Open to members of the Product Liability & Complex Torts Client Advisory Board & Practice Group Leadership.

**5:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.**  
**ALL ALFA INTERNATIONAL ATTORNEY MEETING**

Alder

All ALFA International attorneys are required to attend.

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

**WOMEN'S INITIATIVE CHEESE TASTING**

Tamarack Ballroom Terrace

Kick off this year's seminar with fine wine and charcuterie bites, including a special appearance from Mountain Mansfield Creamery who will be on-site sharing the finest Vermont cheese. There will also be a surprise for one lucky attendee who enters our raffle. We look forward to seeing you at the 2024 Women's Initiative Event at The Lodge at Spruce Peak in Vermont!



**Agota Peterfy**  
Women's Initiative Liaison  
BROWN & JAMES, P.C.  
St. Louis, Missouri

6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

**PRE-SEASON TAILGATE**

**REGISTRATION, WELCOME RECEPTION & BUFFET DINNER**

Spruce Village Green

Kick-off the season as you arrive in Stowe! After settling in, don your favorite team apparel and join us on the Village Green for a time to reconnect with colleagues and friends.

*Suggested Attire:* Sport team jerseys or apparel. Jeans are appropriate. This evening we will be dining outdoors, layers are recommend.



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

**7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.**  
**BREAKFAST BUFFET**

Tamarack Ballroom Terrace

**7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.**  
**FIRST TIME ATTENDEE BREAKFAST**

Mountain Birch

\*All first time client and attorney attendees are encouraged to attend this breakfast to connect and get to know each other.

**8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**  
**PROGRAM SESSIONS**

Tamarack Ballroom, Sugar Maple & Oak

**8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.**  
**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**



**Eddy Hayes**  
Chair, ALFA International Board of Directors  
LEAKE & ANDERSSON, L.L.P.  
New Orleans, Louisiana



**Beth Rose**  
Chair, Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group  
SILLS CUMMIS & GROSS P.C.  
Newark, New Jersey



**Jessica Zaroski Bauer**  
Chief Executive Officer  
ALFA INTERNATIONAL  
Chicago, Illinois



**Colleen Murnane**  
Vice Chair, Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group  
FRANTZ WARD LLP  
Cleveland, Ohio

**8:15 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.**  
**GENERAL SESSION**

**I Wish the Real World Would Just Stop Hassling Me—Dealing with Regulators**

We all dread that call or letter. ALFA International manufacturing and retail clients and their in-house and outside counsel frequently need to work with federal, state and local regulators in a variety of contexts including agency subpoenas and inquiries, incident investigations, public records requests, product recalls and safety campaigns and at times litigation. Using real world examples, this panel discussion will focus on effective tactics and techniques for mitigating the risk of and responding to government investigations, including developing robust compliance programs, establishing clear chains of internal and external communications and effective strategies for working (or arguing) with government agencies.



**Jay Casini**  
Co-Moderator  
WHITFIELD & EDDY LAW  
Des Moines, Iowa



**Sandra Cobden**  
Chief Counsel, Litigation & Compliance  
PACTIV EVERGREEN  
Lake Forest, Illinois



**Steve Getzoff**  
Co-Moderator  
LESTER SCHWAB KATZ & DWYER, LLP  
New York, New York



**Jorge Colon**  
Sr. Corporate Counsel, Investigations  
THE J.M. SMUCKER COMPANY  
Orrville, Ohio

**9:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.**  
**BREAK**

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

**GROUP ONE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS**

**TRACK 1**

**FOREVER IS A REALLY LONG TIME—WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PFAS AND “FOREVER CHEMICALS”**

You mean like – FOREVER-forever? If you have looked at the news recently, you have probably seen headlines of all shapes and sizes about PFAS and “forever” chemicals—those man-made substances lasting thousands of years that are in most of the consumer products we use and have been detected in the bloodstream of every American who has been tested. This panel will present a brief description of what PFAS chemicals are and where they are found, as well as the potential health risks. The panel will then provide information on the issues already appearing in PFAS litigation, projections of where PFAS litigation may be going in the future, insurance coverage challenges raised by PFAS litigation, and how you can manage this risk now. Is this the next asbestos litigation?



**Jay Thompson**  
*Moderator*  
MURPHY & GRANTLAND, P.A.  
Columbia, South Carolina



**Allison Lange Garrison**  
NILAN JOHNSON LEWIS PA  
Minneapolis, Minnesota



**Chris Schilder**  
*Chief Legal Counsel,*  
*ESG & Innovation*  
PACTIV EVERGREEN  
Lake Forest, Illinois



**Lauren McMillen**  
PLUNKETT COONEY  
Detroit, Michigan



**Andrew Dorn**  
*Manager, Global*  
*Environmental Programs*  
ILLINOIS TOOL WORKS  
Glenview, Illinois

**TRACK 2**

**PUT YOUR BEST FACE FORWARD—SELECTING AND PREPARING THE CORPORATE REPRESENTATIVE**

A corporation is intangible, and the corporate representative embodies the company. It is a unique opportunity to help create the company’s personality. Selecting the best corporate representative can make the difference between success and failure at trial. This session will present factors to consider when selecting the best corporate representative and strategies for preparing them for deposition and trial, to help create a strong corporate personality.



**Rob Smith**  
*Moderator*  
MAYER LLP  
Houston, Texas



**Raina Shah**  
*Principal Consultant*  
APPLIED SAFETY  
AND ERGONOMICS, A  
RIMKUS COMPANY  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



**Chris Phalen**  
*Director, Claims*  
*Management Governance*  
SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC  
Foxboro, Massachusetts



**Bob deRosset**  
YOUNG MOORE AND  
HENDERSON, P.A.  
Raleigh, North Carolina

10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

**BREAK**

10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

**GROUP TWO ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS**

**TRACK 1**

**WHEN NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED—THE CONUNDRUM SURROUNDING MAKING “SAFETY DEVICES” OPTIONAL**

Technological advancements can make powered pieces of equipment more useful and, in some instances, arguably safer for certain applications. However, customer demand for such changes often lags behind product advancements. In many cases, manufacturers present the new technologies as “optional.” In product litigation, a Plaintiff frequently bears the burden of proving the existence of a reasonable alternative design which would have either prevented the injury or lessened the chance of injury. Where a Plaintiff’s injury could have been prevented by the inclusion of the “optional” product improvement, a Plaintiff may argue the “optional” improvement should have been the “standard” design. This panel will address the conundrum facing product manufacturers when deciding whether new technology can be made “optional” when the technology arguably makes the equipment safer. It will provide an analysis of existing case law addressing this issue, identify factors to consider when making “safety devices” optional, and offer practical guidance with respect to defending cases where a manufacturer’s own design is being used against them.



**Matt Jacobson**  
*Moderator*  
WHITFIELD & EDDY LAW  
Des Moines, Iowa



**Chris Harden**  
*SVP Director of Risk*  
*Management*  
AGCO CORPORATION  
Duluth, Georgia



**Randy Reavis**  
*Senior Products Counsel*  
VOLVO GROUP NORTH  
AMERICA, LLC / MACK  
TRUCKS, INC.  
Greensboro, North Carolina



**Craig Hamilton**  
MCDOWELL KNIGHT  
ROEDDER & SLEDGE, LLC  
Mobile, Alabama

**TRACK 2**

**GENERATIVE AI USE IN-HOUSE—REALIZING THE POTENTIAL WHILE AVOIDING THE HYPE**

Join us for a thought-provoking panel discussion on current use of generative AI in legal departments. Beginning with insights from the initial stages, we will explore the challenges and excitement of venturing into the realm of generative AI, touching on foundational strategies and early wins. Transitioning to the intermediate stage, the panel will share firsthand experiences of navigating implementation hurdles, optimizing processes, and identifying opportunities for further AI integration.



**John Osgathorpe**  
*Moderator*  
TAYLOR, DAY,  
GRIMM & BOYD  
Jacksonville, Florida



**Jolene Russell**  
*Deputy General Counsel and*  
*Chief Compliance Officer*  
SHAW INDUSTRIES  
GROUP, INC.  
Dalton, Georgia



**Caroline Keller**  
*Vice President, General*  
*Counsel and Secretary*  
MACROSOURCE, LLC  
Savannah, Georgia



**Mark Werle**  
RYAN SMITH &  
CARBINE, LTD.  
Rutland, Vermont

11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**BREAK**




**12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**  
**GENERAL SESSION**

**Crisis Management and Communications—  
It's Not a Crisis if You are Prepared**


Product manufacturers are often presented with “crisis” situations such as product recalls, catastrophic injuries allegedly caused by their products, mass tort claims and other potentially devastating events. In today’s hyperconnected world, manufacturers must be prepared to manage and, as much as possible, control these events so as to prevent potential ruin. In the past, the question presented was “What do you do when the 60 Minutes crew shows up at the door?” Today’s news cycles and global internet traffic do not wait for 60 Minutes to act and make a rapid, structured response to crises even more imperative to a company’s survival. This panel features seasoned ALFA International attorneys and experienced senior legal executives who will provide useful insights, tools, and suggestions on the development and execution of a Crisis Management and Communications protocol suitable for virtually any crisis situation and designed to enable a company to effectively manage those crises when they arise so that they are not distracted from the important work of investigating the claim itself.




**Kevin Owens**  
*Moderator*  
JOHNSON & BELL, LTD.  
Chicago, Illinois



**Ryan McGary**  
*General Counsel &  
Corporate Secretary*  
AAF INTERNATIONAL  
Louisville, Kentucky



**John D. Exner**  
*General Counsel & Secretary*  
SENECA FOODS  
CORPORATION  
Janesville, Wisconsin



**Jill Gerdrum**  
HALL & EVANS, LLC  
Missoula, Montana

**1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**  
**LUNCH BUFFET**

*Tamarack Ballroom Terrace*

**2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**  
**OPTIONAL AFTERNOON  
ACTIVITIES**

See social activity brochure for additional information.  
*Advance registration is required.*

**7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.**

**APRES SKI**

**RECEPTION & DINNER BUFFET**

*Alpine Club Restaurant  
The Lodge at Spruce Peak*

**7:00 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. Cocktail Reception**

**7:45 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Buffet Dinner**

*Suggested Attire: Apres ski—cozy sweaters, shawls, jackets, furry hats and anything you’d see at a ski chalet are encouraged. Jeans are appropriate.*



**10:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.**


**LATE-NIGHT HOSPITALITY SUITE**

*Whistle Pig Pavilion*

**Hospitality Suite Liaisons:**



**Colleen Murnane**  
FRANTZ WARD LLP  
Cleveland, Ohio



**Kara Stubbs**  
BAKER STERCHI  
COWDEN & RICE LLC  
Kansas City, Missouri



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

**7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.**  
**BREAKFAST BUFFET**

*Tamarack Ballroom Terrace*

**7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.**  
**CLIENT ROUNDTABLE BREAKFAST**

*Mountain Birch*

\*This is a chance for clients to discuss issues that keep them up at night and what outside counsel can do for them. This ALFA International clients-only session is a great opportunity to network and share candid thoughts about your business and how ALFA International can better serve you. While a topic outline will be provided to spur discussion, attendees can offer their thoughts on any issue. One or two designated clients will lead the discussion and take notes of the responses. Those designated clients will present a summary of their discussions before the final general session on Friday.


**8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
**PROGRAM SESSIONS**

*Tamarack Ballroom, Sugar Maple & Oak*


**8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.**  
**GENERAL SESSION**

**What Can We Learn from Blunders Made by Athletes?  
Strategies to Mitigate and Avoid Risk Through Employee  
Communication Training**


You can tell when a high-profile athlete has received training on interviews and social media communication because that athlete says all the right things. Knowing that the Internet preserves everything, the trained athlete stays away from potentially offensive statements and makes positive comments. Similarly, in your company, your employees need to be trained to communicate in company emails, texts, or social media in a way that doesn’t become the Exhibit A for a plaintiff counsel suing the company. This session will provide the communication playbook for company representatives to coach employees on what should and should not be said in internal or external written communications.



**Steve Hamilton**  
*Moderator*  
HALL & EVANS, LLC  
Denver, Colorado



**Nicole Brunson**  
*Associate General Counsel*  
A.O. SMITH CORPORATION  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin



**Katie Koehler**  
*Legal Counsel*  
TRELLEBORG GROUP  
Trelleborg, Sweden



**Adam Cooper**  
MONACO COOPER LAMME & CARR, PLLC  
Albany, New York

9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

**WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ALFAI HEADQUARTERS?**

This session will provide an overview of many new and some improved offerings available at ALFAI as well as resources and opportunities available to our clients.



**Jessica Zaroski Bauer**  
Chief Executive Officer  
ALFA INTERNATIONAL  
Chicago, Illinois

9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

**BREAK**

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**GROUP THREE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS**

**TRACK 1**

**2024 HOT TOPICS**

This session will consist of three separate 20-minute presentations discussing current hot topics that impact organizations' business operations and litigation strategies. Topics:

• **Topic One – The Standards for Admission of Expert Testimony Under Federal Rule of Evidence 702 Were Meaningfully Amended December 1, 2023**

Following more than two decades of various forms of misapplication of the "Daubert trilogy" of United States Supreme Court cases articulating the standards for admitting scientific and other forms of expert testimony, the December 1, 2023 amendments to Rule 702 have the effect of: (1) raising the admissibility bar by strengthening trial courts' initial gatekeeping role, (2) requiring a tighter connection between experts' opinions and the methods they use, and (3) continued monitoring of experts' in-court testimony to be able to strike, when necessary, expert testimony that as actually presented no longer meets admissibility standards.



**Annette Mijanovic**  
HAIGHT BROWN &  
BONESTEEL LLP  
Los Angeles, California

• **Topic 2 – Say Goodbye to Chevron Deference**

Just a few months ago, the U.S. Supreme Court overruled the doctrine known as "Chevron Deference," which required federal courts to defer to an agency's interpretation of the statute the agency administers when the statute is ambiguous even when the court disagreed with the agency's interpretation. How this changed landscape will impact administrative rule making and litigation across practice areas will be discussed.



**Beth Rose**  
SILLS CUMMIS &  
GROSS P.C.  
Newark, New Jersey

• **Topic 3 – California Courts Pave the Way for Radical Expansion of Liability for Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Who Delay in Developing New Drugs**

In Gilead Tenofovir Cases, 98 Cal. App. 5th 911 (2024), a California appellate court has allowed a negligence lawsuit to proceed against a pharmaceutical manufacturer for its alleged delay in developing an improved drug for the treatment of HIV/AIDS, effectively holding that a manufacturer's duty of care to users encompasses its decisions regarding whether and when to bring its treatments to market. Does every improved product released by a manufacturer give rise to potential liability on the grounds that the product should have been made available sooner?



**Zac Schlein**  
SEMMEs, BOWEN  
& SEMMEs  
Baltimore, Maryland

**TRACK 2**

**LITIGATION TANGO—DANCING THROUGH DISPUTES TOGETHER**

Join us for an engaging panel where we dive into the art of navigating business relationships in and out of the courtroom. Explore how collaboration and strategic communication can transform litigation from a battleground into an opportunity for unity. Gain insights into the power of working together in litigation through the deployment of various strategies such as coordinating discovery efforts, sharing expert witnesses, and joint defense agreements. We'll also discuss navigating through scenarios where collaboration is not feasible



**David Warnick**  
Moderator  
JOHNSON & BELL, LTD.  
Chicago, Illinois



**Josh Humphries**  
Senior Counsel  
WESTROCK  
Atlanta, Georgia



**Grace Garcia**  
MORRISON MAHONEY  
Boston, Massachusetts



**Jennifer Goodwin**  
Senior Counsel  
VICTAULIC COMPANY  
Easton, Pennsylvania



**Alexandra Mack**  
Senior Corporate Counsel,  
North America  
HOYA VISION CARE  
Lewisville, Texas

11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

**BREAK**

11:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

**REPORT FROM CLIENT ROUNDTABLE**

An elected client representative will give a brief report on the topics discussed during the client roundtable breakfast.

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**GENERAL SESSION**

**Nuclear Verdicts— Does Anybody Really Know What's Going On?**

Is it possible to mitigate nuclear verdicts? Is it even possible to identify cases where a nuclear verdict is a risk? The panel will present a number of nuclear verdicts, their similarities, and their differences, to identify common factors that drive nuclear verdicts. We will discuss whether these are one-offs or part of a trend. Most importantly, we will talk about what we can do about them.



**Nick Wheeler**  
Moderator  
COSGRAVE VERGEER KESTER LLP  
Portland, Oregon



**Matthew Googe**  
General Counsel &  
Corporate Secretary  
MALIBU BOATS, INC.  
Knoxville, Tennessee



**Michael Linn**  
Senior Claims Examiner  
MEDMARC  
Morrisville, Pennsylvania



**Thomas O'Toole**  
President & Consultant  
SOUND JURY CONSULTING, LLC  
Seattle, Washington



**Dina Cox**  
LEWIS WAGNER, LLP  
Indianapolis, Indiana

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**LUNCH BUFFET**

Tamarack Ballroom Terrace

2:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

**OPTIONAL AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES**

See social activity brochure for additional information. Advance registration is required.

7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

**OPTIONAL DINNER**

Advance registration is required.

**JESSICA ZAROSKI BAUER** joined ALFA International (ALFAI) in 2004 as a Coordinator of Events & Member Services. She then worked for several years as a Marketing Manager, Chief Events Officer and Chief Operating Officer. After 17 years with the association, she accepted her current role as Chief Executive Officer. In this position she is the strategic thought leader of the organization, working closely with the Board of Directors and the various ALFAI committees. She manages headquarters staff and maintains constant communication with association members. Jessica oversees the member recruitment, development and retention programs as well as the marketing and business development initiatives for the organization. Prior to joining ALFA International, she worked in the marketing department of the Chicago-based law firm of Gardner, Carton & Douglas, LLP (now Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath). She is a graduate of the University of Iowa Tippie College of Business (Go Hawkeyes!) and is an avid college football fan. In her spare time Jessica can be found enjoying family time with her husband Harry and her two young daughters, Greta and Vivian. She also enjoys swimming in Lake Michigan, playing beach volleyball and watching Oscar nominated movies.

**NICOLE M. BRUNSON** is a Legal and Corporate Affairs Consultant and the former Head of Litigation & Disputes at ARRIVAL. Nicole's background is in shareholder class actions, general litigation, product liability, corporate matters and commercial disputes. She focuses on global cost avoidance and risk mitigation through business engagement with finance and operations teams. Nicole is a 2006 graduate of Indiana University School of Law- Bloomington (n/k/a/ Maurer School of Law) and a 1998 graduate of Xavier University of Louisiana, where she received a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry. Nicole also obtained an MBA in Marketing and Management from Christian Brothers University in 2002. Before joining Arrival in 2021, Nicole served as Associate General Counsel, Commercial Litigation Americas for Trane Technologies and worked as an associate with Swanson Martin & Bell, LLP, a boutique litigation firm in Chicago, Illinois.

**JASON M. CASINI** is a member of Whitfield & Eddy, PLC law firm, ALFA International's member firm in Des Moines, Iowa. Jay's practice focuses primarily on product liability and commercial litigation. He has served as national counsel for a major sporting goods retailer and represented a wide variety of product manufacturers and retailers, including cases involving motor vehicles and accessories, sporting goods and outdoor products, recreational equipment, manufacturing and processing equipment, industrial safety equipment and lawn and garden equipment. He frequently represents clients in high stakes commercial litigation, including cases involving shareholder actions, partnership disputes, insurance coverage, non-compete agreements and misappropriation of trade secrets. Jay also provides clients with valuable insight on minimizing their litigation exposure through proactive approaches to product liability issues and risk management strategies. Jay also serves as Special Counsel to the Animal Rescue League of Iowa, Inc., representing the organization in a variety of matters such as animal abuse and neglect litigation. Jay is admitted to practice in the State of Iowa, the U.S. District Courts for the Northern District and Southern District of Iowa, and the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. He has also been admitted pro hac vice in several other federal district courts nationwide.

**SANDY COBDEN** is Chief Counsel, Litigation & Compliance, for Pactiv Evergreen, a leading manufacturer of fresh food and beverage packaging, with over 14,000 employees across over 50 manufacturing facilities in North America. Sandy has extensive experience dealing with a variety of different types of regulators, both federal and state, and assisting her teams with navigating a wide variety of legal issues.

**JORGE COLÓN** is the Sr. Corporate Counsel, Investigations at J.M. Smucker. Previously, he worked at Amazon where he led an Investigations Quality Assurance team which created and implemented an Audit and Training function for Amazon's Central Investigations and Human Resources teams. Jorge has 10+ years of experience representing private and public sector entities in matters including labor and employment, Foreign Corrupt Practices Act litigation, and federal civil rights claims. Jorge

graduated from Connecticut College with a B.A. in English Literature in 2005 and earned his J.D. from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 2010. Jorge resides in Tampa, FL with his wife and two boys.

**ADAM COOPER** is a member of Monaco Cooper Lamme & Carr, PLLC, ALFA International's member firm, in Albany, New York. Adam concentrates his practice in the fields of product liability, food law and liability, professional liability, personal liability and premises liability. His clients include commercial retailers, industrial manufacturers, food producers and processors. He also represents professionals before administrative licensing boards in the context of investigations and disciplinary hearings. He has achieved successful results for his clients at the trial and appellate levels and has extensive experience in motion practice. He has an "AV" rating from Martindale Hubbell and is listed as a New York "Super Lawyer." He is past president of the Federation of Bar Associations for the Fourth Judicial District of New York and Past President of the Defense Research Institute of Northeastern, New York. Mr. Cooper obtained a bachelor's degree from St. Lawrence University and his law degree from the Albany Law School of Union University.

**DINA M. COX** is a partner with ALFA International member firm, Lewis Wagner, LLP in Indianapolis, Indiana and was the Program Chair for the 2021 ALFA International Client Seminar. Dina is a legal strategist and trial attorney who honors responsive client service as a top priority. She has served as lead counsel in numerous lawsuits and bet-the-company litigation involving multi-million-dollar claims ranging from breach of contract, false advertising, unfair competition, unfair commercial practices, consumer fraud, and breach of warranty to claims of serious injury caused by products liability and professional negligence. Dina is an aggressive yet civil trial lawyer who has significant jury trial experience in state and federal courts and substantial appellate experience. Dina defends mass torts, class actions, government enforcement actions, drug and medical device cases, toxic tort and chemical exposure cases, and professional liability lawsuits including legal malpractice. Dina also counsels clients during government investigations and assists professionals facing disciplinary grievances and licensing issues. Dina's mass tort and class action defense work is national in scope and has included lawsuits filed in numerous states from New York to California as well as lawsuits consolidated as part of multi-district litigation. Dina is a regular faculty member for the national institute of trial advocacy in its learn-by-doing trial advocacy courses and a frequent speaker on product and professional liability topics.

**BOB DEROSSET** is a shareholder of ALFA International member firm Young Moore and Henderson P.A. in Raleigh, North Carolina. Bob serves clients primarily in the fields of construction, business and product liability law. He tries cases at the state and federal levels in North and South Carolina. He is certified by the North Carolina Dispute Resolution Commission to conduct mediated settlement conferences in Superior Court cases and uses his perspective as a seasoned litigator to assist parties to voluntarily resolve their disputes through mediation. Bob has also completed collaborative law training and advanced collaborative law training. He is part of the effort in North Carolina to expand collaborative law into construction and business law. He is an active member of ALFA International's Construction and Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Groups. He is recognized in North Carolina Super Lawyers in the area of Construction Litigation and holds an AV rating from Martindale-Hubbell. Before joining Young Moore in 2001, Bob practiced law for two years in Columbia, South Carolina and served as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer in León, Nicaragua. When he is not working for his clients, Bob enjoys trail running or running on the streets and greenways of Raleigh. He is a novice ultra-marathoner who has not yet run one too many races. Bob is a fan of the Raleigh area, as well as North Carolina in general, and enjoys showing visitors what the region has to offer.

**ANDREW DORN** is Manager, Global Environmental Programs at Illinois Tool Works. He has a degree in environmental engineering from Northwestern University and spent several years as a consultant for industry and government. Tiring of working outside in the summer and feeling limited by

40-hour work weeks, Andrew graduated from Chicago-Kent College of Law in 2010 with a focus on environment and real estate. While there, his most notable achievement was getting his brief kicked in the Seventh Circuit. After a few legal odd jobs, Andrew worked to support the redevelopment of contaminated real estate in Chicago. During this time, President Obama personally selected Andrew (as the low bidder in an open bidding process) to lead the environmental diligence for the Obama Library. And, to finally wrap this up, since joining ITW in 2019, ITW's stock price has almost doubled, which Andrew attributes to his excellence in environmental stewardship.

**JOHN D. EXNER** has been General Counsel of Seneca Foods Corporation since December 31, 2005 and Secretary since 2020 (Assistant Secretary 2007-2020). He was Legal Counsel/Vice President from 1991-2002 and Legal Counsel/President from 2002 to 2005 of Midwest Food Processors Association, Inc. (now known as Midwest Food Products Association, Inc.). He also has experience in food production management. He received a B.A. from Northwestern University and a J.D. from Marquette University Law School. Seneca Foods Corporation is North America's leading provider of packaged fruits and vegetables, with facilities located throughout the United States. Its high quality products are primarily sourced from over 1,200 American farms. Seneca Foods Corporation manufactures a large share of the retail private label, food service, and export canned vegetable markets, distributing to around 70 countries.

**GRACE V.B. GARCIA**, Managing Partner of the Massachusetts ALFA International member firm Morrison Mahoney LLP, concentrates her practice in the areas of product liability, construction law - including personal injury, construction defect, and contractual - OSHA, commercial litigation, employment litigation, premises liability and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) cases. Grace currently serves as Vice Chair of ALFA International's Board of Directors, and is a former Chair of both ALFA International's Construction Practice Group and Women's Initiative Practice Group. Grace has an AV Preeminent Rating from Martindale Hubbell and in 2020 she was honored by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly with its "Circle of Excellence" after being honored in 2013 as a "Top Women of Law." Grace has over 25 years of trial practice and litigation experience and has obtained successful outcomes on behalf of her clients in both state and Federal Court trials. She also has successfully argued before the Appeals Court. Beyond ALFA, she is actively involved in many professional groups, and is the Immediate Past-President of the Massachusetts Bar Association and past President of the Massachusetts Defense Lawyers Association. She is a routine lecturer on defending brain injuries, risk transfer and indemnity issues, best discovery practices and deposition techniques, and OSHA.

**ALLISON LANGE GARRISON** is an experienced litigator with Nilan Johnson Lewis PA, ALFA International's member firm in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She represents manufacturers and businesses in commercial disputes, product liability defense, and complex tort litigation. She also provides proactive advice and counsel to manufacturers on PFAS regulatory compliance and litigation risk mitigation. Allison is a smart and persistent advocate for her clients throughout the life cycle of their businesses. A skilled writer and researcher, Allison receives high praise from clients and members of the judicial bench for her ability to grasp and translate complex subject matter and to produce clear, organized, and persuasive arguments.

**JILL GERDRUM**, a member of ALFA International firm Hall & Evans, LLC's Missoula, Montana office, is a civil litigator with a practice focused on product liability, transportation, premises liability and professional liability. She represents an array of clients, including manufacturers, distributors, retailers, transportation companies, insurers, and professionals. Jill has successfully represented her clients in all phases of litigation, including motions practice, trial, and appeal. She regularly practices in the state and federal courts and administrative agencies in several Western states and serves as regional contact counsel for a Fortune 50 package delivery company. In her appellate practice, Jill has argued and prevailed in the Montana Supreme Court and has prevailed on briefing in the Ninth Circuit

Court of Appeals. Jill is also often called upon for early accident scene investigations and serves as an independent investigator for entities facing potential claims. She is admitted to practice in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming, state and federal courts, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court.

**STEVE GETZOFF** is a senior litigation partner with Lester Schwab Katz & Dwyer, LLP, the ALFA International member firm in New York, New York. Steve focuses his practice in product liability, with an emphasis on consumer and recreational products. His clients include manufacturers, distributors and national trade associations. For years, he has represented manufacturers seeking to clarify and comply with federal and state product and safety legislation, including the new CPSIA and the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act. He regularly serves as national and regional coordinator for multi-state litigations on behalf of nationally known product manufacturers. Steve has substantial experience in regard to manufacturer issues before the US Consumer Product Safety Commission. He has frequently served on CLE programs addressing product liability law issues.

**JENNIFER GOODWIN** is Senior Counsel at Victaulic Company, the leading producer of mechanical pipe joining solutions with over 50 global facilities and 4,000 employees worldwide. Jennifer is responsible for international business transactions, including distribution relationships and employee matters, management of the global real estate portfolio, commercial transactions and select international and domestic product liability litigation. Prior to joining Victaulic, Jennifer served as Senior Section Counsel at Olympus Corporation of the Americas. She received a B.A. in political science from Bloomsburg University, and her J.D. from Villanova University.

**CRAIG HAMILTON** is a partner in the ALFA International member firm McDowell Knight Roedder & Sledge, LLC based in Mobile, Alabama, where he is also on the Firm's Executive Committee. He is an experienced trial lawyer who handles high stakes litigation in a broad range of matters including products liability, professional liability, construction, and trucking, among others. He is a Sustaining Member of the Product Liability Advisory Council (PLAC) and he has been named to the Mid-South Super Lawyers in Product Liability since 2018. Craig is on the steering committees for the ALFA International Complex Torts/Product Liability and the Professional Liability Practice Groups. He is also a member of the Professional Liability Defense Federation.

**STEVE HAMILTON** is a member of the ALFA International member firm, Hall & Evans, LLC, in Denver, Colorado. Steve is a litigation attorney with a diverse practice, but he mainly focuses on product liability defense. He is the product liability practice group chair at Hall & Evans. His experience in the product liability field is national in scope and covers a broad spectrum of insured and self-insured manufacturers of automobiles, bikes, machinery and infrastructure components. He is a Martindale-Hubbell® AV Preeminent Peer Review Rated attorney and has been recognized in the product liability practice area by Super Lawyers. Steve received his BS from Montana State University in 1994 and his JD from the University of Montana in 1997.

**CHRIS HARDEN** is the Global Director of Risk Management for AGCO Corporation. Since joining AGCO in 1991, Chris has been a part of the management team that grew AGCO from a \$200m startup farm equipment company into a \$14 billion corporation that is a global player in the farm equipment industry. AGCO's brands include Massey Ferguson, PTX Trimble, VALTRA, Grain & Protein and FENDT. Prior to joining AGCO, Chris was the Risk Manager for the City of Athens and Clarke County, Georgia. He was responsible for managing the merger of the two individual governments into one operating City/County government. Prior to joining Athens Clarke County, Chris worked in the finance and risk management department of Texas Instruments Inc. in Dallas, Texas. He is an honors graduate of the Terry College of Business at the University of Georgia and has an advance degree as a Certified Public Manager from the Carl Vincent Institute of Government at UGA.



**EDDY HAYES** is a partner with Leake & Andersson, L.L.P., the ALFA International member firm, in New Orleans, Louisiana, where he leads the firm's international trade and business practice. The firm's international trade and business practice focuses on a wide variety of international issues, including customs matters, import/export transactions, international sales of goods and services, disputes under bilateral investment treaties, antidumping and countervailing duty proceedings before the Department of Commerce and International Trade Commission and World Trade Organization dispute settlement. Eddy also maintains an active international public policy and government relations practice, advising businesses and local governments on international trade capacity and economic development issues, including the business implications of international multilateral and regional free trade agreements. In January 2014, the country of Ukraine appointed Eddy to serve as the Honorary Consul to Ukraine for the State of Louisiana. Eddy is charged with promoting and preserving the interests of Ukraine and her citizens throughout the State of Louisiana. He serves on ALFA International's Board of Directors as ALFAI's Chair.

**JOSH HUMPHRIES** serves as Senior Counsel for Smurfit Westrock. In that role, he is responsible for all general litigation and asbestos matters in the United States, and he was previously responsible for all employment, general litigation, and business litigation that arose within the boundaries of the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the Fifth and Eleventh Circuits for a predecessor entity, WestRock. Smurfit Westrock is a multinational provider of sustainable, fiber-based paper and packaging solutions that was formed in July 2024 and is estimated to have approximately \$34 billion in revenue produced by one hundred thousand team members working in approximately five-hundred and sixty-three facilities around the world. Prior to joining WestRock, Josh served as Senior Counsel for Jack Cooper Holdings Corp., a North American transportation and logistics provider, where he was responsible for customer and vendor contracts, litigation, and real property. At Jack Cooper, he also assisted with M&A transactions, corporate debt restructurings, as well as corporate governance matters. Before moving in-house, Josh was a securities litigation associate with the law firm now known as Hunton Andrews Kurth in its Charlotte then Atlanta offices after clerking for one year for Judge Stan Birch with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. Josh received his law degree from Washington & Lee University School of Law, graduating cum laude, and received his AB in History from Princeton University. He lives in Alexandria, Virginia and enjoys everything.

**MATTHEW D. JACOBSON** is a Member in the Des Moines, Iowa ALFA International law firm of Whitfield & Eddy, PLC. Matt's litigation practice includes representing product manufacturers at state, regional and national levels. His practice also includes consulting with product manufacturers on issues relating to accident prevention, including formation of safety committees, performance of hazard analyses and composition of safety labels and manuals. For the past 18 years, Matt has spoken to a group of product manufacturers on a biannual basis to address issues relating to production liability prevention and defending product liability lawsuits. Matt is admitted to practice in both Iowa and Illinois, including the U.S. District Courts for the Northern and Southern Districts of Iowa and the Northern, Central and Southern Districts of Illinois. He has also represented clients on a pro hac vice basis in Wisconsin, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Alabama, New York, Michigan, Louisiana, West Virginia, Oklahoma, California, Kentucky, Kansas, South Carolina and Colorado. Matt earned his B.S. from the University of Iowa College of Liberal Arts (1990) and his J.D. from the University of Iowa College of Law (1993).

**CAROLINE BELL KELLER** is the Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary for MacroSource, LLC. MacroSource is one of the largest wholesale distribution companies for bulk dry and liquid fertilizers in the industry. Through international trading, vessel chartering and the MacroSource terminals and warehouses in North America, South Africa, Peru, Mexico, and Hong Kong the company covers supply and trading in all major fertilizer markets. Prior to joining MacroSource, Ms. Keller was with General Dynamics Corporation for over fifteen years. In her last role at General Dynamics, Ms.

Keller was the Vice President and General Counsel of General Dynamics Ordnance and Tactical Systems (GD-OTS), located in St. Petersburg, FL. She was the chief attorney and a member of the Senior Leadership Team reporting to the President of GD-OTS. Previously, Ms. Keller was the Vice President and General Counsel of General Dynamics' European-based business unit, General Dynamics European Land Systems (GDELS), headquartered in Madrid, Spain and with facilities in Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Romania, Spain and Switzerland. In this position, Ms. Keller was the chief attorney for GDELS and the head compliance, ethics and insider threat officer. Before joining GDELS, Ms. Keller was Deputy General Counsel for Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation, a General Dynamics Company based in Savannah Georgia. At Gulfstream, Ms. Keller was responsible for advising Gulfstream senior leadership and the business on a wide range of international and US legal matters. Ms. Keller earned her Juris Doctorate in 1997 from Georgetown University School of Law. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in International Relations from Randolph-Macon Woman's College in 1989. Ms. Keller currently lives in Savannah, Georgia with her husband Jeff and their two children.

**KATIE KOEHLER** serves as Legal Counsel for Trelleborg Group. Trelleborg is a Swedish-headquartered, global engineering group and leading manufacturer of polymer solutions. In her role, Katie manages disputes in the Americas, negotiates contracts, and provides legal advice and counsel across Trelleborg's Medical Solutions and Sealing Solutions businesses. She is passionate about making legal trainings as engaging as they can possibly be, viewing training and relationship-building with business teams as some of the most important parts of her role. Katie obtained her BA in Political Science from the College of Saint Benedict and her JD from the University of St. Thomas School of Law.

**MICHAEL LINN** recently joined Medmarc as a Sr. Claims Examiner having had prior experience in a variety of insurance lines including but not limited to E&O; General Liability; and PIP Litigation. Currently, he is responsible for claim investigation; coverage analysis; negotiating settlements; litigation management; and maintaining excellent client relationships. Mike also assists with reviewing and writing new contracts to retain experts. Prior to joining Medmarc, Mike worked in the trucking industry for almost a decade becoming an expert with handling cargo related matters. Mike received his J.D. from Temple University Beasley School of Law; his BA from the University of Colorado, Boulder. He also studied at the Defense Language Institute completing the Turkish Basic course later becoming a linguist while in the U.S. Army. He is licensed in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Mike resides in Bucks County, PA and in his spare time you can find him watching his child play baseball, now at the collegiate level.

**ALEX MACK** is Senior Counsel, North America, for Hoya Vision Care. She is a seasoned legal professional with a distinguished career spanning both litigation at Locke Lord and her in-house corporate counsel role at Hoya Vision Care. With several years of invaluable experience at a top-tier law firm, Alex honed her skills in navigating complex legal matters and advocating for clients with unwavering dedication. At Hoya, Alex plays a pivotal role helping the North American commercial team to navigate complex legal matters in litigation and ensure compliance with regulatory standards. Alex received her law degree, Cum Laude, from Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law and her bachelor's degree, with High Honors, from the University of Texas at Austin.

**RYAN MCGARY** is the Global General Counsel of AAF International ("AAF"), the world's largest manufacturer of air filters and air filtration equipment for commercial, industrial, cleanroom, transportation, and power generation applications. Ryan is based in AAF's US headquarters in Louisville, KY. In his current role, Ryan is responsible for all legal matters impacting AAF as well as regulatory and compliance matters. Prior to joining AAF in 2006, Ryan was a commercial litigation attorney in Cincinnati, OH.

**LAUREN MCMILLEN** is a partner in ALFA International member firm Plunkett Cooney's Insurance Coverage Practice Group and works to resolve complex insurance coverage disputes on behalf of their insurer clients.

Lauren's coverage practice includes high exposure losses, environmental contamination, construction defects, product defects, bodily injury, property damage, toxic torts, bad faith and extracontractual litigation. She is currently serving as national coordinating coverage counsel for one of the nation's largest insurance carriers relating to PFAS and AFFF litigation.

**ANNETTE MIJANOVIC** is a partner at the ALFA International member firm Haight Brown & Bonesteel LLP, in Los Angeles, California, where she began her career as a summer associate seventeen years ago. She chairs the firm's Business Solutions practice group and is a member of the firm's Transportation and Products Liability practice groups. She has served as lead counsel in trials involving transportation and commercial litigation disputes in state and federal court. She is admitted to practice law in all California state and federal courts.

**COLLEEN MURNANE** is a partner with Frantz Ward LLP, the ALFA International member firm in Cleveland, Ohio. Colleen counsels clients on anticipating and avoiding liabilities and managing their business risks in the areas of product liability, business torts, commercial contract, construction, class actions and beer and alcohol operations. She has extensive experience litigating product defect cases involving all ranges of products, from home appliances to commercial tools to industrial bearings and other equipment. She has obtained defense verdicts in catastrophic injury and property damage cases in both state and federal court. Her approach involves building strategic partnerships with her clients to develop efficient game plans to avoid disputes prior to litigation and to implement tactical defense strategies to prevail at trial and minimize losses when litigation arises. She has represented craft breweries in all facets of their business. Colleen is a trusted advisor to companies of all sizes, from closely held family businesses to Fortune 500 companies. She delivers the answers, support and results they require in the manner best tailored to their needs. Colleen practices law because of her desire to defend and protect what people value most—their principles and reputations.

**JOHN OSGATHORPE** is a shareholder and serves as the president and managing partner of Taylor, Day, Grimm & Boyd, the ALFA International member firm in Jacksonville, Florida. In his business litigation and complex torts practice, he protects the interests of companies, management teams, business owners and stakeholders in a diverse array of commercial and torts disputes. His practice includes most types of business and commercial disputes, including breach of contract claims, shareholder disputes, corporate governance disputes, misappropriation of trade secrets and UCC matters, while his torts practice includes product defects cases, truck and auto accidents, defamation and premises liability. He also handles disputes regarding real estate and wills & trusts. John is currently the vice chair & marketing chair for ALFAI's Business Litigation Practice Group. He is an active member of ALFAI's Product Liability & Complex Torts and Business Litigation Steering Committees. He has presented at several ALFAI International Client Seminars, Business Litigation and Product Liability & Complex Torts seminars. John previously served on ALFAI's Board of Directors and as its treasurer, along with several other ALFAI committees.

**TOM O'TOOLE, PH.D.** has practiced across the nation for over fifteen years in nearly every litigation type. He has consulted on matters as small as low exposure medical malpractice and as large as "bet-the company" MDL class actions and billion dollar environmental claims. His cases have been featured in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Washington Post, and have been the subject of feature films and documentaries. He co-authored the book *Jury Selection Handbook*, published by Carolina Academic Press, and is the host of the popular podcast, *The Sniper Defense*.

**KEVIN OWENS** is a shareholder of Johnson & Bell, Ltd., the ALFA International member firm in Chicago, Illinois. Kevin's civil litigation practice includes the defense and trial of catastrophic injury, consumer and other product liability actions, construction and general negligence actions, and the litigation of commercial disputes in state and federal courts. His experience

also includes litigation of construction product defect actions and litigation of contract actions at law and equity. Kevin served as the chair of ALFA International from 2020-2022 and is currently chair emeritus.

**AGOTA PETERFY** is a principal in the ALFA International St. Louis firm of Brown & James. She focuses her practice on product liability and toxic tort. She has represented major manufacturers in asbestos claims and national real estate companies in premises liability matters. Agota serves as the chair of the firm's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee and is on the board of directors for the Missouri Organization of Defense Lawyers. She is ranked by Best Lawyers in the area of insurance law. She graduated from Brigham Young University magna cum laude before attending Southern Illinois University School of Law.

**CHRIS PHALEN** is the Director of the Claims Management team for North America at Schneider Electric. Schneider Electric is a multinational company headquartered outside of Paris, France and operates in 100 countries with a workforce of over 135,000. The company provides energy and automation digital products for efficiency and sustainability. It addresses homes, buildings, data centers, infrastructure and industries, by combining energy technologies, real-time automation, software and services. Chris' primary responsibilities include management of the US workers compensation program, defense of various product and general liability claims and other assorted matters under the company's insurance program. He also sits on the global Offer Safety Alert Committee which oversees various product safety initiatives within the company. Chris has over 35 years of experience in managing claims for several regional insurance carriers and self-insured organizations and corporations including; CVS Pharmacy, American Power Conversion and the former Providence Washington Insurance Company. Outside of work, Chris is a dedicated lap and open water swimmer and volunteers his time officiating high school and youth age group swimming competition. He is a graduate of Rhode Island College with a dual Bachelors Degree in Political Science and Public Administration. He also holds the AIC designation from the Insurance Institute of America. He has three daughters and resides in Rhode Island with his wife, Bonnie.

**RANDY REAVIS** is Senior Products Counsel for Volvo Trucks and Mack Trucks. He manages a team of lawyers and engineers that is responsible for all legal issues arising from the sale of the companies' products throughout North America. He is responsible for managing product liability and warranty claims and litigation and also supports the engineering, warranty, marketing, and other departments on legal, compliance and safety issues related to the companies' existing and future products, including battery electric vehicles and autonomous solutions. Prior to joining Volvo Trucks and Mack Trucks, Randy was in private practice for over twenty years, first at a national law firm and then at a large regional firm. In addition to defending product manufacturers in lawsuits across the United States, he represented both plaintiffs and defendants in a broad range of civil and commercial litigation with an emphasis on construction contracts and disputes. Randy is a certified mediator and regularly mediates significant tort and contract claims across the United States. A graduate of Catawba College and the University of North Carolina School of Law, Randy has been selected to Best Lawyers in America and has an AV Preeminent rating.

**BETH S. ROSE** is a member of Sills Cummis & Gross P.C., the ALFA International member firm in Newark, New Jersey, where she chairs the Product Liability Practice Group and co-chairs the Litigation Practice Group. She has tried complex product liability cases to verdict in state and federal courts throughout the country. Beth has over 25 years of experience successfully defending complex product liability matters for consumer products, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, foods, chemicals and construction/ industrial machines, to name a few. During her career, she has served as national counsel to several companies, including those in the pharmaceutical, medical device and contract research organization spaces, defending mass tort litigation. She has also served as New Jersey counsel to entities defending complex product liability

claims in New Jersey's Multi-County Litigation system. Since 2008, she has been recognized in the Chambers USA® Guide to America's Leading Lawyers for Business. Since 2014, she has been named in Benchmark's Top 250 Women in Litigation: The Definitive Guide to the Leading Female Attorneys in the U.S.® Beth received her B.A. with honors from Wesleyan University and her J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center.

**JOLENE RUSSELL** is the Deputy General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer at Shaw Industries, one of the world's largest, privately held, global flooring manufacturers specializing in designing and manufacturing virtually every category of flooring, including carpet, resilient, hardwood, laminate, and ceramic floors. Jolene has broad governance and oversight responsibility throughout the enterprise for maintaining compliance with regulatory and legal obligations, Shaw's Code of Business Conduct, and related policies. Prior to joining Shaw, Jolene was the Deputy General Counsel for Recreational Equipment, Inc. where she provided legal and compliance advice on regulatory and compliance matters, including the Code of Conduct, Records Management, Trade Compliance, Product Regulatory Compliance and Employment Practices as well as provided support to the Board of Directors and oversaw the Litigation function of the department. Jolene began her legal career at RadioShack Corporation, where she served as in-house counsel and Senior Director of Ethics and Compliance. As a corporate attorney at RadioShack, her primary areas of responsibility included advertising and marketing, product safety and compliance, supply chain management, and privacy matters. In her ethics and compliance role, Jolene was responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring an enterprise-wide ethics and compliance program. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Washington State University and her Juris Doctorate and LLM from Texas A&M University School of Law.

**CHRIS SCHILDER** is chief counsel at Pactiv Evergreen, one of the largest manufacturers of fresh food and beverage packaging in North America. In his role, Chris is responsible for overseeing the commercial contracts, innovation, regulatory and government affairs teams. Prior to joining Pactiv Evergreen in 2022, Chris spent 15 years with BrandSafeway, serving as deputy general counsel & vice president of risk management to the world's leading access and industrial services provider. Before beginning his in-house career, Chris spent seven years in private practice as a litigator in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Chris received his BA from the University of Wisconsin and his JD from the University of Michigan.

**ZACHARY D. SCHLEIN** is a principal at ALFA International's Maryland member firm, Semmes, Bowen & Semmes' Litigation Practice. He has spent the majority of his career litigating large and complex civil cases, including lead-exposure cases, nursing home negligence cases, and products liability matters. He has presented to attorneys and insurance carriers from across the country on the defense of property owners in lead-exposure lawsuits. Zachary also has significant experience representing property owners and property managers in premises liability actions, including cases involving alleged exposure to mold and other environmental toxins. Zachary is a graduate of the University of Baltimore School of Law (J.D., summa cum laude, 2012). While in law school, Zachary served as an associate comments editor on the University of Baltimore Law Review. Zachary also gained considerable litigation experience as a Rule 16 attorney in the university's civil advocacy clinic, representing individuals in cases involving the denial of unemployment insurance benefits and landlord-tenant disputes. Zachary holds his B.S. in English from Towson University. He was a judicial intern for the Honorable Joseph F. Murphy, Jr., Maryland Court of Appeals; and a judicial law clerk for the Honorable John J. Nagle III, Circuit Court for Baltimore County.

**RAINA SHAH** is a Principal Consultant at Applied Safety and Ergonomics, A Rimkus Company. She has consulted and published research in the areas of human factors, warnings, and product and occupational safety for over 20 years and has extensive experience in litigation matters related to chemical hazard communication, product and occupational safety, and warnings. Ms. Shah has played an active role in national standards for chemical labeling

(ANSI Z129.1), material safety data sheets (ANSI Z400.1), and consumer product warnings and instructions (ANSI Z535) and has regularly guest lectured at the University of Michigan on topics including hazard communication and uncertain health and safety risks. Ms. Shah holds a master's degree in Industrial and Operations Engineering from the University of Michigan, as well as bachelor's degrees from the University of Michigan in both Psychology and Industrial and Operations Engineering. She is a Certified Product Safety Manager (C.P.S.M.) and a Certified Professional Ergonomist (CPE).

**ROBERT G. SMITH** is a capable litigator and is a partner at Mayer LLP, the ALFA International firm in Houston, Texas. Rob is on the steering committee of the ALFA International Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group, and is a member of the Business Litigation and Corporate Transactions Practice Groups. Rob is the outgoing Chair of the Medical Defense & Health Law Committee in the International Association of Defense Counsel and he is also a member of the Product Liability and Business Litigation Committees. Rob represents manufacturers (heavy equipment, medical devices, durable medical equipment, sporting goods), health care providers, and other businesses in litigation as well as transactional matters. Rob graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a degree in mathematics from Louisiana State University and attended law school at the University of Houston College of Law. He is Board Certified in Personal Injury Trial Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization and has tried a wide variety of cases during his 27+ years of practice.

**MATTHEW J. STANCZYK** is a partner in the Michigan ALFA International law firm Plunkett Cooney where he serves as a member of the Board of Directors and is the managing partner of the firm's Product Liability Practice Group. Mr. Stanczyk concentrates his practice in various areas of complex litigation, including product liability, fire-related litigation, toxic torts, construction litigation and commercial warranty litigation. In his over 30 years of practice he has also routinely counseled clients on risk shifting and risk management issues, including contracts, product literature and warranty development. His clients include product manufacturers and distributors, general contractors, construction managers and transportation firms. Mr. Stanczyk is a member of the ALFA International PLCT Steering Committee and is the current Chair Emeritus and former Chair, Vice Chair, Marketing Chair and Program Chair and is on the ALFAI Board of Directors. He is also a member of the DRI Products Liability Committee. He is a Michigan Super Lawyer in Product Liability, Dbusiness magazine Top Lawyer in Product Liability and AV rated by Martindale-Hubbell. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and law degree from the University of Detroit.

**JAY THOMPSON** is a shareholder at ALFA International member firm Murphy & Grantland P.A. in Columbia, South Carolina, where his practice focuses on defense of product liability and complex claims in addition to advising businesses on regulatory compliance and policy development. Prior to joining Murphy & Grantland, he litigated cases across the Southeast for 16 years with an AmLaw 75 law firm. Jay believes strongly in the value of skilled leadership to motivate a team to achieve more than the sum of its parts. Both from personal experience and from observations of others, he has seen many times the sharp distinction between success brought about by quality leadership and organizational health, as well as the challenges that can occur in its absence. He serves as Secretary of the South Carolina Defense Trial Attorneys' Association and has spoken at numerous continuing legal education seminars and provided numerous articles and publications for attorneys. Prior to practicing law, Jay's background was in computer science. He worked as a systems analyst and programmer for a major tire manufacturer before law school.

**DAVID WARNICK** is a trial lawyer and shareholder at Johnson & Bell, the ALFA International member firm in Chicago, Illinois. David's practice focuses on products liability, and he acts as National Coordinating Counsel for a commercial lighting distributor and manufacturer. As NCC, David navigates the complexities of various state and international jurisdictions. He also defends companies and excess liability carriers in high-exposure litigation, including cases involving explosions, fires, or catastrophic

motor vehicle incidents resulting in multiple fatalities. Additionally, he is experienced in the areas of handling cases involving public utilities, insurance coverage matters, construction defects, and environmental claims. David graduated from the University of Dayton in 2008 and earned his J.D. from Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio, in 2012. He is an active member of the Chicago Bar Association, DRI, and an editor and frequent author for the peer-reviewed Illinois Defense Counsel Quarterly. He has also authored articles for the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin on the latest updates from Illinois and related federal court opinions. David completed cybersecurity coursework at Harvard and is preparing for the Certified Information Privacy Professional (CIPP/US) exam.

**MARK F. WERLE** is a shareholder and director of Ryan Smith & Carbine, Ltd., ALFA International's Vermont member firm. His diverse experience includes protecting the rights of business owners in all manner of tort and contractual disputes. Mark's litigation practice includes intellectual property litigation, business torts, the representation of institutional lenders and other businesses in the workout of troubled debt and asset recovery, and the representation of parties in shareholder disputes. He is

also active in environmental and real estate litigation as well as matters involving catastrophic transportation losses. Mark assists resorts and hotels in areas as varied as risk management, ADA compliance, television and movie production contracts, employment claims, construction defects and premises liability suits. Mark has tried cases in Vermont and New York; and he has successfully argued appeals to the Vermont Supreme Court and the United States Second Circuit Court of Appeals in New York.

**NICHOLAS E. WHEELER** is a trial lawyer and partner at Cosgrave Vergeer Kester LLP, the ALFA International member firm in Portland, Oregon, where he chairs the firm's Product Liability & Medical Device Practice Group. He defends manufacturers and resellers of a wide range of industrial and consumer products, with an emphasis on mechanical and electrical failures. Within ALFA International, he serves as the Marketing Chair of the Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group. In addition to his product liability work, he also defends legal malpractice, railroad/transportation and other property damage, personal injury and wrongful death lawsuits. Finally, despite practicing in the age of the "vanishing civil jury trial," he has tried nearly 20 jury trials in state and federal courts.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### MEETING LOCATION

THE LODGE AT SPRUCE PEAK  
7412 Mountain Road  
Stowe, Vermont 05672  
Tel: (802) 282-4625  
[www.sprucepeak.com](http://www.sprucepeak.com)

### REGISTRATION

Please contact ALFA International Headquarters to register.

ATTENDANCE IS OPEN ONLY TO MEMBERS OF ALFA INTERNATIONAL AND THEIR INVITED GUESTS AND IS LIMITED TO AGES 21+.

### ATTIRE

The attire for the educational sessions throughout the conference is business casual. Casual attire is appropriate for the social events and optional activities. Wednesday night's reception and dinner is outdoors so layers are recommended. Thursday & Friday dinners are indoors. Attendees are encouraged to lean into each dinner's theme when packing evening attire.

### CLE CREDIT

ALFA International certifies that this program has been approved for 7 hours of General CLE credit in the States of Illinois, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and California. If you need credit in another state, please contact that state bar regarding the necessary requirements to obtain CLE credit. ALFA International staff is available to assist in any way possible but you must apply individually to obtain credit in your particular state.

### SEMINAR CONTACT

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