

Speaker Biographies

2024 Regional Women in the Law Summit, Cincinnati OH

Thursday, April 25

1:00 – 1:45 pm Trial Skills - You Said What? - Can or Should You Really Say That?

Valerie will lead a discussion about opening and closing statements which will include representative appellate cases and discussion of practice pointers.

Valerie W. Herbert, Esq. - Partner
Travis, Herbert & Stempien Attorneys



Valerie Herbert started her law career in Louisville Kentucky in 1989 “of counsel” and then as a partner with the law firm of Ricketts of Travis, before forming Travis & Herbert Attorneys which is now Tavis Herbert & Stempien Attorneys. For the past 35 years, her practice has been focused on insurance defense, including areas of personal injury, motor vehicle accidents, and premises liability litigation. Ms. Herbert routinely handles cases in Jefferson, Bullitt, Meade, Hardin, Henry, Oldham, Shelby, Franklin, Fayette and Trimble counties in Kentucky—though she has also previously practiced in Kenton and Boone counties in Northern Kentucky.

Ms. Herbert earned her B.A. degree cum laude from the University of Notre Dame in 1986 and her J.D. degree (with honors) from the University of Louisville in 1989. She is a member of the Louisville and Kentucky Bar Associations and the Kentucky Defense Counsel, Inc. Ms. Herbert is admitted to practice in Kentucky and in the United States District Court, Western District of Kentucky.

Ms. Herbert was the first woman to appear in the Kentucky Trial Court Review as one of the top ten most prolific trial attorneys beginning in 1998 and she continues to enjoy an active trial practice. She has also lectured and written on various topics related to the trial of personal injury cases from a defense perspective.

Ms. Herbert is married to Gus Herbert (also an attorney) and they have three adult children. She has been active in the Louisville Bar Association and the Notre Dame Alumni Club. She started running (slowly) ten years ago and has completed eight mini-marathons. Ms. Herbert also enjoys spending time with her family in her spare time, especially her two grandchildren.

1:45 - 2:30 pm *The Future is Here – Piloting the Multigenerational Workplace*

The future is here. Millennials and Zoomers are making up a larger and larger portion of the workforce. We must ask ourselves – Who are these individuals? What are their needs? What motivates them? What stifles them? What drives them away? This panel will discuss trends as well as ways to lead, engage, and retain Millennials and Zoomers in a multigenerational workplace.

Madeline Richmond, Esq. - Lewis Wagner LLP



Madeline is a born and raised Hoosier who graduated magna cum laude from the Indiana University Maurer School of Law in 2023. She worked as a law clerk at Lewis Wagner during the summer of 2022, before becoming an associate in the firm’s transportation practice. Madeline was inspired to pursue a career in law by a high school class called “We The People,” where she developed a passion for reading, writing, and oral advocacy. She also loves meeting new people and hearing their stories and has combined those two loves in pursuing a legal career.

Madeline lives in Indianapolis and enjoys crafting, playing pickleball, and hanging out with her cat and dog, Charlie and Jack.

Molly Lee, Esq. - Lewis Wagner LLP



Molly Lee is a partner with Lewis Wagner in Indianapolis, Indiana. Molly concentrates her practice on defending a variety of civil litigation matters, including wrongful death, catastrophic personal injury, premises liability, liquor liability, construction liability and various insurance defense cases. Molly also has substantial experience representing Indiana governmental entities in defense of lawsuits.

Molly is a proud graduate of DePauw University and the Indiana Robert H. McKinney School of Law. While pursuing her law degree, Molly served as a Legal Extern for the NCAA and a Legal Intern for The Finish Line, Inc. For two years, she chaired the Young Lawyer Section of the Defense Trial Counsel of Indiana. Molly currently serves on the Indianapolis Legal Aid Society Board of Directors. Additionally, Molly has been recognized as a “Rising Star” for the past six years. Molly resides in Indianapolis with her husband and their two young daughters.

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



A trial attorney for more than four decades, Candi has substantial experience in the areas of product liability, legal malpractice, and complex commercial cases. She has significant jury and bench trial experience and has worked extensively at the appellate level in both state and federal courts.

Candi is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and served as a past president of the Ohio Association of Civil Trial Attorneys. She has also served as a faculty member for the National Institute of Trial Advocacy at the University of Cincinnati College of Law. She is consistently recognized among Super Lawyers' Top Lists, including the Top 10 Ohio Super Lawyers and the Top 5 Cincinnati Super Lawyers. In 2012, 2017 and 2021, Candi was named The Best Lawyers in America® Cincinnati "Lawyer of the Year" in Product Liability Litigation – Defendants.

2:45 – 4:15 pm Diversity and Inclusion: Let's Talk

This presentation will include a discussion of bias, how to develop needed pipelines and the importance of inclusion. Mr. Woods will explore the intersection between the rules of professional conduct and diversity inclusion.

Ricardo Woods, Esq.

Partner, Burr Forman, LLP



Ricardo Woods is the Managing Partner of Burr & Forman's Mobile office. Ricardo is a defense trial lawyer and practices in Burr and Forman's Transportation, Insurance and Product Section (TIPS) with an emphasis on product and toxic tort liability, insurance litigation and government liability.

His product liability and toxic tort experience include the defense of cases involving industrial-grade machinery, warranty claims, automobile components, solvents and other chemical agents. Ricardo has spent his career training, preparing and deposing expert witnesses in product liability cases. He has successfully defended product manufacturers, distributors, and sellers in the product arena. Ricardo's insurance litigation experience includes issues related to defalcation, bad faith, fraud and coverage agents.

He is a creative problem solver who provides his clients with innovative and cost-effective solutions and strategies. He is no stranger to the courtroom, and he is experienced in handling all stages of complex litigation. Ricardo has first-chair jury trial experience, as well as extensive pre-trial litigation experience.

He has successfully defended matters, which included allegations of wrongful death, paralysis, consumer protection claims, fraud related to financial services, bad faith, civil rights violations, severe bodily injuries, and catastrophic property loss.

In addition to his service to the bar and his government service as City Attorney of the City of Mobile, Ricardo has served as a leader in the non-profit community over the years as the President of 100 Black Men of Greater Mobile, Inc., Chair of Mobile United, President of the Vernon Z. Crawford Bay Area Bar Association (an NBA affiliate), Chairman of AL.com's first Gulf Coast Young Professional's Summit, and the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Prichard Preparatory School.

As an active member of DRI--Lawyers Representing Business, Ricardo is a member of the Board of Directors (National Director), the Diversity Committee (immediate past chair), the Product Liability Committee, and Toxic Tort and Environmental Law Steering Committee. He is also a member of the IADC and the FDCC. Ricardo is a native of Natchez, Mississippi. He attended both law school and college as a recipient of leadership scholarships. While in law school, he was a member of the school's nationally ranked Trial Team, and he served as the Chief Judge of the Trial Board.

4:15 – 5:15 pm Judicial Panel

Moderator: Kentucky Supreme Court Justice Michelle Keller

6th Supreme Court District



Justice Michelle M. Keller was appointed to the Kentucky Supreme Court in April 2013. She was subsequently elected in both 2014 and 2022 for two full terms on the Court. Prior to her service on the Supreme Court, Justice Keller was elected as Judge on the Kentucky Court of Appeals in November 2006. Justice Keller has served as the Court of Appeals representative on the Judicial Conduct Commission and Chairperson of the Court of Justice's Technology Governance Committee, and is currently serving as Chairperson of the Kentucky Access to Justice Commission and Criminal Rules Committee.

Prior to her service on the bench, Justice Keller practiced law for 17 years. She served as an Assistant County Attorney for her home county of Kenton. Her private practice concentrated in the areas of medical negligence and product liability defense, personal injury, family law, and criminal defense. Justice Keller also practiced administrative law, representing numerous clients before state regulatory and licensure boards. She is Chairwoman Emeritus of the Kentucky Personnel Board and has served as a hearing officer and member of that Board. Justice Keller is licensed to practice law in Kentucky, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky, and the United States Supreme Court. She is a member of the Honorary Order of Kentucky Colonels and has twice been commended by the Kentucky House of Representatives for her service to the Commonwealth.

Justice Keller attended Northern Kentucky University's Chase College of Law while working as a licensed registered nurse in critical care. At Chase, Justice Keller was an IOLTA Scholar, earning her Juris Doctor in 1990. Chase presented Justice Keller with both the Chase Excellence and Chase Exceptional Service Awards in 2007 and 2011 respectively.

Additionally, Justice Keller was named a 2012 Outstanding Woman of Northern Kentucky honoree for her commitment to public service and community involvement. She was honored on Law Day in 2013 with the Richard D. Lawrence Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the Northern Kentucky Bar Association (“NKBA”). Justice Keller was honored in 2014 with the Liberty Bell Award for her service to the Court of Justice, and in 2016 she was inducted into the Lloyd Memorial High School (her alma mater) Alumni Hall of Fame. In December 2017, Justice Keller was the first woman presented with the Distinguished Lawyer of the Year Award by the NKBA. Recently, the Kentucky Bar Association (“KBA”) honored Justice Keller with the 2020 Distinguished Judge Award.

Justice Keller has served in various positions for the NKBA, KBA, and the American Bar Association. In 2009, she received the KBA’s Donated Legal Services Award for her commitment to Pro Bono service and support of Kentucky’s legal services organizations. She is a Master in the Salmon P. Chase Inn of Court and served as President of the Inn from 2012-13. Justice Keller is also a Fellow of both the American and Kentucky Bar Foundations.

A lifelong Northern Kentuckian, Justice Keller and her husband, Jim, a physician, are the proud parents of two adult daughters. One serves as a public health practitioner and the other is a practicing attorney.

Judge Susanne Cetrulo, Kentucky Court of Appeals

6th Appellate District, Division 2



Judge Cetrulo was appointed to the Court of Appeals in September of 2021 and elected in November of 2022 to serve the 6th Appellate District, Second Division, which is composed of the Commonwealth’s 13 northernmost counties.

Her career has brought her full circle, as her first legal job was as a staff attorney for the Court of Appeals from 1984 to 1991, first for Judge Charles Lester and then Judge Judy M. West. Judge Cetrulo went on to spend 30 years in private practice and came to the Court of Appeals from the civil litigation firm of Cetrulo, Mowery & Hicks, which she founded along with her husband in 2000. Prior to establishing her own firm, Judge Cetrulo practiced with Kohlen Patton & Hunt in Cincinnati and with Ware Bryson West & Kummer in Edgewood.

In addition to practicing civil litigation in Kentucky and Ohio, she was an adoption attorney in both states for over 30 years. She has finalized placements for more than 350 children, and she and her husband are adoptive parents.

Judge Cetrulo has been named one of the most prolific trial attorneys in Kentucky several times by the “Kentucky Jury Verdict Reporter.” She has presented on appellate advocacy and mediation skills and is a certified mediator.

Judge Cetrulo is a co-founder of Cameron’s Cause, a non-profit organization that places automated external defibrillator devices in Northern Kentucky schools and businesses to prevent sudden cardiac death. She has served as a board member and volunteer with the Northern Kentucky Bar Association’s women lawyers and mentoring programs, Josh Cares, KAREFarm, the Citizen Foster Care Review Board, Court Appointed Special Advocates, the Diocesan Children’s Home, Dixie Heights High School band, the Women’s Crisis Center, IMPACT 100, and Immanuel United Methodist Church in Lakeside Park, Kentucky. In 2021,

she was recognized by the Northern Kentucky Bar Association as the “Distinguished Lawyer of the Year.”

She earned a Juris Doctor from Northern Kentucky Salmon P. Chase College of Law and a Bachelor’s degree from Morehead State University. Judge Cetrulo and her husband, Bob, are the parents of a daughter and two sons and have three grandchildren.

Judge Sally A. McLaughlin, Dearborn County Superior Court



Judge Sally A. McLaughlin was appointed by Governor Mitch Daniels to serve as the first Judge of Superior Court II in 2006 and is now in her second elected term. Prior to her appointment, she served as Prosecuting Attorney for the Seventh Judicial Circuit.

Judge McLaughlin grew up in Dearborn County graduating from St. Lawrence School and Lawrenceburg High School. She earned an Associate of Arts and Bachelor of Science Degree from Eastern Kentucky University; and completed work towards a Master of Science Degree in Nursing at the University of Cincinnati. She earned her Law Degree at Salmon P. Chase College of Law in 1990 while serving as the Director of Nursing at Dearborn County Hospital. She has also worked as a staff nurse at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky and as a manager of patient services at Children’s Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Judge McLaughlin is a graduate of the Indiana Graduate Program for Judges and the Indiana Judicial College. She was recognized by the Dearborn County Chamber of Commerce as a Woman of Distinction in 2006 and received a Martin Luther King Memorial Award in 2011 for community service.

Judge McLaughlin sponsors an annual Leadership in Law Program for high school students and summer internships for law students. She welcomes opportunities to participate in programs in our community and at our local schools.

Judge Jennifer Muench-McElfresh, Butler County Court of Common Pleas

Judge Jennifer McElfresh was appointed to the Butler County Common Pleas Court in October of 2013. She was elected to her first full term in 2014. Judge McElfresh handles criminal felony and civil cases. In addition to her regular docket, Judge McElfresh presides over the Felony Non-Support Court. The Felony Non-Support Court is a specialized docket which strives to enhance the public safety by preventing recidivism while assisting felony non-support offenders in taking responsibility for their behavioral issues and in paying their court ordered child support. In 2016, Judge McElfresh was elected by her fellow judges to serve as Administrative Judge, a role which she held for more than two years. As Administrative Judge, Judge McElfresh was responsible for submitting the Court’s budget, managing the Court’s personnel, and developing the Court’s policies.

Judge McElfresh holds both a Bachelor of the Arts and Juris Doctor from the University of Cincinnati. Prior to taking the bench, she served as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney with the Butler County Prosecutor’s Office for fifteen years. In addition to representing county agencies as an Assistant Prosecutor, Judge McElfresh prosecuted juvenile delinquency cases as well as adult misdemeanor and felony cases. For thirteen years, Judge McElfresh prosecuted child homicide, physical abuse, and sexual abuse cases. In 2011, she became the Division Chief of the



Child Assault Division of the Butler County Prosecutor's Office. Judge McElfresh received a Meritorious Service Award from the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association in 2012.

Judge McElfresh is a member of the Ohio Justice Alliance for Community Corrections, the Ohio Common Pleas Judges Association, the Butler County Bar Association, and Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #38. She serves on the Ohio Judicial Conference's Public Confidence and Community Outreach Committee, Criminal Law and Procedure Committee, and Judicial Ethics, Professionalism, and Diversity Committee as well as the Butler County Criminal Justice Advisory Board and the Butler County Bar Association's Criminal Law Committee, Bar Applications Committee, Bar Foundation Committee, Continuing Legal Education Committee, and Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee. She is the Chairperson of the Butler County Bar Association's Notary Committee and serves on the Ohio Notary Advisory Board.

In 2019, Judge McElfresh was appointed by Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O' Connor to the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission. As a member of the Commission, Judge McElfresh serves on the House Bill 1 Implementation Workgroup. The Workgroup is charged with studying the impact of this new legislation and reporting its findings to the Governor.

Judge McElfresh resides with her family in Fairfield, Ohio. She has previously served on the Fairfield Planning Commission, Fairfield Parks and Recreation Board, and Fairfield Civil Service Commission. She is an active member of Sacred Heart Church and currently serves on the Miami Valley Health Services Board and the Bunker Hill Haven for Boys Board. She is a member of the Lindenwald Kiwanis of Hamilton/Fairfield and a regular volunteer at the Animal Adoption Foundation.

Friday, April 26

7:00 - 7:30 am Friday Morning Mindfulness

We invite you to start your day mindfully by joining Claire Parsons as she leads the group with mindfulness practices, breathing exercises and gentle movement.

Led by **Claire Parsons, Esq., Of Counsel**
Bricker Graydon



Claire E. Parsons, a seasoned attorney with 15 years of experience, specializes in litigation across Kentucky and Ohio. Her practice includes school law, administrative law, municipal law, and employment law. As a former president of the Kentucky Defense Counsel, Claire is dedicated to mentoring and promoting employee well-being. She served on the 2022 WIL Planning Committee.

8:00 - 8:45 am Changing the Paradigm: Practical Tips for Creating a Supportive Work Environment

This session will explore the impact law firm policies and culture can have on both lawyer well-being and ethical obligations, including competence (1.1), diligence (1.3), communication (1.4), and supervision (5.1-5.3). Exploration of recent studies—including the [ABA Commission on Women in the Profession’s *Legal Careers of Parents and Child Caregivers*](#) and the [McKinsey & Company 2023 Women in the Workplace](#)—will provide a foundation for discussing policies that are data-supported. Attendees will receive practical tips for how to effectuate change, including how to craft policies that support lawyers’ well-being (and the bottom line).

Emily N. Litzinger, Esq., Partner
Fisher & Phillips, LLP



Emily N. Litzinger is a partner in the national labor and employment law firm Fisher Phillips and practices out of the Louisville office. Emily is a trusted adviser and experienced litigator who counsels and defends employers through the intricacies of labor and employment law and works with her clients to develop preventative strategies to ensure compliance and avoid costly litigation. As a mother of three energetic young daughters, Emily is passionate about the advancement of women in both the legal profession and the workplace.

Courtney Risk, Esq.
Education & Engagement Specialist
Lawyers Mutual of Kentucky



Courtney describes her role at Lawyers Mutual as a unicorn, where she gets to combine her skills in relationship building, risk management education, litigation, and organizational collaboration. She joined the Lawyers Mutual team after beginning her career handling litigation—both criminal and civil—as well as transactional work. Courtney has spoken across Kentucky and nationally about the connection between burnout, trauma, well-being, and lawyer liability. She attended Northern Kentucky University Salmon P. Chase College of Law and currently serves as the Mentorship Chair for the Fayette County Bar Association Women’s Law Association and as a member of the Women Leaders in Insurance Board.

8:45 - 10:15 am A Perspective from Inside Counsel: Navigating Challenges in the Ever-Changing Legal Environment

Moderator: Kayla Goodfellow, Esq.

Staff Counsel, Cincinnati Insurance Company

Kayla Goodfellow is staff counsel at the Law Office of the Cincinnati Insurance Company where she defends a broad range of civil litigation from inception through appeal. She received her B.A. from Coe College in 2005 and her J.D. from IU McKinney School of Law in 2008. Kayla is currently on the board of NeighborLink Indianapolis, which provides seniors with free home repairs so they may age in place safely.

Anita L. Koesters, Esq.

JD, CPCU, AIC-M, ASLI, The Cincinnati Insurance Company



Anita Koesters, JD, CPCU, co-leads the Express Claims Center for The Cincinnati Insurance Companies. In this role, she trains and develops a team of new claims associates, creating a foundation for successful insurance careers. She's also responsible for reviewing specific state rulings and regulations to keep the ECC operating within licensing and state requirements. Prior to joining the insurance industry, Anita practiced civil litigation in Ohio for several years. In her insurance career that started before joining Cincinnati, she applied her legal knowledge to work with counsel in various jurisdictions involving complex, litigated and coverage matters.

Kerrie Kitts, Esq.

JD, Manager-Major Case, Hanover Insurance Group



Kerrie's legal career began at the law firm of Patterson, Phifer and Phillips in Detroit, Michigan. It was there she found her love of insurance that has carried her career to this day.

She currently leads a team of national and regional adjusters providing technical guidance on the Programs and Excess & Surplus Claims book at The Hanover Insurance Group. Prior to joining The Hanover, Kerrie was an AVP with Cincinnati Insurance, a Regional Manager for Liberty Mutual, spent 12 years with Farmers Insurance in a variety of leadership roles that included National Coverage Manager, Claims Counsel Manager and Southeast

Technical Consultant. Kerrie also spent 10 years with Nationwide Insurance in a variety of leadership positions.

Kerrie earned both her Bachelor's and Juris Doctorate from The Michigan State University – Go Spartans!

Jill K. Mercer, Esq., *Managing Counsel, Contingent Litigation, Nationwide Corporate Operations and Litigation Legal Team*

Jill Mercer is a Managing Counsel in the Contingent Litigation Unit of the Corporate Operations and Litigation Legal Team. She and her team specialize in managing bad faith litigation against the company throughout the country. This includes not only driving the litigation from start to finish to ensure the strongest defense is mounted, but also advising leadership on important trends in litigation and high exposures to the company. Jill has 20 years of litigation experience, which includes multiple jury trials and appellate arguments.

Jill graduated from The Ohio State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Spanish, and received her Juris Doctorate from Capital University in Columbus, Ohio. She is also a Past-President of the Ohio Association of Civil Trial Attorneys, and very active in the civil defense bar.

10:30 am - Noon 2024's Best Legal Tech Tips, Tricks, Services & Websites

Learn about the best legal technology, practice management, electronics, services and incredibly useful websites for lawyers. This rapid-fire presentation is full of great ideas you can immediately incorporate into your practice. We'll also cover important tips for Word, Outlook, Acrobat, improving your web-meeting game, digital signature platforms, cybersecurity tips and services, home office equipment recommendations, and many other practice management tips, tricks and technologies.

Barron K. Henley, Esq. Owner, Affinity Consulting



Barron's role at Affinity involves automating complex documents with HotDocs and Contract Express. He also teaches continuing legal education classes on technology, ethics and practice management; is a primary software trainer for Affinity; and conducts technology audits. Barron practiced law from 1993 to 1997, then began offering technology services to lawyers in 1997. He is a founding partner of Affinity Consulting Group.

Barron's superpower is his ability to automate extremely complex documents. Teaching continuing legal education classes in front of a live audience is his favorite part of his job.
