

# NEWSLETTER



***Ivan Hannel***  
***General Counsel***  
***Zoe Holding Company***

## **Message From the Network Chair**

Just “be professional.” That’s advice we often hear and sometimes give. I’m not even sure it’s good advice, but if it is, it surely doesn’t feel satisfying when dealing with difficult clients, corporate and otherwise.

For instance, over the past week, I had two conversations with fellow attorneys that captured the sometimes maddening reality of client relationships. One attorney was representing a large national building supply company. He was frustrated because his point of contact at the company wouldn’t respond to requests for documents—documents essential to maintaining jurisdiction in a particular state.

Another attorney shared a different kind of experience: late on a Friday evening, his corporate client, the defendant, called and unexpectedly put someone on the phone who had nothing to do with the case, asking about legal strategy.

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That person's questions ranged from procedural rules—like why discovery varies depending on the amount in controversy—to grievances about how terrible the plaintiff was to the point he was speaking over the attorney and had to be warned to stop. It was an invasion of that attorney's final hours to conclude a long work week that bothered him, along with the irrelevancy of colloquy he was forced to endure.

Meanwhile, I had just given some strategic media advice to a new pro bono client—someone who's been struggling for over two decades to bring attention to his set of claims. He often ignores my gentle advice and repeatedly begins our conversations with "You're probably not going to like this but...." He seems completely unaware of the definition of insanity often attributed to Einstein: doing the same thing repeatedly—literally two decades—and expecting a different result. Though I wanted to say exactly that, I held back. Instead, I simply asked, "If your plan doesn't work, what's your next step?" Segue, to be honest, one of my favorite lines to deploy with obstinate clients and their belabored plans is from the TV series 30 Rock: "Oh, no, I hear you. I was just making sure that you hear you."

Each of these situations illustrates our need to refrain ourselves at times—biting our tongues, practicing patience, and trying to "be professional." As attorneys, we have an obligation to be truthful with our clients, and ideally to do so in a way that doesn't provoke unnecessary defensiveness or emotional backlash. But the reality is, clients often do respond emotionally—or worse, not at all. And in those moments, the well-worn advice we give and tell ourselves to just "be professional" can feel deeply unsatisfying, especially when we're not being treated like professionals in return. Professionalism, after all, should be a two-way street. Around the same time, someone fortunately sent me a video about stoicism, which I know only a bit about and sort of threw it into the philosophical pile of "things that make sense in theory but hard to do in practice." Typically, it featured the Epictetus quote: "Men are disturbed not by things, but by the views which they take of them." Putting it in plainer language, it just reminded me that while we cannot control our clients—or their situations—we can control our response by reminding myself that we didn't cause their entanglements, and we can't always fix them.

As attorneys, we're not alchemists who can spin every problematic fact into a golden thread. When I tell myself to "be professional," what I'm mostly really doing is preparing to document the interaction—CYA mode. That may be necessary, but it's not emotionally nourishing. What is helpful, at least for me, is to remember this: it's the client's journey. I'm just a skilled deckhand who came aboard mid-voyage—often when the ship is already taking on water. We're often pulled into problems we didn't create. And even if we could fully control our clients and lead them to the outcome we believe is best, doing so would mean substituting our will for theirs. That might be effective—but is it right? Probably not. Even if the outcome is objectively better, overriding their agency doesn't seem morally defensible. Ultimately, the practice of law is an exercise in compromise with other human beings at bad times in their lives. We're here at the client's request, helping to tell their story—not ours—in a way that aligns with their sense of what matters. That's why, when I hang up the phone late on a Friday night after one of these calls, I try to laugh a little and say to myself, "Welp, Jim's gonna Jim. Whatcha gonna do?" CYA: "Jim" is not "Jim." There's my professionalism for you.

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July 23, 2025 -  
Co-Sponsored with Law Department  
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**Upcoming Events**

*Have an idea or request for a legal update topic? Email the program chair at: Julianna Hanlon at [jihanlon@mgb.org](mailto: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](mailto:shane@neweraadr.com) with your interests and questions!*

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## CALL FOR WEBINAR SPEAKERS

In conjunction with our network sponsor – Cozen O'Connor – the Litigation Network is looking to form a 3-Part webinar series geared toward providing non-litigators with the basics of what to expect at each stage of litigation. The first part (hopefully to be scheduled in August) will focus on pre-Litigation, service, litigation holds, hiring outside counsel, forum selection, answer/demurrer/motion to dismiss decisions and scheduling orders. The second webinar (shooting for September 2025) will discuss written discovery, privilege logs, e-discovery, depositions (both taking and prepping your client), motion practice and designation expert witnesses. The final webinar (early October) will focus on putting the case together, preparing for dispositive motions, completing mediation and settlement postures, trial preparation and post-trial issues. Any individual interested in presenting in either one or all of the sessions in this series as a speaker should reach out to Max Colby at [m.colby@acc.com](mailto:m.colby@acc.com).



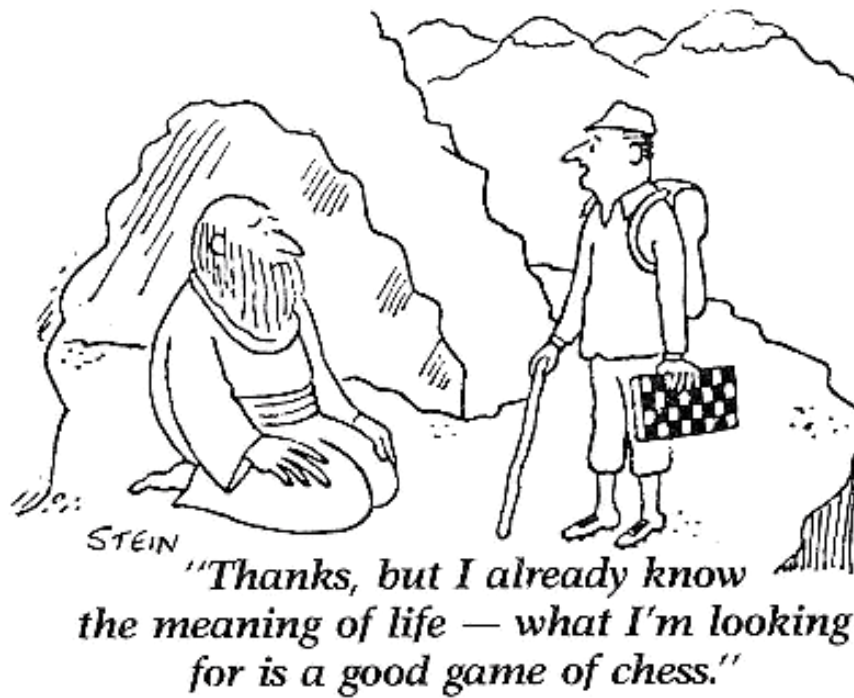
## **Cozen Spotlight**

**Chris Hennessy**  
**Member**  
**Commercial Litigation**  
**[chennessy@cozen.com](mailto:chennessy@cozen.com)**

Chris focuses his practice on litigation and represents businesses across numerous industries. Chris's creative, bold, and proactive approach helps his clients stay out of the courtroom, when possible, but prepares them for the successful prosecution of their rights or defense of their conduct should litigation become necessary. He also assists his clients with risk management and conflict avoidance and works with them to understand their businesses from the inside out. This allows him to assist those businesses throughout the gamut of their operations, including drafting and negotiating contracts, employment, and non-disclosure agreements; developing written policies concerning biometric information; assessing insurance and risk management needs; and developing litigation strategies.

Chris's litigation and trial experience enable him to protect the rights of his clients through verdict and also informs his counseling strategies.

The wide range of Chris's experience is evident from the variety of industries in which he has represented clients. He has represented multiple defendants — both employers and timekeeping technology companies — against alleged violations of the Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act (BIPA) and the Genetic Information Privacy Act (GIPA). He has extensive experience defending timekeeping technology clients and employers in BIPA class actions and employers and businesses in GIPA class actions. He has also helped clients with ERISA claims brought by union pension and welfare funds alleging improper or insufficient contributions under multi-employer plans and defended employers from wage grievances brought pursuant to collective bargaining agreements. Chris has significant and varied experience in more traditional litigation involving personal injury and property damage claims, handling those cases from case inception through verdict. He has experience in defending product liability claims that result in both property damage and personal injury, including product failure cases in the plumbing industry and personal injury cases arising out of claims against retailers and manufacturers of dietary supplements.



### **Calling all Chess Players (and Chess Player Wannabes)**

Without further ado, let's get this pony (rook?) moving! Below please find the instructions for joining our online ACC Litigation Network Chess group on the Chess.com app, then look for an additional email once enough members have joined.

1. Download the free Chess.com app on your phone, if you don't already have it. It looks like this: 2. 3.4.
2. Create an account.
3. Under the "Connect" section, look for the "Clubs" and search for "ACC Litigation Network" Club.
4. Request to join the club. Give me and Max some time to get everyone admitted to the group. If you don't get accepted within 3 days, send an email to me at [Jennifer.denny@cardinalfinancial.com](mailto:Jennifer.denny@cardinalfinancial.com) and I will make sure we can see your request.
5. Feel free to ask members to play games and reach out and start/or a conversation in the forum.

We are hoping to have our first tournament around August 15, 2025. The goal is to have a beginner, intermediate and expert level so everyone has a good time and a challenging (but not too challenging match). If you have organized something like this in the past on this platform, feel free to reach out to me and give me pointers, this is my first time setting something like this up, so I appreciate any insight and your patience while we work through any issues. Check us out and find some new mates!



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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](mailto:shane@neweraadr.com) with your interests and questions!

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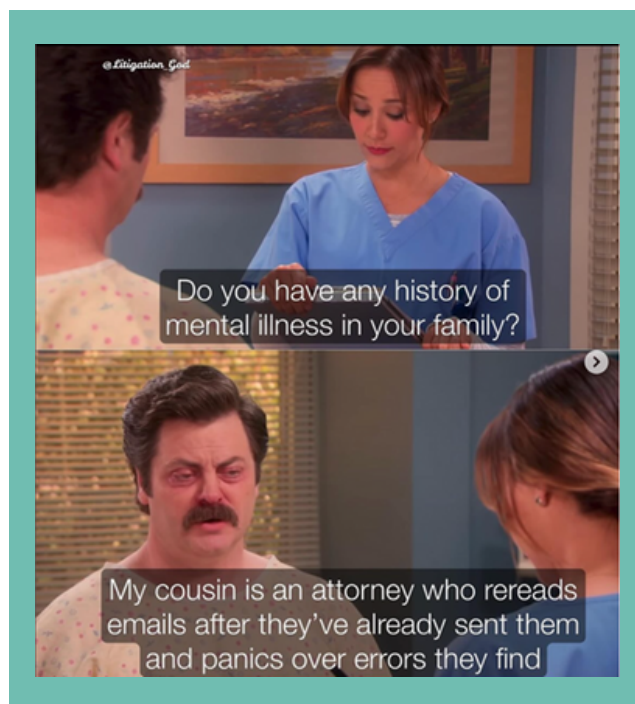


## **Litigation Laughs**

Encountering any nuanced procedural or case law issues?

Need any general guidance on navigating new legislation or regulations?

**Let's hear from you in the Litigation Discussion Forum!**





## Leadership Team

### 2025 ACC Litigation Network Leadership

#### Chair

Ivan Hannel  
General /Counsel  
Zoe Holding Company  
(602) 710-7573  
[ihannel@zoeholdingco.com](mailto:ihannel@zoeholdingco.com)

#### Vice-Chair

Jennifer Denny  
Senior Litigation Counsel  
Cardinal Financial Company, LP  
(636) 565-0716  
[jennifer.denny@cardinalfinancial.com](mailto:jennifer.denny@cardinalfinancial.com)

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Julianna Hanlon  
Legal Counsel  
Mass General Brigham  
[jihanlon@mgb.org](mailto:jihanlon@mgb.org)

#### Annual Meeting Chairs

Abby Adams  
VP, General Counsel  
National Association of Home Builders  
(212) 266-8345  
[aadams@nahb.org](mailto:aadams@nahb.org)

#### Membership Chairs

Shane Mulrooney  
Co-Founder & General Counsel  
New Era ADR  
(630) 853-8536  
[shane@neweraadr.com](mailto:shane@neweraadr.com)

#### Brian Murren

Assistant General Counsel  
Pennsylvania Automotive Association  
(717) 255-8311  
[bmurren@paa.org](mailto:bmurren@paa.org)

### Where to find the ACC Litigation Network:

LinkedIn: [Click Here](#)

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Website: [Click Here](#)