

FEBRUARY 2024
ACC Litigation Network Monthly Newsletter

Message from the Network Chair – Rich Coel, Litigation Lead – Americas, Hitachi Rail STS



If you have ideas about how to increase member engagement for our network, I would love to hear from you! Whether you have current events/programming ideas, or even tips for how the Litigation Network should use LinkedIn, please do not hesitate to email myself or anyone else on the leadership team.

A special thank you to Jennifer Denny and Abby Adams for leading the Litigation Network's efforts in submitting ACC Annual Meeting topic proposals to the ACC. Fingers crossed that our Network's ideas will get selected, and that we can work with (yet-to-be-solicited) volunteers to turn those presentation ideas into a reality.

Upcoming Events

February 27, 2024 Legal Update – Nuisance-Value Lawsuits – [Register HERE!](#)
March 26, 2024 Legal Update – Topic TBD

Have an idea or request for a legal update topic? Email the program chairs at: Abby Adams at aadams@bbbnp.org or David Bock at David.bock@vca.com.

Spotlight on Cozen O'Connor – Mariah L. Passarelli -- mpassarelli@cozen.com

Mariah focuses her practice on a variety of labor and employment and higher education law matters, from employment contracts to complex litigation. Mariah handles matters in administrative proceedings, state, and federal courts. She has represented employers in claims under Title IX, Title VII, 42 U.S.C. § 1981, PHRA, ADA, ADEA, FMLA, FLSA, NLRA, FCRA, and OSHA, and she has defended universities, hospitals, and oil and gas companies in state-wide class and collective actions. Mariah also counsels companies and education institutions on litigation avoidance, anti-discrimination, and anti-bullying and she reviews and drafts employee handbooks, student handbooks, and personnel policies.



Her experience related to higher education extends to both public and private colleges and universities. During the course of her practice, Mariah has represented universities in employment litigation where claimants raised claims of employment discrimination/harassment under both Title IX and Title VII. Her case work also includes representation of a university in federal litigation involving claims of sexual abuse brought by a student related to conduct by a professor. In the area of Title IX and sexual violence complaints, Mariah has conducted third-party investigations from inception to hearing.

Prior to entering private practice, Mariah served as deputy attorney general in the Civil Litigation Section of the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office. During that time, she represented the members of the State System of Higher Education located in the Western District of Pennsylvania in all aspects of employment law defense for more than four years. This work involved the full panoply of employment law claims – age discrimination, race discrimination, disability discrimination, sexual harassment, etc. – including obtaining a successful defense verdict, as solo counsel, in a trial defending a university in an age and disability discrimination case. During her tenure in the Attorney General's Office, Mariah also handled more than 175 federal and state court cases on behalf of commonwealth agencies in employment law and constitutional civil rights matters involving Title VII, Title IX, ADA, Rehab Act, ADEA, PHRA, federal and state Whistle Blower acts and § 1983. She obtained defense verdicts as single-chair trial counsel in multiple federal and state jury and bench trials and acted as co-counsel in complex Title IX litigation.

Litigation Member Spotlight – S. Michael Lee – smichael.lee@engaging.ai

S. Michael Lee loves reading science fiction, taking his dog Milo on walks, and watching Korean Dramas on the weekends. Now at his third start up, he is building out the backroom and legal functions as COO and CLO of Engaging.ai. Engaging is a Generative AI company that builds interactive user experiences as well as licenses its code-free user experience engine. Projects that took weeks to months can now be done in days to weeks. Text becomes speech and video in moments.

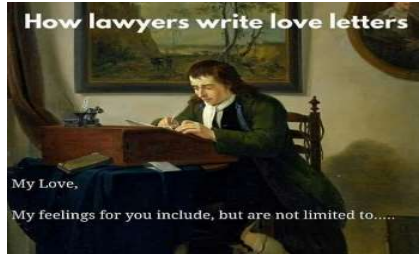


Prior to working in house, Michael was a litigation attorney at an AmLaw 200 firm, and prior to that he was a prosecutor. He has extensive litigation, compliance, and investigation experience. This includes conducting 44 jury trials to verdict. In the government, he conducted regulatory and compliance enforcement and prosecuted white collar crimes. He conducted enforcement of FTC and TCPA rules, California's unfair competition laws, and California Air Resources Board investigations. He also investigated and prosecuted embezzlement and tax evasion cases.

Michael firmly believes that life really is a box of chocolates.

Do you have a recommendation for a litigation network member who should be given the spotlight in our newsletter? Send an email to jennifer.denny@cardinalfinancial.com with your suggestion (self-nominations welcome!).

Litigation Laughs



“An Open Letter to My Career as a Litigation Attorney: How do I love thee? Let me count the ways...”

For the month of love, tell us what you love about being an in-house litigation attorney!

Join in the conversation on our Discussion Board.

2024 ACC Litigation Network Leadership		
Chair	Rich Coel Litigation Leads - Americas Hitachi Rail STS (412) 266-9389 Richard.Coel@hitachirail.com	
Vice-Chair	Ivan Hannel General /Counsel Zoe Holding Company (602) 710-7573 ihannel@zoeholdingco.com	
Program Chairs	Abby Adams Assistant General Counsel BBB National Programs (703) 247-9355 aadams@bbbnp.org	David K. Bock Corporate Counsel VCA Inc. (619)876-2299 David.bock@vca.com
Annual Meeting Chairs	Abby Adams Assistant General Counsel BBB National Programs (703) 247-9355 aadams@bbbnp.org	Jennifer Denny Senior Litigation Counsel Cardinal Financial Company, LP (636) 565-0716 jennifer.denny@cardinalfinancial.com
Membership Chairs	Jennifer Denny Senior Litigation Counsel Cardinal Financial Company, LP (636) 565-0716 jennifer.denny@cardinalfinancial.com	Shane Mulrooney Co-Founder & General Counsel New Era ADR shane@neweraadr.com
Special Projects	S. Michael Lee COO & CLO Engaging.ai Smichael.lee@engaging.ai	
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