

NEWSLETTER



Ivan Hannel
General Counsel
Zoe Holding Company

Message From the Network Chair

When AI Is Safer than Our Brethren

Like many lawyers, I'm fascinated by the future—particularly how artificial intelligence intersects with the legal profession. My interest in AI began in 2008 when I read *On Intelligence* by Jeff Hawkins, the creator of the Palm Pilot's software. If you remember those days, a handheld device that could (barely) read your terrible handwriting felt like magic.

I tried explaining the book to my best friend after an exhausting cross-country move in a van so he could pursue his dream of earning a Master of Fine Arts in literature with his young family in tow. That move proved providential—he recently received an advance for his novel and submitted his first draft to an editor and I’m very proud of him. Recalling back to that hectic day, after a few post-move libations, we had our most heated argument ever: my prediction of an AI-driven “robo-apocalypse” versus his skepticism that AI would amount to anything. The future I envisioned hasn’t quite arrived—yet. Over time, he’s come closer to my perspective, but rather than feeling vindicated, I wish he were right, and I were wrong.

AI is now the dominant conversation in law and most professions. There’s a steep learning curve, and lawyers, by nature, relish mastering complex subjects. Questions abound: How does AI impact employment decisions, copyright concerns, and privacy? Can we use AI to assess systemic risks or refine legal strategies? How do we mitigate AI hallucinations? Will we eventually entrust court decisions and advocacy to AI judges and lawyers? The proverb “May you live in interesting times” feels apt, as our CLE schedules fill with AI-related sessions.

But I worry. While we focus on how AI affects our professional lives, we may be missing a deeper societal shift. Instead of merely asking, “How will AI change us?” perhaps we should start with a more fundamental question: “What is law for?” Do established legal frameworks and rule sets still make sense when society itself seems fractured over basic facts, the value of long-standing civil formalities, and the nature of decision-making?

This divide isn’t just a fringe movement challenging a broad societal consensus. Instead, it feels like an almost even split, largely along political lines. And yet, at the far ends of each ideological pole, we see an odd “U-shaped” effect—where extreme positions, despite their different conclusions, often mirror each other in mindset and approach.

Many professional legal organizations deliberately avoid politics, allowing us to engage narrowly within our field. The implicit hope seems to be that by steering clear of partisan topics, we can maintain the profession's perceived neutrality—and with it, what little remains of our esteem as trusted arbiters of society's conflicts.

Yet, while politics is largely taboo in legal circles, we often forget that armed conflict—specifically the American Revolution—gave us the very legal system we now uphold. That revolution wasn't televised, but it was paid for in blood. And to paraphrase a saying about war: you may not be interested in politics, but politics is interested in you.

Perhaps it's time to step beyond the relative safety of strictly professional legal topics and engage in more serious discussions about politics itself. Law is not separate from politics; it is an emanation of politics—its outcome.

On a legal message board I frequent with hundreds of lawyers, political debate is explicitly discouraged, and for understandable reasons—such discussions quickly become heated and intractable. But if even we, as lawyers, cannot engage in civil debate about the pressing political issues of our time, what does that say about the state of public discourse? That should concern us.

It's worth remembering that Alexander Hamilton, John Marshall, Aaron Burr, James Monroe, and William Paterson were not only lawyers but also served in the Continental Army. How do I know? I used AI, of course

- Ivan

**March 25, 2025 - March Legal Update:
Let the Madness Begin: Sports Betting in
the Workplace – [REGISTER HERE](#)**

**April 16, 2025 - Co-Sponsored with Law
Department Management Network:
RIP Chevron – Leveraging Loper Bright and
Corner Post for your Industry/Company and
your Litigation Strategy – [REGISTER HERE](#)**

**April 17, 2025 - Co-Sponsored with Real
Estate Network: The Hot Seat – Ethical
Issues GCs Face – [REGISTER HERE](#)**

**April 22, 2025 - April Legal Update: Title
TBD – Bring Your Own Device Issues in the
Workplace**



Upcoming Events

Have an idea or request for a legal update topic? Email the program chair at:
Julianna Hanlon at jihanlon@mgb.org.

Have you ever considered joining our committee? The Litigation Network committee is **currently recruiting for several open co-chair roles**. If you have any questions about available roles, time commitments, etc., please reach out to shane@neweraadr.com with your interests and questions!



Cozen Spotlight

Silvia Chicas
***Associate, Labor &
Employment
Department***
schicas@cozen.com

Silvia concentrates her practice on labor and employment. She defends employers against lawsuits in state and federal court, including disputes involving Title VII, Texas Commission of Human Rights, and other ADEA, race, age, and disability discrimination claims; state and federal trade secrets cases; and noncompete and restrictive covenant disputes. Silvia has experience handling employment litigation throughout a case's lifecycle. She drafts motions for summary judgment and motions to dismiss, sends discovery, prepares and answers discovery dispute motions, confers with opposing counsel, takes plaintiff depositions, and defends witness depositions.

She has also participated in settlement discussions and mediations. Silvia represents employers in diverse industries, including grocery, financial services, retail, transportation, health care, hospitality, and energy. Silvia partners with clients to train their staff and management on a variety of employment law topics to ensure their compliance with state and federal requirements. She recently completed a series of anti-harassment trainings, which she presented in both English and Spanish.



**Cozen
Spotlight**

***Kelly Kindig
Member, Labor &
Employment
Department,
kkindig@cozen.com***

Kelly represents public and private employers in a broad range of employment-related disputes, including cases involving discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. She regularly represents employers in collective bargaining negotiations and grievance and interest arbitrations and in proceedings before federal and state agencies, including the National Labor Relations Board, Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

She also works closely with clients to ensure they remain in compliance with various employment and labor laws, including the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), the Labor Management Relations Act (LMRA), and Title VII. She advises clients on hiring, firing, and disciplinary practices, as well as restrictive covenant matters; and has experience with collective action litigation under the FLSA and Age Discrimination Employment Act (ADEA)—primarily defending employers in employment litigation, including disputes involving race, sex, and age discrimination, and sexual harassment.

Jon is General Counsel at Coffman Specialties, Inc. in San Diego, California. Coffman Specialties is a heavy civil engineering contractor. Primarily, Coffman Specialties does concrete and asphalt paving for freeways and airports.

Jon is a native of Southern California, originally from Orange County. He graduated from San Francisco State University with a B.S. in Biology and promptly married his high school sweetheart. From there, Jon experimented with a career in biotech for a couple of years, before realizing that he really needed a graduate degree to achieve the career he was looking for.

Jon did not find a graduate degree in biology inspiring and quickly settled on law school. Jon attended U.C. College of the Law, San Francisco (formerly U.C. Hastings). After graduating, Jon spent most of his career at small, boutique environmental law firms, litigating complex, multiparty cases in state and federal courts.

During this time, Jon moved with his family back to Southern California. Eventually, the family settled in North San Diego County, where he and his wife managed to raise their three children. Two of those are already off to college.

Feeling like it was time for a new direction, Jon took a job as general counsel for a small federal construction contractor. He enjoyed both the new role and the challenge of learning construction law. He has worked in that space ever since.

In what little free time he has, Jon is an avid hiker and enjoys travelling with his wife and family. He is lover of fine food and wine, perhaps to his detriment. He enjoys playing chess, sometimes competitively but so far not very successfully. Jon likes to do what he can from a public service perspective, having served on local commissions and on the board of directors for non-profit organizations. He is a voracious reader of news and history.



Litigation Network Member Spotlight

Jon Lycett
General Counsel at
Coffman Specialties, Inc.

Would you like to be featured in an upcoming Litigation Newsletter? We would love to hear from you! This is a great opportunity to feature your role, your company, or your #morethanalawyer achievements!

Have you ever considered joining our committee? The Litigation Network committee is always open to potential new members for upcoming years. If you have any questions about available roles, time commitments, etc., please reach out to shane@neweraadr.com with your interests and questions!

When I get asked to join a conference call that I'm just going to sit silently on with my camera off:



Litigation Laughs

Who do you have winning March Madness?

Do you have any specific policy for in-office bracket competitions?

[Let's hear from you in the Litigation Discussion Forum!](#)

Reading court judgments be like





Leadership Team

2025 ACC Litigation Network Leadership

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