



OHIO ASSOCIATION OF CIVIL TRIAL ATTORNEYS
The Source for Defense Success

THE UPDATE

NEWS & PRACTICE POINTERS FROM OACTA

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President's Message

**By: Elizabeth T. Smith
2025 OACTA President**

**Fall is the time for
....reengagement.**



Fall is settling in. The hurly burly of first days of school, the rescheduling of discovery and trials delayed for vacations and the start up of schedules has everyone running around, wondering where the time has gone. And even though court schedules don't slow down like they did in the "old days" fall always feels like we are just starting everything over again.

We started the season off with another successful golf outing. Many thanks to the sponsors and to all who participated. This was then followed by our participation in a joint service day with the plaintiff lawyers organization, OAJ. We hope to continue a partnership with this organization to foster civility among our lawyers, setting an example for the bar and for the greater community.

Perhaps the most important activity for OACTA is coming your way on November 13 and 14 with OACTA's annual conference and meeting at the Westerville/Polaris Renaissance Hotel. Check out the agenda in this update and note the **engaging** speakers and topics. And come join us in celebrating this year's well-deserving award honorees who have contributed so much to the profession. We will also honor the next generation of lawyers as we recognize OACTA's scholarship winners. Finally, new officers and new board members will take the helm of this organization and I will become "past."

[**READ MORE**](#)

Mark Your Calendar

ESi and OACTA Webinar

"Who's the Boss? Understanding Key Relationships Among Employers and Employees on Construction Jobsites"

with Edward J. Tuczak, P.E. and Thomas Waling

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

12:00 - 1:00 PM

[**REGISTER HERE**](#)

OACTA Annual Meeting
Renaissance Columbus Westerville-Polaris
November 13-14, 2025
[REGISTER HERE](#)

Rimkus and OACTA Webinar
"Cell Phone Forensics in Trucking Defense: Everything You Need to Know from
Rapid Response to the Courtroom"
with Lars Daniel, Director of Digital Forensics
Wednesday, December 3, 2025
12:00 - 1:00 PM
[REGISTER HERE](#)

OACTA 2025 Coffee Chat
December 12, 2025
SAVE THE DATE!

Register Today for the OACTA Annual Meeting!

Join us November 13-14 for an outstanding two-day program featuring outstanding speakers and interesting topics with something for everyone!

Presentations include the following:

- **Third-Party Litigation Funding** will be presented by Michael Farly, Ohio Insurance Institute.
- Todd Presnell, the lead author of the new legal treatise *Privileges and Protections: Tennessee and Sixth Circuit Law* (Matthew Bender & Co. 2024) will present **Professional Conduct & Attorney-Client Privilege Considerations**.
- An **Update on recent SCOTUS and Ohio Supreme Court Decisions** will be presented by Garret M. Anderson from Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP.
- **Lessons from the Federal Bench** will be shared by Judge Michael J. Newman, United States District Court, Southern District of Ohio at Dayton, Judge Tyson A. Crist, United States Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Ohio at Dayton, and Magistrate Judge Kimberly A. Jolson, United States District Court, Southern District of Ohio at Columbus.
- Julie Brown, Adam Borgman and Joshula Wulf from Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP will discuss **Artificial Intelligence, GenAI, and e-Discovery**.
- Learn about coverage issues and best practices relating to **Cyber Security and Data Breaches** from K. James Sullivan of Calfee, Halter & Griswold LLP.
- Andrew Makoski, and Katie Cornelius, from the Ohio Department of Commerce, will share **Emerging Issues in Ohio Cannabis Law**.
- We will hear **Lessons from the Newest Members of the Ohio Supreme Court** in a panel discussion with Ohio Supreme Court Justice Daniel R. Hawkins and Justice Megan E. Shanahan.



In addition to the educational program, a **Networking Reception** will be held following the last presentation on Thursday and is included in your meeting registration! Also included, is the **OACTA Legal Excellence Awards Luncheon & Annual Business Meeting**, where we will present the 2025 OACTA Awards! See below for the list of this year's recipients. **Exhibitors** will be available to share the latest in products and services with you.

Attendees **can earn CLE credits!** The Annual Meeting program has been approved by the Supreme Court of Ohio Commission on CLE for 8.5 hours, including 1.0 of APC credit. The program has also been approved by the Kentucky Bar Association CLE Commission for 8.5 General credits, including 1.0 hour ethics.

We hope to see you there!

Learn More and Register Today!

Thank you to our Sponsors!



Know.



Congratulations to the 2025 Awards Recipients

During the OACTA Annual Business Meeting & Legal Excellence Award Luncheon on Thursday, November 13, the following awards will be presented. This presentation will take place during the OACTA 2025 Annual Meeting at the Renaissance Columbus Westerville-Polaris.

[Register today!](#)

Excellence in Advocacy Award

John M. Hands, Esq.
Ret. UB Greensfelder LLP

Lifetime Achievement Award

Carolyn A. Taggart, Esq.
Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP

Respected Adversary Award

Daniel R. Mordarski, Esq.
Mordarski Law

Distinguished Contributions to the Community Award

Scott R. Mote, Esq.
Ohio Lawyers Assistance Program

Outstanding Young Lawyer Award

Hannah M. Heinmiller, Esq.
Garvey, Shearer, Nordstrom, PSC

Frank Seth Hurd Member of the Year Award

OACTA Committee Chair of the Year Award

Karen E. Ross, Esq.
Tucker Ellis LLP

Leadership Spotlight

OACTA's strength is in the strength of its leadership. Our longtime leaders deserve a spotlight. This edition's spotlight is Jamey Pregon, a long-time member, Past President, former member of the Board of Trustees, and former Chair of the Personal Injury Defense Committee. Jamey is now the Legislative Affairs Chair for OACTA. In this new role, he has been tracking important legislation working its way through the Ohio Statehouse.



"I joined OACTA shortly after I moved to Ohio and began practicing here. Steve Freeze, who is also a Past President of OACTA, urged me to join, and I am very glad that I listened to him. I have never regretted doing so, and now over twenty years later, OACTA is the only professional organization that I have continuously been a member. OACTA has helped me develop as a lawyer, and OACTA has always kept me aware and alert of trends and developments throughout Ohio. The CLEs and Updates are always excellent, but OACTA is a lot more than that. I have met some great friends through OACTA, and I have enjoyed the mentorship, friendship, and comradery with all of OACTA's membership. This is a benefit that I fear is slipping away from our profession, and indeed from all society, as we move into the age of Zoom, remote proceedings, and remote workplaces. There is no substitute for personal interactions with people, and OACTA is filled with a lot of great people. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to meet and work with attorneys across Ohio, and I believe OACTA plays a key role in the betterment of our profession overall. Everyone in the legal profession has a job to do, and by learning to do our job better, it helps to elevate others in the profession as well. I am proud to be a part of OACTA, and I hope we continue to grow as we move into the future."

Jamey is staff counsel for The Cincinnati Insurance Company at its headquarters in Fairfield, Ohio. He practices primarily in southwest Ohio, and his practice areas include personal injury defense, construction law, insurance coverage and bad faith, and civil litigation. **OACTA thanks Jamey for his long commitment to OACTA, and the important work he continues to do.**

OACTA Foundation 16th Annual Golf Outing

Thank you to all who participated in the OACTA Foundation's 16th Annual Golf Outing!

The OACTA Foundation Golf Outing was held on Tuesday, September 2nd at Pinnacle Golf Club in Grove City. Over **seventy golfers** came out to support the OACTA Foundation. Thank you to all who participated as a sponsor or golfer!

Net proceeds from the Golf Outing benefit the OACTA Foundation. The OACTA Foundation funds projects consistent with the mission of OACTA, such as the annual *Hilary S. Taylor Inclusion and Equity Scholarship Program* and the *National Foundation for Judicial Excellence* (NFJE).

This year, over \$14,000 was raised for the OACTA Foundation for the scholarship program and NFJE! Thank you to Golf Outing Co-Chairs **Brigid Heid** and **Mark McCarthy** for all their efforts!



Thank you to our 2025 OACTA Foundation Golf Outing Sponsors for their support!

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Lawyers Care - OAJ/OACTA Day of Service

On September 12th, OACTA teamed up with OAJ (Ohio Association for Justice) to give back to the community!

OACTA and OAJ members volunteered at the Mid-Ohio Market for a day of giving back. Thanks to all who participated!

(pictured: OACTA Member, Kelly Grigsby Jones)



Learn More About OACTA Committees

Click on the names of the committees below to download their current roster as an excel spreadsheet.

OACTA Substantive Law Committees:

- [Appellate Advocacy](#)
- [Business & Commercial Litigation](#)
- [Construction Litigation](#)
- [Employment Law](#)
- [Government Liability](#)
- [Insurance Coverage](#)
- [Litigation & Trial Skills](#)
- [Medical Negligence](#)
- [Personal Injury](#)
- [Product Liability & Toxic Tort](#)
- [Professional Liability](#)

[Click Here to Update your Committee Interest](#)

New OACTA Members since July 2025

Please welcome our new OACTA members!

Ryan Boda, Progressive Insurance House Counsel
Matthew Duffy, Collins, Roche, Utley & Garner, LLC
Kaitlin Madigan, Weston Hurd LLP
Abriana Malfatti, University of Cincinnati College of Law
Dylan Moore, Capital University Law School
Edith Nkenganyi, Capital University Law School
Olivia Rhodes, University of Dayton School of Law
Lindsey Self, Haber LLP
Kaiden Sharrock, Capital University Law School

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Forensic**

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Appeal Bond Specialist

RIMKUS



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