



**ALFA International**  
THE GLOBAL LEGAL NETWORK



# ***BACK TO THE FUTURE***

**2023 HOSPITALITY & RETAIL PRACTICE GROUP SEMINAR**

**January 25-27 | Ojai Valley Inn | Ojai, California**

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

## 2022-2023 HOSPITALITY & RETAIL PRACTICE GROUP LEADERSHIP



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



**Dean Arruebarrena**  
*Chair, Hospitality & Retail Practice Group*  
 LEAKE & ANDERSSON, L.L.P.  
 New Orleans, Louisiana



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*Program Chair, 2023 Hospitality & Retail Practice Group Seminar*  
 LEWIS THOMASON  
 Knoxville, Tennessee



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## 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.

# BACK TO THE FUTURE

## 2023 HOSPITALITY & RETAIL PRACTICE GROUP SEMINAR January 25-27 | Ojai Valley Inn | Ojai, California

*"Wait a minute, Doc. Are you telling me you built a time machine... out of a DeLorean?"*

In the Hospitality and Retail Industry, we often wish we could take a time machine to prevent events from occurring, however technology in the 21st Century still does not have the 1.21 gigawatts to make that a reality. The 2023 ALFA International Hospitality & Retail Seminar is not intended to take us back in time, rather to take us into the future!

As we return to a certain state of "normal" post-pandemic, we are left wondering what exactly that the "new normal" will look like in the hospitality and retail industries? Join our industry experts in exploring issues that the hospitality and retail worlds are facing now and into the future at our 2023 Hospitality & Retail Seminar: including the ever-present threat of gun violence, the rise of TBI claims in premises cases, liquor liability and new and emerging issues. Our Breakfast Club will address new trends in mediation, as well as how to deal with bullying tactics. In the ever-growing Cold War between Plaintiffs and Defendants, we will focus on the rising threat of nuclear verdicts.

The 2023 Hospitality & Retail Seminar will strike hard and strike fast with no mercy. We will teach you on how to recognize and overcome hidden biases in your jury panels. We will educate you on social awareness and how to deal with microaggressions so fear will not exist in your dojo, pain will not exist in your dojo and defeat will not exist in your dojo.

With the dramatic backdrop of the beautiful Topatopa Mountains, Ojai, California will be a beautiful setting for the 2023 Hospitality & Retail Seminar. We welcome attendees to the opportunity to network and discuss the issues facing the hospitality and retail industry, but also to explore, relax, unwind as they build and maintain relationships and friendships that continue to make ALFA International the best legal network.

We hope you will join us at the Ojai Valley Inn in Ojai, California for the ALFA International Hospitality & Retail Practice Group Seminar! Roads? Where we're going, we don't need roads.



**Ben Jones**  
*Program Chair, 2023 Hospitality & Retail Practice Group Seminar*  
 LEWIS THOMASON  
 Knoxville, Tennessee



## ALL ABOUT OJAI

The origin of the name Ojai has been historically known as derived from a Native American word meaning "nest." Set in a valley in the Topatopa Mountains, the area is known for its connection to nature, whether that be through its hiking and biking trails, produce farms or wineries.

The Ojai Valley Inn is a sprawling resort located just outside of downtown Ojai on 220 acres. This luxurious retreat has been one of California's most revered destinations since opening in 1923. The resort overlooks the unspoiled natural beauty of its mountain surroundings and celebrates the relaxed glamour of California's past. Attendees are invited to fly into Santa Barbara (43 miles) or Los Angeles (85 miles) before driving to the property.

3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**EARLY REGISTRATION & HOSPITALITY**

Farmhouse Courtyard

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**FACULTY REHEARSAL**

Farmhouse Great Room

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

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**CLIENT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

Demaret Room

\*Open to members of the Hospitality & Retail Client Advisory Board & Practice Group Leadership.

4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

**CLIENT ROUNDTABLE**

Demaret Room

This event allows client attendees the opportunity to exchange ideas and share best practices in a social setting without ALFA International lawyers present. An agenda of hot topics for discussion will be sent to all registrants a few weeks prior to the program. The roundtable will be moderated by a member of the Hospitality & Retail Client Advisory Board. We look forward to a vibrant and engaging discussion!

4:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**ALL ALFA INTERNATIONAL ATTORNEY MEETING**

Farmhouse Kitchen

\*All ALFA International attorneys are required to attend.

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

**WOMEN'S INITIATIVE EVENT**

**Coasters and Cocktails**

Kitchen Terrace

Create a one-of-a-kind pair of coasters while sipping cocktails and connecting with other female attendees at the 2023 Hospitality & Retail Seminar!



**Julia Jimenez**  
Women's Initiative Liaison  
DANIEL COKER  
Oxford, Mississippi

6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

**Welcome Reception, Buffet Dinner & Registration**

Pergola Lawn & Orchard Event Lawn

Join us for a welcome cocktail reception and buffet dinner while the sun sets. Enjoy an evening catching up with old friends and making new acquaintances in a Tuscan-inspired setting as we welcome you to Ojai!

**Suggested Attire:** Come as you are. Tonight's event will be outdoors so cool-weather attire is recommended as are flat shoes.



THURSDAY, JANUARY 26

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

**BREAKFAST BUFFET**

Farmhouse Lawn

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

**FIRST TIME ATTENDEE BREAKFAST**

Farmhouse Library

\*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**

Farmhouse Great Room

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



**Dean Arruebarrena**  
Chair, Hospitality &  
Retail Practice Group  
LEAKE & ANDERSSON, L.L.P.  
New Orleans, Louisiana



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



**Ben Jones**  
Program Chair, 2023  
Hospitality & Retail  
Practice Group Seminar  
LEWIS THOMASON  
Knoxville, Tennessee

8:15 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

**GENERAL SESSION**

**From Fast Times to Stranger Things**

We live in *A Different World*. *The Twilight Zone* has come and gone with some *Growing Pains* in between. We are now headed for our *Wonder Years*, right?

- Are you *Too Close for Comfort* after the pandemic? *Who's The Boss* when it comes to remote work? Do you need a *Full House*?
- Watch out for *The Fall Guy*: preparing your *A-Team* to litigate everything from slip-and-falls to *Murder (she wrote)* – what are juries focused on now?
- *Gimmie A Break* with all of the social media! Are social media influencers the new *Golden Girls*? How has the rise in social media affected the way you do business? Or has it?

Grab a *Bosom Buddy* and some *CHiPs* and let's discuss how history has molded where we are now and where we are headed. *Cheers!*



**Kimberly Harris**  
Moderator  
QUILLING, SELANDER,  
LOWNDS, WINSLETT  
AND MOSER, P.C.  
Dallas, Texas



**Julia Jimenez**  
DANIEL COKER  
Oxford, Mississippi



**Donna Wanser**  
Vice President of Legal  
PANDA RESTAURANT  
GROUP, INC.  
Rosemead, California



**Molly Lee**  
LEWIS WAGNER, LLP  
Indianapolis, Indiana

9:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

**BREAK**



9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. ■ ■ GENERAL SESSION

## Managing the Risk of Gun Violence—Are You Ready for the Litigation that Follows?

"I never thought it would happen here" is a sentiment often expressed after an incident of gun violence at a public place or business. Unfortunately, the reality is that it can happen anywhere. That is why most organizations and businesses have been proactive in attempting to reduce both the risk it will occur and the exposure of employees and customers to injury or death if it does. Despite such efforts, the incidents do occur and a lawsuit often follows. As a consequence, every policy, plan or action by the organization or business will be intensely scrutinized and may become the primary basis of the Plaintiff's theory of liability. This general session and two follow-up breakout session will address best practices and walk attendees through an incident scenario so they can be the judge of their own organization's readiness in the face of such a crisis.



**Allen Sydnor**  
*Moderator*  
HUIE, FERNAMBUCQ  
& STEWART, LLP  
Birmingham, Alabama



**Angela Cabado**  
*Senior Manager, Risk Management*  
MARRIOTT  
VACATIONS WORLDWIDE  
Orlando, Florida



**Stephen Cocco**  
*Special Consultant*  
RIMKUS CONSULTING  
GROUP INC.  
Phoenix, Arizona



**Nathan Brown**  
*Senior Attorney*  
THE KROGER CO.  
Cincinnati, Ohio



**Mary Haefer**  
*Chief Claims Officer*  
CAPSPECIALTY  
Madison, Wisconsin



**Yana Shapiro**  
GERMAN, GALLAGHER  
& MURTAGH, P.C.  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. BREAK

10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. ■ ■ GENERAL SESSION

## Brain Games—Evaluating the Rise of Traumatic Brain Injury Allegations in Hospitality and Retail Personal Injury Claims

While the incidents haven't changed, the injuries alleged have. Allegations of closed head and traumatic brain injury ("TBI") are on the rise in premises liability claims. This session, which features a practicing clinical neuropsychologist and an expert in jury psychology, will examine why closed head injury allegations are on the rise in premises liability claims, the evidence claimants and their experts are using to support TBI claims, discovery necessary to evaluate the claims and an enlightening discussion of how juries evaluate TBI claims and the evidence presented in support and defense of such claims.



**Keith Rozanski**  
*Moderator*  
HAIGHT BROWN &  
BONESTEEL LLP  
Los Angeles, California



**Kyle Boone**  
*Clinical Neuropsychologist*  
CONSULTANT  
Torrance, California



**Bill Kanasky**  
*Senior Vice President*  
COURTROOM  
SCIENCES, INC.  
Irving, Texas

11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. BREAK

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

## OPT IN—A Conversation About Equity

How do you make the workplace work for everyone? Acknowledging bias is the first step, but there's so much more that anyone - leader or not - can do to ensure that all voices are heard and amplified, and that every member of the team can feel safe in and succeed in the workplace.

Minda Harts will share the ways in which everyone can contribute to building a truly equitable workplace culture. It starts with courageous leadership: not being afraid to start productive conversations around how to make things better when you witness discrimination. It continues with courageous listening, and then being a success partner in someone's career. By sharing real tools anyone can use to fight workplace inequity, Harts guides us toward creating inclusive environments that have a positive impact on every employee.



**Barath Raman**  
*Moderator*  
LEWIS WAGNER, LLP  
Indianapolis, Indiana



**Minda Harts**  
*Workplace and Equity Consultant*  
THE MEMO LLC  
Los Angeles, California

Minda Harts is a Workplace and Equity Consultant. She is also the bestselling and award-winning author of *TheMemo*, *Right Within*, and *You Are More Than Magic*. Minda is a highly sought-after speaker for companies such as Liberty Mutual, Nike, Google and Salesforce. In 2020, she was named the Top Voice for Equity in the Workplace by LinkedIn. Minda hosts a live weekly podcast called *Secure The Seat*.

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

### LUNCH BUFFET

Farmhouse Lawn

1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

See attached document for optional activity choices.

*Prior Registration is Required.*

7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.  
**RECEPTION & DINNER**  
**BUFFET**

Farmhouse Lawn



7:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

### Cocktail Reception



7:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

### Dinner

And the word of the day is... PARTY! We're taking it back to the 80s tonight! Come ready to dance the night away to the best of the 80s!

Suggested Attire: Think neon and wild patterns – break out your 80s favorites. Tonight's event will be outdoors so cool-weather attire is recommended as are flat shoes.



10:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.

### After Hours Hospitality Suite

Farmhouse Kitchen & Library

After dinner, continue to enjoy the company of friends both new and old at this evening's late-night hospitality suite!

Hospitality Suite Liaisons:



**Bob Comfort**  
JOHNSON & BELL, LTD.  
Chicago, Illinois



**Lance Eberhart**  
HALL & EVANS, LLC  
Denver, Colorado



7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

**BREAKFAST BUFFET**

Farmhouse Lawn

8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**PROGRAM SESSIONS**

Farmhouse Great Room

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

**GENERAL SESSION**

Presented by the  **ALFAI Future Leaders Forum**

## “Shall We Play a Game? How About Global Thermonuclear War?”

We are at war. Nuclear verdicts of \$10 million or more have exploded over the last decade. The number of \$100 million jury verdicts, and even billion-dollar verdicts, are also on the rise. To effectively defend against nuclear verdicts, you must first understand why they occur. There are several factors to blame, including juror psychosocial considerations, growing litigation funding for plaintiff attorneys, political influences, growth of Reptile tactics, distrust of corporations and generational influences. This panel will outline the effect of these factors on nuclear verdicts, and provide practical solutions to avoid atomic fallout for defendants. “Which Side Do You Want?”



**Andre Webb**

*Moderator*

GERMAN, GALLAGHER AND MURTAGH, P.C.  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



**Sonya Goykhman**

*Corporate Counsel, Litigation,*

*Law & Corporate Affairs*

STARBUCKS COFFEE COMPANY  
Seattle, Washington



**Alan Nolley**

*Senior Litigation Counsel*

FLYNN RESTAURANT GROUP  
San Francisco, California



**Kate Martz**

BAYLOR EVNEN WOLFE & TANNEHILL, LLP  
Lincoln, Nebraska

9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

## ALFA International HQ Update

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

9:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

**BREAK**

9:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

**GROUP ONE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS**

**TRACK 1**

## THE BREAKFAST CLUB

Trials are almost a thing of the past. Further, in almost every jurisdiction in the country, in order to even get a trial setting, you must first have a mediation. So, mediations are now more important than ever. Despite their importance, some opposing counsel try to hijack the mediation process. Often when this happens, the mediator is no help, and the mediation fails. In this lively and entertaining session, a seasoned mediator and an experienced trial lawyer as well as a seasoned claims professional who handles these claims on a daily basis will share some of the latest techniques on how to make your mediation successful and not let it get stuck in a ditch.



**John Tarpley**

*Moderator*

LEWIS THOMASON

Nashville, Tennessee



**Ritchie Royston**

*CPCU, Assistant Vice President*

RSUI GROUP, INC.

Atlanta, Georgia



**Monica Garcia**

BUTT THORNTON & BAEHR PC

Albuquerque, New Mexico

**TRACK 2**

## LABOR & EMPLOYMENT HOT TOPICS— BACK TO WORK ... AFTER TRAGEDY STRIKES ... IF ONLY WE COULD GO BACK TO THE FUTURE.

Whether perpetrated by a former or current employee, customer or scorned spouse, no company is immune from workplace violence. In this breakout session, the panel will explore how and why some companies seem to do a better job of preventing, managing and navigating the various potential employment law claims that can arise based on decisions made before, during or after such a crisis. Claims run the gamut including OSHA violations, negligent retention, negligent hiring and negligent supervision, defamation and assault and battery. How are risks screened out during the hiring process when labor shortages are so severe? Were there red flags that were unreasonably minimized or worse yet... ignored? What about social media posts or anonymous concerns expressed by coworkers about an employee? How should the company react without overreacting? What proactive steps can and should be taken before, during and after a high-risk termination?



**Paul Klockenbrink**

*Moderator*

GENTRY LOCKE

Roanoke, Virginia



**Rob Bertram**

*Chief Legal Officer*

THE CAVA GROUP, INC.

Washington D.C.



**Jennifer Lankford**

*Senior Corporate Counsel*

CRACKER BARRELL OLD

COUNTRY STORE, LLC

Lebanon, Tennessee



**Yvette Davis**

HAIGHT BROWN & BONESTEEL LLP

Los Angeles, California

**TRACK 3**

## COGLIN'S LAW: BEER IS FOR BREAKFAST— DRINK OR BE GONE!

In this session, the panel will take you on a blast from the past and lead an entertaining group discussion on Liquor Liability and the myriad of issues that arise in defending Dram Shop claims. The panel will discuss the history of Dram Shop legislation, the vast legal differences that can exist across jurisdictions and the potential intersection between criminal and civil laws concerning alcohol-related incidents. This presentation could include music, video, trivia, and/or drinking games.



**Christopher Bryan**

*Moderator*

HALL & EVANS, LLC

Denver, Colorado



**Julia Suiter**

*Chief Legal Officer*

ILLINOIS CASUALTY COMPANY

Rock Island, Illinois

10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.  
**BREAK**

10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.  
**GROUP TWO ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS**

**TRACK 1** **HOSPITALITY HOT TOPICS—  
“I FEEL THE NEED... THE NEED FOR SPEED”**

The current world of retail and hospitality is traveling at Mach 1, and as a result it is often difficult to navigate the everchanging airspace of social, political, legal and ethical boogies. As a result, it can feel like you are pulling 5 G's or flying through a jet wash. If you want to dodge a future dogfight, join our panel in a hypersonic discussion of deployment strategies for a victorious 2023.



**Tamara Nelson**  
Moderator  
MERRICK, HOFSTEDT  
& LINDSEY, P.C.  
Seattle, Washington



**Jason Schiesser**  
Associate General Counsel  
SIMON PROPERTY  
GROUP  
Indianapolis, Indiana



**Jesse Conrad**  
HALLORAN SAGE  
Hartford, Connecticut

**TRACK 2** **POLICE ACADEMY—A DISCUSSION ON THE BEST  
PRACTICES TO DEFEND, SURVIVE AND ADVANCE  
WHEN CRIME COMES TO OUR CLIENTS**

Our clients have and will continue to be targets for the criminal activity of third parties. This roundtable will discuss best practices for crime prevention policies and procedures, what to do in the first 24 hours after the crime occurs, how counsel can assist in preserving evidence, and how to best go about responding to preservation of evidence letters. We will also discuss steps we can take to minimize the likelihood of a successful lawsuit against our clients. The discussion will include the importance of obtaining and preserving video evidence, obtaining statements from employee witnesses, cooperation with law enforcement, public relations and the media, and ensuring the narrative is focused on the criminal conduct of the third party and not vague negligence theories against the company. We will explore current claims and cases nationwide and how to help companies survive the crime, move forward from the crime and continue to thrive. You won't be *Running Scared* after this breakout session, instead you will be a *Lethal (Legal) Weapon*!



**Ronald Diegel**  
Moderator  
MURPHY &  
GRANTLAND, P.A.  
Columbia, South Carolina



**Janice Rickert**  
VP of Litigation  
BLOOMIN' BRANDS  
Tampa, Florida



**Chris Mueller**  
TAYLOR DAY, P.A.  
Jacksonville, Florida

**TRACK 3** **DON'T MESS WITH THE BULL,  
YOU'LL GET THE HORNS!**

The tremendous expansion of civil case mediations, brought about by the ease of use of remote audio-visual conferencing technologies and the unpredictability of civil juries, has resulted in the plaintiff's bar utilizing new and innovative mediation strategies to try to maximize their recovery of settlement dollars from defendants and their insurers. This session will discuss the nature of the "Running with the Bulls" strategies that plaintiffs are increasingly employing at case mediations and how the defense can effectively counter them.



**Sean Milano**  
Moderator  
MORRISON  
MAHONEY LLP  
Boston, Massachusetts



**Andriana Stefak**  
Senior Risk Manager  
EG AMERICA  
Boston, Westborough,  
Massachusetts



**Andrew Tuttle**  
FOWLER WHITE  
BURNETT P.A.  
Palm Beach, Florida

11:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.  
**BREAK**

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**GENERAL SESSION**

**Who Can It Be Now?  
Deciphering the Mystery  
of Unconscious Bias in  
Your Jury**

Does your ideal juror have a hat? Does your ideal juror wear glasses? Is your ideal juror male? Female? Young? Older? These days, a better question might be "does a juror you think is ideal actually harbor unconscious bias against your client because of something that happened during their childhood?" Judges, lawyers and juries do not simply leave their bias at the door because they walk into a courtroom and jurors may harbor feelings about the parties that they don't even realize they have. This program will tackle how to address unconscious bias in jury selection while playing a round of the beloved 80's game, *Guess Who?*



**Cate Jackson**  
Moderator  
GENTRY LOCKE  
Roanoke, Virginia



**Caren Ries**  
Associate Counsel & Assistant Secretary  
SKYLINE CHAMPION CORPORATION  
Troy, Michigan



**David T. Vanalek**  
SVP, Chief Legal and Compliance Officer  
RICHMOND NATIONAL INSURANCE  
Richmond, Virginia



**Chris Page**  
YOUNG MOORE AND HENDERSON P.A.  
Raleigh, North Carolina



**Tim Peeples**  
DANIEL COKER  
Oxford, Mississippi

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**LUNCH BUFFET**

*Farmhouse Lawn*

1:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

If you are staying over on Friday evening, please see the attached document for optional activity choices.

*Prior Registration is Required.*



**DEAN ARRUEBARRENA** is a principal partner with the ALFA International firm of Leake & Andersson, L.L.P. in New Orleans, Louisiana. Since 1996, Dean has maintained an active litigation practice in all Louisiana state and federal courts. He is admitted to all Louisiana state courts, the U.S. District Courts for the Eastern, Middle and Western Districts of Louisiana and the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. His practice areas are varied and include premises liability, workers' compensation, casualty and insurance. Dean's professional affiliations include the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel, New Orleans Bar Association and New Orleans Association of Defense Counsel. He is also Leake & Andersson's primary liaison with the New Orleans Pro Bono Project and devotes several hours each year to Pro Bono causes. Dean is a 1993 *cum laude* graduate of Loyola University New Orleans, where he received the Bank of Louisiana award for the outstanding Economics graduate, and a 1996 graduate of Loyola University New Orleans Law School. He is the Program Chair for the 2021 ALFA International Hospitality & Retail Practice Group Seminar.

**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.

**ROB BERTRAM** is Chief Legal Officer at The Cava Group, Inc. In this capacity, he is responsible for developing and leading legal strategy to promote and protect the interests of Cava's multi-channel Mediterranean culinary platform. Previously, he was General Counsel for Ollie's Bargain Outlet, Inc. ("Ollie's"). In that capacity, he was responsible for overseeing the diverse range of legal, and many business affairs involving the company. Prior to joining Ollie's, Rob was an attorney in the corporate department of McNees, Wallace & Nurick, LLC, in Harrisburg, PA, where he represented both growth and well established companies. Rob attended the Pennsylvania State University ("Penn State"), attaining a degree in economics, and received his JD from The Dickinson School of Law. He speaks frequently on both contracting, corporate governance, and store operation issues. Rob mentors undergraduate students at Penn State.

**KYLE BOONE, PH.D.** was a Professor in the California School of Forensic Studies at Alliant International University from 2008 to 2016, and was Director of Neuropsychological Services and Training at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in Torrance, California, from 1986 to 2008. She was also a Full Professor-In-Residence in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA until 2008, and continues as Clinical Professor. She served on the advisory committee that developed clinical neuropsychology practice standards published in The Clinical Neuropsychologist in 2007. In 2008 she was an invited member of a consensus conference to develop practice standards in the identification of malingering and suspect effort that were published in The Clinical Neuropsychologist in 2009, and she served as co-author on the updated practice standards for use of performance validity tests and determination of neurocognitive performance invalidity published in The Clinical Neuropsychologist in 2021. In 2022 she was lead author on the official position paper on test security for the American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology which was published in The Clinical Neuropsychologist. Dr. Boone serves on the editorial boards of The Clinical Neuropsychologist, Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology, and Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology. She also serves on the University of Minnesota Press MMPI-3 Consultative Panel.

**NATHAN BROWN** is Senior Attorney for The Kroger Co. where he manages all tort and ADA litigation for Kroger and as well as various other commercial litigation matters. He also provides general legal counsel to its Smith's, King

Soopers, Fry's and Dillon's grocery divisions. Mr. Brown also provides legal support to Kroger's Asset Protection team. Prior to joining Kroger, he was an Assistant General Counsel for Walmart Stores, Inc. working in its litigation and corporate practice groups. Mr. Brown earned a Bachelor of Arts, *cum laude*, in Political Science from Brigham Young University and earned his Juris Doctor, *cum laude*, from the J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University where he was a member of the BYU Law Review.

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**ANGELA CABADO** is currently the Senior Manager, Risk Management Insurance Claims for Marriott Vacations Worldwide Corporation (MVWC). Angela is a graduate of the University of South Florida, School of Biomedical Sciences. She holds an Associate in Risk Management designation and is working towards her Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter designation. Angela began her career with MVWC in 2019 as a Manager of Workers' Compensation and was previously a workers' compensation adjuster for Liberty Mutual Insurance. At MVWC, she was part of the team leading the COVID-19 response and is currently expanding her role into General Liability, Property, EPL, and D&O.

**JESSE CONRAD** is a Partner with the ALFAI firm in Connecticut – Halloran Sage. Jesse's core practice is centered on litigation and includes representation of individuals, insurance companies, corporations, and large organizations/businesses as they face any sort of litigation in any courthouse in Connecticut. Jesse has a long history of handling cases with high levels of exposure in many areas but most commonly engages in commercial litigation, construction litigation, transportation and premises liability litigation, employment litigation, and worker's compensation claims. Jesse routinely represents his clients all over Connecticut in arbitrations, at mediations, and, if necessary, at trial proceedings. Through his advocacy, clients are provided with guidance through complex legal difficulties and are assisted in making sound decisions for their case. When he is not litigating, Jesse serves as a mentor to younger attorneys at the firm including his role as a member of the firm's Summer Associate Committee. Jesse also has the pleasure of serving as the Co-Chair of Halloran Sage's Pro Bono Committee where he has the honor of representing disadvantaged veterans facing legal troubles.

**STEPHEN COCCO** is a highly-skilled former FBI agent and executive manager with over 27 years of experience in security management skills, crisis and consequence management, criminal investigations, and forensic investigations and interviews. As a Joint Terrorism Task Force manager, he gained broad experience in investigating violent extremists and terrorist organizations, and in conducting and overseeing FBI homeland security investigations on a global basis. Mr. Cocco can adapt to change and apply critical thinking and analysis to complex matters, summarizing findings to allow for fact-based decision making. Provides strong law enforcement liaison skills, including serving as FBI representative at Arizona state and local law enforcement and intelligence sharing working groups. Mr. Cocco's areas of expertise include crisis and emergency management, investigation, evidence collection, and investigative reports, fraud and financial analysis, use of force (Expert witness), "Active Shooter" training, domain assessment, intelligence collection, and analysis. Mr. Cocco is fluent in Spanish.

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**RONALD DIEGEL** is a shareholder of Murphy & Grantland. His areas of practice include many different types of insurance defense matters including premises liability defense, automobile defense, trucking defense, homeowners defense, products liability defense and retail merchant defense. Ron attended The Citadel for his undergraduate degree and obtained his juris doctor from the University of South Carolina. Prior to joining the firm, Ron was with a general practice firm in the Myrtle Beach area. He has tried a variety of cases to verdict in general sessions, civil and family court. Ron's career spans 30 years and he has tried more than 50 cases to verdict. Because of his wide-ranging trial experience, Ron is frequently asked to handle major cases by many clients of the firm. These cases typically involve catastrophic claims with multiple parties and frequently involve the use of multiple medical, forensic and accident reconstruction experts. Ron has been a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) since 2008 where he is a Life Fellow. He is AV rated by Martindale-Hubbell. He is also a member of the Trucking Industry Defense Association, the Transportation Law Association, the Defense Research Institute and the South Carolina Defense Trial Attorneys Association. He has also served as the Chair of the Trucking Law Substantive Committee of the South Carolina Defense Trial Attorneys Association. Ron is also Certified Mediator by the South Carolina Board of Arbitrator and Mediator Certification and has mediated hundreds of cases over the last decade. He and his wife Ginger have been married for 32 years, have three children, one grandchild (more hoped for!) and two dogs—a Golden Retriever and a Miniature Schnauzer.

**LANCE G. EBERHART** is CEO at the ALFA International law firm Hall & Evans, LLC in Denver, Colorado. Mr. Eberhart practices in the area of complex civil litigation handling the defense of a full range of property and casualty matters including matters directly affecting the transportation to hospitality and retail industries. Prior to joining Hall & Evans Mr. Eberhart had significant trial and appellate experience in the field of criminal defense. Mr. Eberhart is in numerous professional organizations and is a member of both the ALFA International Hospitality & Retail and Transportation Steering Committees. He was the 2016 ALFA International Hospitality & Retail Law Practice Group Chair. Mr. Eberhart is a graduate of the Washington University School of Law.

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**CAREN RIES** is Associate Counsel, Assistant Secretary, and Litigation Manager for Skyline Champion Corporation and its subsidiaries, including Champion Home Builders, Champion Modular, Titan Factory Direct, Champion Retail Housing, and Star Fleet Trucking. She joined the Champion family in 2018 as Associate Counsel and Litigation Manager. As one of three lawyers with the Company, she is a Corporate Generalist by default whose areas of responsibility continue to expand and evolve daily. Prior to joining Champion, Caren was a career litigator in private practice with the law firms Trott & Trott, P.C., Crimando & Cleland, P.C., and Kitch Drutchas, Wagner, Valitutti & Sherbrook, P.C., with practice areas focused on real property, family law, and medical malpractice and product liability defense. Caren is a graduate of Wayne State University Law School in Detroit, Michigan.

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**JULIA B. SUITER** received both her Bachelor and Juris Doctorate degrees from Indiana University. Upon graduation, she clerked for the Honorable Brent E. Dickson of the Indiana Supreme Court. Thereafter, Ms. Suiter worked for the Indianapolis law firm of Riley Bennett & Egloff, where she focused her practice on product liability, medical malpractice, toxic torts, and general insurance defense. In 2000, Ms. Suiter became the Operations Counsel for KONE Inc., a world-wide leader in the vertical transportation industry. While at KONE, Ms. Suiter was business counsel to the organization, focusing on construction,

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**DAVID T. VANALEK** is the Chief Legal and Compliance Officer and Corporate Secretary of Richmond National, a specialty excess and surplus lines insurance company dedicated to writing hard to place risks for small and mid-sized

businesses headquartered in Richmond, Virginia. David is responsible for all corporate governance, regulatory, compliance, claims law, and litigation activities of the company and its affiliates, and serves as legal advisor to the leadership team, business units, and board of directors. Prior to joining Richmond National, David served as the Claims Chief Operating Officer at a global Fortune 500 insurance carrier, where he led the day to day operational support for all claims divisions responsible for all lines of business throughout North America and Bermuda. David also served for years in various claims leadership roles in the professional liability, cyber liability and management liability product lines. Prior to joining the insurance industry, Mr. Vanalek was in private practice as a commercial litigator, serving clients throughout California and Illinois. He received his Bachelor's degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, and his law degree from the University of California, Davis, where he served as an Editor on Law Review, as well as a judicial extern for an associate justice of the California Supreme Court. Mr. Vanalek is a frequent speaker on insurance, claims, technology, professional liability, cyber liability and management liability issues.

**DONNA WANSER** is the Vice President of Legal for Panda Restaurant Group, Inc. and has been with the company since 2000. Panda Restaurant Group has over 2,400 restaurants throughout the country, and internationally in such places as Guam, Canada, Dubai, Korea, Mexico, etc. Donna oversees a staff of over 40 real estate legal associates consisting of attorneys, paralegals, due diligence, administrators and a property management team. Donna is a graduate from the University of Maryland, holds an MBA in Banking and Finance from Dowling College and a Juris Doctorate from Touro Law School and specializes in Real Estate, Corporate and Franchise Law. She was an adjunct professor at Pepperdine University teaching law at the doctorate level. She also holds a Doctorate of Education in Organizational Leadership from Pepperdine University. Her dissertation research involved the study of the emotional intelligence of lawyer leaders and its correlation to effective leadership to the new up-coming millennial generation and younger. Donna has spoken at large conferences on leadership, employment, real estate and personal development. She is certified in and has taught personal development programs and assessments such as MBTI, DISC, Seven Habits, Corporate Change and Emotional Intelligence. In addition, she is currently the Co-Chair of the Franchise Committee for the Business Section of the California Bar Association and was previously on the Board of Grant Angel Wishes and Travel Foundation, the Board of Girl Scouts of America, President of her home owner association and Secretary of the Board for Center for Psychological Health Services (CPH). She actively engages in helping charity organizations that benefit children and people in need. Donna's hobbies include world travel and continuous learning. For her, it's all about people and culture and staying off the tourist path. She continues to stay active and has summited Kilimanjaro, kayaked with the penguins and seals in the Antarctic sea, and photographed the polar bears in the Arctic circle. Her more active trips include mountain biking the in the famous redwood forest of Rotorua, diving with stingrays and reef sharks in Moorea, biking 125 miles through Croatia/Montenegro/Bosnia-Herzegovina and most recently hiking the "W" in Patagonia. Where next?...

**ANDRE WEBB** is a partner with ALFA International member firm German, Gallagher & Murtagh, P.C. in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is an experienced trial attorney with a demonstrated history of success. Andre concentrates his practice on the defense of insured and self-insured entities in a variety of litigation matters, including premises liability, dram shop/liquor liability cases, motor vehicle accidents (inclusive of UM/UIM claims), and professional liability matters. The diverse nature of Andre's practice, along with his background and expertise, provides him with a unique perspective when advising and counseling clients towards attaining the best and most cost-effective resolution. Andre's professional activities extend beyond the courtroom as he is very active in the legal community. Andre was listed as one of 2023 Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch in America, named one of Pennsylvania Legal Award's "2021 Lawyers on the Fast Track" by The Legal Intelligencer, and recognized as a Pennsylvania Super Lawyer "Rising Star." Andre is an elected member of the Philadelphia Bar Association's Board of Governors; he served as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Young Lawyers Division ("YLD") and is an Executive Committee member of the Philadelphia Association of Defense Counsel ("PADC"). Andre is also active with the Pennsylvania Bar Association, where he serves in the House of Delegates.



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### MEETING LOCATION

Ojai Valley Inn  
905 Country Club Road  
Ojai California 93023

Tel: (855) 697-8780  
[www.ojaivalleyinn.com](http://www.ojaivalleyinn.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. Resort casual attire is appropriate for the social events and casual attire for the optional activities. Wednesday and Thursday receptions and dinners are outdoors and temps are predicted to dip at night so layers and jackets are recommended.

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### SEMINAR CONTACT

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