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University Club of Chicago  
76 East Monroe Street  
Chicago, IL 60603  
312.726.2840

# JULY 8<sup>TH</sup>

## WELCOME RECEPTION

### **Pinstripes Chicago**

435 East Illinois Street, Chicago, IL 60611

(312) 527-3010

5:00-8:00pm

# JULY 9<sup>TH</sup>

## BREAKFAST

7:45-8:30am

## INTRODUCTION

8:15am

## SESSION I

8:30-9:30am

### **Bowled Over by Bankruptcy: When the Bonded Contractor Files Chapter 11**

Laura Ashley, Esq., Krebs Farley, PLLC

Michael Dudek, RLI Corp.

## SESSION II

9:30-10:30am

### **Cash is King: The Risks and Woes of Real Property Collateral**

Christopher J. Reilly, Esq., CSG Law

James Sayre, Great American Insurance Group

## BREAK

10:30-10:45am

## SESSION III

10:45-11:45am

### **How to Speak Surety In Canada: Managing Claims and Expectations**

Scott C. Williams, Esq., Manier & Herod, P.C.

Riccardo Orsini, M.A., J.D., Intact Insurance Group

Ryan J. Slepisky, Trisura Insurance Company

## LUNCH

11:45-12:45pm

## SESSION IV

12:45-1:45pm

### **Sureties and Trust Funds: Mechanisms of Trust Creation and Surety Considerations**

James P. Minogue, Esq., Watt, Tieder, Hoffar & Fitzgerald, LLP

# JULY 9<sup>TH</sup>

## SESSION V

1:45-2:45pm

### **The Big Defaultski: How Strategies are Impacted within a Multi-Project Default by the Character of the Project**

Jeffrey S. Price, Esq., Manier & Herod, P.C.

Mark S. Marino, The Travelers Indemnity Company

Michele Killebrew, Esq., Liberty Mutual Surety

Michael J. Sams, The Cincinnati Insurance Company

Frank Benway, The Vertex Companies, LLC

## SESSION VI

2:45-3:45pm

### **Funds-Tracing: Establishing the Ownership of Money in Surety and Fidelity Matters**

Andrew S. Kent, Esq., CSG Law

Robert Mason, The Vertex Companies, LLC

## BREAK

3:45-4:00pm

## SESSION VII

4:00-5:00pm

### **Split Happens - How Takeover Agreements Can Spare You the Legal Headaches**

Janet Doherty, PE, The Vertex Companies, LLC

Eric Johansen, PE, Crum & Forster

Nick Belanger, The Hartford

Matt Levey, PE, Crum & Forster

Tatum Rhyne, The Vertex Companies, LLC

## POST-PROGRAM RECEPTION

5:30-9:30pm

### **Avli on The Park**

180 N. Field Blvd., Chicago, IL 60601

(312) 600-9997

# JULY 10<sup>TH</sup>

## BREAKFAST

7:45-8:30am

## INTRODUCTION

8:15am

## SESSION VIII

8:30-9:30am

### **Enforcement of Claims Against Governmental Entities: Differences in Sovereign Immunity**

Maxwell Kavy, Esq., Watt, Tieder, Hoffar & Fitzgerald, LLP

Shelby Stein, AFSB, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance

# JULY 10<sup>TH</sup>

## SESSION IX

9:30-10:30am

### Effective Trial Performance Skills for Surety Professionals

Keith Lichtman, Esq., Mills Law Group

Zach Anderson, Esq., Mills Law Group

Toby Pilcher, Esq., Liberty Mutual

## SESSION X

10:30-11:30am

### State of the Surety Industry 2025. "Will the Economy be Spared?"

Bill McConnell, PE, JD, MSCE, MBA, The Vertex Companies, LLC

Dayna Anderson, CMA, CFE, The Vertex Companies, LLC

John Cullian, P.E., The Vertex Companies, LLC

## PROGRAM CONCLUSION

11:30am

## LUNCH - RIVER & LAKE BOAT CRUISE

11:45-2:30pm

Transportation Departs for Navy Pier

11:45am

Lunch

12:15pm

Boarding for Seadog Speedboat Architecture Tour

1:00pm

### Seadog Cruises - Navy Pier

600 E. Grand Avenue

Chicago, IL 60611

(312) 321-1241

# CO-CHAIR BIOGRAPHIES



## **Sara Corbello, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance**

Sara Corbello is Surety Claims Manager at Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company. Sara is based in Metro Detroit and oversees claims and legal matters on behalf of BHSI across North America. Prior to joining the surety industry in 2019, Sara spent a decade in private practice representing automotive OEMs and major P&C carriers in complex product liability, construction defect, and coverage litigation. A proud Midwest native, she received her BS from Michigan State University (GO GREEN!) and JD from Western Michigan University Cooley Law School.



## **Jonathan Hahn, The Vertex Companies, LLC**

Mr. Jonathan Hahn has been with VERTEX since its founding days and has worked on a great variety of projects ranging from heavy highway bridge/infrastructure to multifamily, mixed-use commercial/vertical construction including public and private schools, department of defense and green energy projects. Mr. Hahn has served many roles in the field including construction manager, on-site monitoring, owner's representative, and project manager for completion projects. Mr. Hahn is a respected consultant in the surety claims industry and continues to be active with National Bond Claims, Surety Association of Canada and the American Bar Association. For the past several years, he has been growing our surety presence in Canada and is our international surety point of contact.



## **Meena Marwaha, Intact Insurance Group**

Meena Marwaha is the Funds Control Manager at Intact Insurance Group. She has worked as an Accountant in the Surety and Fidelity industry for more than 15 years. Before her tenure at Intact she worked at Hudson, Liberty Mutual and The Hartford. Her experience includes managing funds control accounts, producing exposure analyses for claim accounts and performing financial reviews for underwriting. Prior to her career in construction, she worked as a Forensic Accountant at Deloitte and the United Nations.



## **Brian Padove, Watt, Tieder, Hoffar & Fitzgerald, LLP**

Brian Padove is a partner in Watt Tieder's Chicago office. He is licensed to practice law in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Brian focuses his practice in the areas of commercial litigation, construction law, and suretyship representing a wide variety of construction industry clients including contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, and owners. He has experience in contract drafting and negotiations, breach of contract claims, mechanic's liens, and claims involving delays. Brian also represents sureties in matters involving payment and performance bond claims on private and public projects, drafting and negotiating takeover agreements, and collateral and indemnity disputes.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



## **Dayna Anderson, CMA, CFE, The Vertex Companies, LLC**

Dayna Anderson, Senior Managing Director at The Vertex Companies, LLC, is a seasoned expert witness and executive with specialized experience in forensic accounting, fraud investigation, and construction-related arbitration and litigation experience. A Certified Management Accountant and Certified Fraud Examiner, Dayna supports complex economic damages analyses in commercial litigation and arbitration throughout the world.



## **Zach Anderson, Esq., Mills Law Group**

Zack Anderson's practice is primarily devoted to surety, construction, design professional liability, fidelity, and other complex commercial litigation. His specialties include surety bonding, defective construction, design defects, delay claims, payment disputes, professional negligence, and insurance claims. He represents a broad range of parties in all aspects of their construction practices, including sureties, general contractors, subcontractors, property owners, architects, and engineers in a broad range of matters.

Mr. Anderson has authored chapters in The Surety Underwriter's Desk Book and The Financial Institution Bond and Commercial Crime Policy and has been recognized by Best Lawyers for his work in construction law. Mr. Anderson is a graduate of Georgia Southern University and Duke University School of Law and is licensed in all Georgia state and federal courts.



## **Laura Ashley, Esq., Krebs Farley PLLC**

Laura represents a diverse range of clients, including secured and unsecured creditors, banks, hedge funds, trustees, debtors, and other key stakeholders, in complex insolvency and adversary proceedings across multiple industries. These industries include restaurants, retail, financial services, maritime, oil and gas, construction, and real estate development. Her practice encompasses Chapter 11 reorganizations, Chapter 15 cross-border insolvency cases, and litigation related to preferences, fraudulent conveyances, dischargeability, asset sales, and the automatic stay. With extensive experience in out-of-court restructurings, Laura advises creditors and borrowers on workouts, loan restructurings, distressed financings, and liquidations. She skillfully negotiates and drafts complex workout agreements, motions, and enforcement litigation related to bankruptcy cases.



## **Nick Belanger, The Hartford**

Nick Belanger is an Engineer providing support to the entire bond claim department at The Hartford. Nick graduated from Central Washington University with a B.S. in Business Administration. He has been in his role with Hartford for a little over three years. Prior to that he worked for 16 years as a project manager for a large commercial general contractor based in Washington State.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



**Frank Benway, The Vertex Companies, LLC**

Frank Benway has over 15 years of construction management experience on some of the most complex projects nationwide. Specific expertise includes surety consulting and project completion, owner's representation, construction oversight, construction claim analysis and preparation, construction bid package preparation, and cost to complete preparation. As Senior Managing Director, Mr. Benway manages the surety consulting and completion contracting practice across the east coast. Additionally, Mr. Benway provides project management services, supervision of consultants and project management teams, on-site supervision of work, report preparation, budget preparation, analyzes of costs-to-complete, payment bond claims, and subcontractor litigation. Mr. Benway is an experienced speaker, presenting many accredited presentations for VERTEX and at industry conferences.



**Janet Doherty, PE, The Vertex Companies, LLC**

Ms. Doherty earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Illinois and is a licensed civil engineer. Prior to joining VERTEX, she worked as a Project Manager for a General Contractor and has experience with on-site supervision, contract and change order pricing and negotiations, scheduling, and estimate to complete reporting. Since joining VERTEX 14 years ago, she has worked on numerous claims including surety, construction defects, and property and casualty. Her strengths include surety consulting, construction management, cost to complete analysis, scheduling analysis, and completion contracting.



**John J. Cullian, Jr., P.E., The Vertex Companies, LLC**

Mr. Cullian has over thirty-five years of experience in the construction industry with particular emphasis on evaluating troubled projects, providing process review and improvement assessments, and providing project management oversight services for ongoing construction projects. He possesses significant experience with the preparation and resolution of complex engineering and constructions disputes on a wide variety of engagements. Mr. Cullian has worked on a variety of construction issues, including the analysis and quantification of delays and cost overruns associated with improper design, installation, changed conditions, extra work, worker productivity, and terminations. His construction dispute and consulting assignments have involved projects across a broad range of industries including: commercial, education, governmental, industrial, power, oil & gas, transportation, and water/wastewater treatment, among others. Mr. Cullian has worked for owners, contractors, subcontractors, architect/engineers, and insurers involved in construction disputes. He has testified in state court and arbitration, and he has represented clients in mediation.



**Michael Dudek, RLI Corp.**

Michael is a Claim Director – Surety Claims for RLI Insurance Company since 2019. He is responsible for a diverse group of surety claims including commercial, contract, and energy bond claims covering various industries. Prior to joining RLI, Michael was a Senior Claims Counsel with CNA Surety for three years and handled mostly contract surety claims. Before joining the company side of surety claims, Michael was an attorney in private practice for seven years with Leo & Weber, P.C. where he handled a variety of surety claims and related litigation. Much of his practice focused on bankruptcy and Michael has authored and presented several topics related to surety issues in bankruptcy. Prior to entering private practice, Michael was a law clerk for the Honorable Jacqueline P. Cox of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of Illinois from 2007-2009.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



## **Eric Johansen, PE, Crum & Forster**

Eric Johansen is Assistant Vice President of Surety Engineering Services at Crum & Forster Surety. He has worked as an in-house engineer in the Surety industry for more than 18 years and an additional 15 years in general contracting and consulting. Prior to Crum & Forster he worked for Liberty Mutual and The Hartford. He has a B.S. and M.S. in Civil Engineering and is a licensed Professional Engineer in Connecticut.



## **Maxwell T. Kavy, Esq., Watt, Tieder, Hoffar & Fitzgerald, LLP**

Max is an associate attorney in Watt Tieder's Chicago office. He is licensed to practice law in Illinois and Missouri and has practiced construction law since graduating from law school and understands his clients on a personal level. As the son of a contractor, Max understands the stresses and practical effects of construction disputes and seeks to resolve cases efficiently. He has significant experience with the Illinois Mechanics Lien Act and has represented general contractors, subcontractors, real estate firms, and small business owners. Max also has significant experience with OSHA investigations, including pre-citation site visits, and has assisted clients with resolving any citations issued.



## **Andrew S. Kent, Esq., CSG Law**

Andrew S. Kent focuses his practice on surety and fidelity claims, providing legal advice with respect to surety-related regulatory and transactional matters, commercial litigation, and public contract bid disputes. For more than 25 years, he has regularly authored and assisted on articles related to the topics of fidelity and surety law and is a presenter and speaker at conferences in those fields. Andrew earned his J.D. from Rutgers Law School in Newark and his B.A. from Rutgers University, where he was in the General Honors Program and a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He served as a law clerk to the Honorable Leo Yanoff in the Law Division of the Superior Court, State of New Jersey. Andrew also worked for nearly two years as a surety claims specialist at a Pennsylvania-based insurance company.



## **Michele L. Killebrew, Esq., Liberty Mutual Surety**

Michele Killebrew is the Regional Vice President of National Accounts and Asia Pacific Surety Claims. She received her undergraduate degree in History with a minor in Sociology from Indiana University Bloomington in 1999 and her law degree, cum laude, from The John Marshall Law School in 2006. Michele is a member of the Illinois and Indiana bars and a member of the American Bar Association. Michele began her career in surety 18 years ago as an associate in the Chicago law firm Leo & Weber, PC and in 2012 began her career with Liberty Mutual Surety handling contract surety claims. Michele was recently a co-chair of the 2025 ABA Midwinter Meeting construction program, has presented at numerous surety conferences and seminars, and has co-authored articles on various surety-related topics.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



**Matt Levey, PE, LEED AP, Crum & Forster**

Matt is Senior Surety Engineer who has worked in the claims dept. at Crum & Forster since 2020. Matt's primary roles include claims investigations, developing exposure analysis and cost to complete estimates, and evaluating and implementing project completion alternatives, including relet packages, bid solicitations and completion contract oversight. Prior to joining the surety industry in 2020, Matt worked for nearly a decade with an international construction company, primarily in estimating and project management, where he specialized in large P3 and design-build projects. He has a B.S. in Mathematics from Allegheny College, as well as a B.S. in Civil Engineering and MEng in Engineering Management from Cornell University. Matt is a licensed claim adjuster in multiple states and a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of California.



**Keith Lichtman, Esq., Mills Law Group**

Keith Lichtman is a board-certified (FL) construction lawyer and trained and registered mediator (GA) with over 20 years of complex commercial law and litigation experience. He regularly litigates and mediates matters throughout the southeastern United States relating to surety bonds, construction defects, commercial crime and other insurance policies, financial institution bonds, as well as collections matters. He has been recognized as a "Georgia Super Lawyer" (2015-2025), "Georgia Rising Star", "Georgia Trend Legal Elite", and is rated AV-Preeminent, Martindale Hubbell's highest rating for ethics and the ability to practice law. He is licensed to practice in all state and federal courts in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina.



**Mark S. Marino, The Travelers Indemnity Company**

Born and raised in construction, I bring a decade of construction management experience, primarily in financial leadership roles, and over two decades leading surety claim teams at Travelers. I have handled performance and payment bond claims and related matters across more than 30 states, as well as Puerto Rico, Guam, and Cuba. Over the course of my career, I have painted bridges in New York; built highways from Pennsylvania to Texas; constructed runways in North Carolina and schools from Massachusetts to the Rio Grande Valley; shipped classified waste from Tennessee to Utah; provided strategic financial assistance; managed major litigation — taking numerous matters to trial — and delivered testimony more times than I can count.



**Robert M. Mason, The Vertex Companies, LLC**

Robert M. Mason is a seasoned Senior Consultant with The Vertex Companies, based in Winfield, Kansas. With over 20 years of experience in the accounting and consulting industry, Robert brings deep expertise in forensic accounting, surety claims, construction matters, business interruption claims, and financial investigations. His career spans a diverse range of roles including project monitoring, funds control, independent audits, and financial management across both public and private sectors. Robert has been instrumental in supporting sureties and clients across the U.S. in navigating complex claims, performing detailed books and records reviews, identifying loss exposures, and managing project financials for construction. His practical insights and investigative skills have led to significant recoveries, improved financial clarity, and resolution of critical disputes.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



## **Bill McConnell, PE, JD, MSCE, MBA, The Vertex Companies, LLC**

Bill McConnell is a co-founder and the Chairman of the Board of The Vertex Companies, LLC, an international AEC firm. Bill is a seasoned expert witness for domestic and international megaproject disputes. He has testified over 250 times, most notably for quantum/damages, scheduling, allocation, productivity, termination, and standard of care opinions. Recently published, Bill is a frequent presenter at many construction, engineering, and law conferences each year. Learn more about his book, titled *Fundamentals of Construction Claims: A 9-Step Guide for General Contractors, Subcontractors, Architects, Engineers, and Owners*.



## **James P. Minogue, Esq., Watt, Tieder, Hoffar & Fitzgerald, LLP**

James (“JP”) Minogue is a commercial litigation associate in Watt Tieder’s Chicago Office. JP is licensed to practice law in Illinois and concentrates his national practice in the areas of commercial litigation, construction law, and suretyship representing a wide variety of construction industry clients, including contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, and owners. JP provides a full range of transactional and litigation services to clients advising them on contract preparation and negotiation, design-defect disputes, payment disputes, mechanic’s liens, and surety claims and defenses. Prior to joining Watt Tieder, JP practiced commercial litigation at a highly regarded international law firm and later practiced construction law at a Chambers ranked firm in Chicago.



## **Riccardo Orsini, M.A., J.D., Intact Insurance Group**

Riccardo Orsini is Surety Claims Manager at Intact Insurance, and oversees various surety claims for the Western, Ontario and Atlantic regions in Canada. He has been with Intact now for three years and has worked in surety claims with other surety companies spanning over 10 years. Riccardo graduated from the University of Toronto and obtained his law degree from the University of Windsor. Prior to his surety career, Riccardo was a litigator practicing in construction litigation handling lien claims, debt collection and contract disputes.



## **Toby Pilcher, Esq., Liberty Mutual Surety**

Toby Pilcher is Senior Surety Claims Counsel at Liberty Mutual Surety working out of Liberty’s Atlanta area office. Toby obtained his B.S. in Legal Administration from Loyola University, Chicago (magna cum laude) and his J.D. from DePaul College of Law, (with honors). He is licensed to practice in Illinois State Court and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. During his 30 plus years in the industry, Toby started his career in the Chicago area representing construction companies, sureties and Insurance companies both in-house and as outside counsel and has spent the last 25 years in-house in the Atlanta area handling primarily contract surety claims.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



**Jeffrey S. Price, Esq., Manier & Herod, P.C.**

Jeffrey S. Price served as Manier & Herod's Managing Partner and Chairman of the Executive Committee from 2014 through 2020. His practice focuses on areas of fidelity law, surety law, cyber risk and liability insurance coverage, D&O and E&O insurance and commercial litigation. Mr. Price served as past Chair of the Fidelity & Surety Law Committee of the American Bar Association (2021-22). In 2022, he was elected to the Section Council for the Tort Trial and Insurance Practice Section of the ABA and is serving a three year term in that capacity (2022-2025). Mr. Price is admitted to practice in all the courts of North Carolina and Tennessee as well as a number of federal courts and courts of appeal throughout the United States. With the assistance of other members of the firm who are admitted in other jurisdictions, Mr. Price is able to provide support and representation to his clients in jurisdictions throughout the United States.



**Christopher J. Reilly, Esq., CSG Law**

Christopher J. Reilly is an attorney in the firm's Surety & Fidelity and Litigation Groups. Christopher advises and represents sureties, owners, design professionals, contractors and developers in all aspects of surety and construction law. Christopher has extensive experience representing clients on matters related to performance and payment bonds, professional liability, design defects, breaches of contract, delays, mechanic's liens, property damage, and contract negotiations. Prior to joining the firm, Christopher was an associate at a New York based law firm where he represented owners, developers and design professionals throughout New York City and, prior to that, clerked for the Honorable Kenneth J. Grispin, P.J.Cv., Superior Court of New Jersey.



**Tatum Rhyne, The Vertex Companies, LLC**

Mr. Tatum Rhyne is a graduate of an ABET accredited Engineering College with a Bachelor's degree emphasized in Mechanical Engineering, with previous experience in project management. Mr. Rhyne is a Consultant at VERTEX working primarily in Surety and Construction Defect files. At VERTEX, Mr. Rhyne's typical responsibilities include: investigation of Surety performance and payment bond claims; investigation and scope preparation on Construction Defect files; management of project vendors; preparation of owner pay applications; technical reporting of project work and progress; active communication with all parties involved in a project including clients, owners, project staff and subcontractors; job file organization and maintenance; acquisition of pricing for and preparing subcontract and/or owner change orders.



**Michael J. Sams, The Cincinnati Insurance Company**

Mike is the Associate Manager in Claims Surety Fidelity at The Cincinnati Insurance Company in Cincinnati, Ohio. He oversees claims related to fidelity insurance policies, financial institution bonds, and commercial crime coverages. Additionally, he handles issues arising from surety performance bond defaults, payment bond claims, and various surety license and permit bonds. Mike has nearly 25 years of industry experience with over 20 of that at Cincinnati. Mike earned his B.A. in Economics and Business Administration from Ohio University. He holds several industry designations, including Associate in Claims (AIC), Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter (CPCU), and Associate in Fidelity and Surety Bonding (AFSB), as confirmed by the Insurance Institute of America.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



**James Sayre, Great American Insurance Group**

James is a Financial Products Claims Specialist for Great American Insurance Company handling bond claims for the surety business unit. In that capacity, James is part of the team that handles performance and payment bond claims made on large construction projects. James joined Great American in January after spending seven years in the Hamilton County Prosecuting Attorney's office where his practice mainly consisted of real estate and civil litigation. James earned his J.D. from the Salmon P. Chase College of Law and his B.A. from Miami University (Ohio).



**Ryan J. Slepesky, Trisura Insurance Company**

Ryan Slepesky is Senior Claims Counsel with Trisura Insurance Company and is in charge of overseeing all contract and commercial surety claims as well as other surety related legal matters on behalf of Trisura throughout the United States. Ryan obtained his B.A. in Political Science from James Madison University (Go Dukes!) and his J.D. from the University of Baltimore School of Law. Prior to joining the surety industry in 2019, Ryan spent several years in private practice representing trades workers in complex product liability, toxic tort, and personal injury litigation. When he is not immersed in surety, Ryan enjoys rooting for his Baltimore sports teams and JMU Dukes, but most importantly spending time with his wife and children.



**Shelby Stein, AFSB, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance**

Shelby Stein, AFSB, is a Senior Claims Examiner with Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, where she handles Payment and Performance Bond matters across North America. Shelby has over 14 years of experience in the Surety industry, including tenures as a licensed broker and a Commercial Surety Underwriter prior to joining BHSI in 2022. Shelby earned her bachelor's degree from The University of Michigan and recently relocated to Traverse City, MI, where she can often be found boating on Lake Leelanau with her husband and two sons or riding horses at a nearby Hunter/Jumper barn.



**Scott C. Williams, Esq., Manier & Herod, P.C.**

Scott Williams is a shareholder with Manier & Herod in Nashville, Tennessee. Scott represents commercial and contract sureties in claim, indemnity, finance, and bankruptcy/restructuring matters in the U.S. and internationally. Scott also serves as Vice Chair of the Underwriting and Risk Management Law Division of the Fidelity & Surety Law Committee of the Tort Trial and Insurance Practice Section of the American Bar Association. Outside of his law practice, Scott enjoys cooking, watching his daughter's sporting events, and reporting on surety news and events.