

Secretary/Treasurer Candidate – Marisa Trasatti

It is with great enthusiasm and a deep sense of commitment that I submit my candidacy statement for the position of Secretary/Treasurer of the Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel (FDCC). My journey with the FDCC has been transformative, shaping me into a better lawyer, leader, and individual. Now, I am eager to give back, not only in the form of serving as an officer to this exceptional organization that has given so much to me personally and professionally, but also to the next generation of FDCC members and leaders.

A Journey of Growth and Leadership

My FDCC story began in 2008 in Kauai, where I attended my first meeting alongside my mentor, Bob Scott. Since then, the FDCC has become my professional home, offering unparalleled opportunities for growth, education, leadership, and lasting friendships. Through active participation in various roles, including as a director and senior director on the Board, leading the FDCC DDB, membership recruitment, and sponsorship committees, serving as program chair of an Annual Meeting, convention chair of an Annual Meeting, and CCS Chair for several years— and all the leadership, writing, and recruiting opportunities in between— I have witnessed firsthand the power of our organization's commitment to excellence and inclusivity.

Vision for the Future

As Secretary/Treasurer, I pledge to:

- Uphold and strengthen the core principles that have made FDCC a beacon in the legal community
- Foster a balance between meritocracy and inclusion, ensuring our growth is both strategic and diverse
- Execute the FDCC strategic plan with precision and innovation
- Create abundant opportunities for members to forge meaningful relationships, showcase their expertise, and realize tangible returns on their membership investment

Proven Leadership and Fiscal Responsibility

My leadership experience spans local, state, and national organizations, providing me with a unique perspective on organizational management and fiscal stewardship. Key roles include:

- President of Maryland Defense Counsel (MDC)
- Treasurer of the Maryland State Bar Association (18,000 members)
- President-Elect of Maryland State Bar Association
- President of Maryland State Bar Association starting June 2025
- Delegate to the American Bar Association House of Delegates
- Member of the Maryland Judicial Disabilities Committee appointed by the Governor
- Member of the Maryland State Bar Character Committee
- Co- Regional Director of CLM for Region 3 (MD, NJ, VA, DC)

When I became President of the MDC, I inherited an association that was \$20,000 in debt, we had hemorrhaged membership and were no longer the counterweight to the Maryland Trial Lawyers Association. The MDC had become irrelevant. My goal was to enhance our presence both in the legal community and in Annapolis (where are Legislature sits) as well as leaving the association with a surplus. I was able to achieve all of these objectives. We knew to increase our membership we had to show value in our membership. To do this we instituted a number of new programs:

- (1) We started a monthly "lunch and learn" program that rotated among the various defense firms in Baltimore. We offered lunch and a speaker(s) on a timely topic that was complimentary to our membership. Members of the defense bar, judiciary, and some of our legislators volunteered their time in preparing and putting on the programs and we were successful in having a sponsor(s) underwrite the cost of the program so that the attendee fee went directly into the MDC treasury.
- (2) We started the first MDC Trial Academy Deposition Boot Camp, a two-day hands-on, intensive program that helped to educate the young lawyer on deposition defending and taking. MDC past presidents volunteered their time to teach, educate, and show through example how to take and defend depositions, how to prepare and conduct direct examinations and cross examinations including the cross examination of the plaintiff, a medical doctor and economist, how to use demonstrative aids and exhibits in depositions, etc. The programming involved classroom discussions, faculty demonstrations, and critiqued student

demonstrations. The program sold out within 24 hours and was a tremendous financial success for the MDC.

(3) We updated our quarterly publication, The Defense Line, to digitize and send electronically and to include more timely topics, as well as highlighting recent defense verdicts.

(4) We took a more active role in Annapolis where we provided members to speak for and against various legislation affecting the defense bar and also participated in more amicus briefs. This was welcomed by our legislators as up to that time most of what they heard was from the Plaintiff's bar.

(5) Finally, we expanded our annual meeting where the new officers were inducted by recognizing members of the defense bar who had an impact on the civil justice system during the previous year and instituted for the first time a "John H. Mudd Lifetime Achievement Award" to honor a member(s) of the Defense Bar who had made a significant impact to the defense bar over their lifetime. All of these initiatives reinvigorated the MDC, and we saw at the end of my tenure a 15% increase in membership plus a \$20,000 budget surplus.

As MDC President, I urged our members to take a more active role in the Maryland State Bar Association and other organizations that would give greater visibility to the defense bar and would allow us to help shape initiatives that would benefit our members. I also focused on inclusion during my MDC officer years and elevating diverse members to both the Executive Committee and various committees, some of whom have already matriculated through the officer ranks to MDC President. We must lift while we rise.

After my MDC Presidency ended, I became active in the MSBA to show by example how members of the defense bar could help change the culture from a pro plaintiff to, at a minimum, a neutral bar association. As Treasurer for the Maryland State Bar, I honed my skills in financial oversight, budgets, expensing of programs, and reporting for large-scale organizations. This year has been particularly important for MSBA because through some cost cutting measures, we are presenting a balanced budget for 2025/2026, following the prior year that closed with a deficit.

In June, I became the first corporate counsel member and defense attorney to be President of the MSBA in more than two (2) decades. We will also be conducting a strategic planning session under my leadership as the current plan was last visited five (5) years ago. Maryland, until recently, did not have CLE. Starting next year CLE will

likely be mandatory, and I will be overseeing the planning and implementation of a number of new initiatives that will educate our members, drawing upon my experience in planning and putting on programs for the FDCC. I have also reached out to Sean Griffin and Frank Ramos regarding their AI and Tech background to serve on a MSBA committee and to present, respectively.

As the CLM Maryland Chapter President, a position that I served in while I was simultaneously President of MDC, we grew the chapter and sponsorships, by holding monthly lunch and learns in-person and by Zoom. Once again, the Maryland CLM chapter had dwindled but by the time I left the position, we had a vibrant chapter that was on a positive trajectory.

Achievements and Commitment to Excellence

My dedication to the FDCC is evidenced by:

- Spearheading record-breaking membership recruitment as Membership Recruitment Chair
- Serving multiple times as Corporate Counsel Symposium Chair
- Successfully chairing the 2023 Summer Meeting (Program Chair) at the Broadmoor and the 2024 Summer Meeting in Toronto (Convention Chair)
- And never turning down a request to take on a project on behalf of the FDCC

These experiences have taught me invaluable lessons in leadership, adaptability, and the importance of member-focused programming. I embrace challenges, share insights openly with the board, and continuously refine our approach to meet member needs. The practice of law is not static—it is ever changing and to be relevant in the future we must adapt and lead the change. We must always see and understand our members needs, now and in the future, and to address these needs. To continue to attract the best and brightest, we must always be able to show the value of an FDCC membership. We are the premier defense association.

I am dedicated to perpetuating FDCC's excellence through high-quality member recruitment and challenging programming that enhances our members' legal and leadership skills. My experience serving multiple times as the Corporate Counsel Symposium Chair, along with my roles as Program Chair and Convention Chair for the 2023 Summer Meeting at the Broadmoor and 2024 Summer Meeting in Toronto, have been invaluable in preparing me for leadership within the FDCC.

These roles have provided me with unique insights into our diverse membership and the organization's needs. As Corporate Counsel Symposium Chair, I leveraged my position as General Counsel at Sciton to connect with insurance and corporate counsel members, many of whom I knew through the Association of Corporate Counsel. My role as outside defense counsel at Bowman and Brooke allowed me to strengthen relationships with corporate and insurance clients, further expanding our network of both corporate counsel and defense counsel members.

The experience of serving as Program Chair for the 2023 Summer Meeting at the Broadmoor was particularly enlightening. We embarked on a "Great Experiment," testing new approaches to programming. While not all innovations were successful, the lessons learned were invaluable. I insisted on sharing our experiences with the entire Board, believing in the importance of transparency and collective learning. This decision, though questioned by some, ultimately proved beneficial as we applied these insights to the 2024 Summer Meeting in Toronto, where we returned to a more traditional format and achieved financial success despite the urban setting.

These experiences have shaped me as a person, a lawyer, and a leader within the FDCC. I am committed to using this knowledge to continue improving our organization, focusing on member recruitment, innovative programming, and fostering valuable relationships across the legal community.

Unique Perspective and Network

My dual roles as General Counsel at Sciton and defense counsel at Bowman and Brooke have allowed me to build a vast network spanning corporate, insurance, and defense sectors. This diverse perspective will be instrumental in enhancing FDCC's value proposition and expanding our influence in the legal community.

As General Counsel of Sciton, the largest founder-owned dermatological laser and light manufacturer in the world, I am called upon to communicate with all levels of the organization - operations, R&D, C-Suite, Key Opinion Leaders, overseeing all litigation, nationally and internationally, regulatory and FDA compliance, and the Board of Directors. I am also directly involved with training of the Sciton sales force as to what legally they can and cannot do in the sale of the laser products. This experience has significantly honed my communication skills, instilling confidence in my ability to work positively with the Executive Team and Accolade.

The Sciton culture is unique and proven, and I would love to integrate that into our long-term strategy and goals. Sciton's success is attributable to its laser focus on first its

internal people and then its customers. Our CEO wears a wrist band that reads, “I am second,” which is testament to the servant leadership mentality that pervades all levels of leadership at Sciton. This philosophy breeds long-term retention, inclusion, and has contributed to Sciton’s exponential growth and dominance in the industry. When I first started working with Sciton twenty (20) years or so ago, there were about forty (40) employees in the United States only, and now there are 400 employees worldwide, including in Canada, Japan, United Kingdom, AUS, Switzerland, South Korea, etc. My in-house role has in so many ways enhanced who I am personally and professionally and readied me for this next step in FDCC leadership.

These skills have enhanced my interactions with FDCC Headquarters, and its staff, to work collectively and seamlessly with the planning and execution of all of my FDCC projects and endeavors. I believe that my leadership skills forged and honed as Sciton’s General Counsel, my leadership skills gleaned through other professional associations, including the FDCC, and my active defense practice, have prepared me to take on the responsibility of serving as an officer of the FDCC. I have been tested in all of my leadership roles already, such that I am prepared to assist the FDCC leadership team and Accolade to address the inevitable challenges ahead.

A Commitment to Our Inspired Community

The FDCC is more than an organization; it’s a community of exceptional individuals dedicated to excellence in law, the greater community, and leadership. As Secretary/Treasurer, I commit to:

- Ensuring fiscal responsibility and transparency
- Driving initiatives that enhance member value
- Fostering an environment of inclusion, innovation, and collaboration
- Upholding the FDCC's reputation as a premier legal organization

The FDCC has significantly enhanced its brand and visibility through its active participation in amicus brief activities and its partnership with Lawyers for Civil Justice (LCJ). As an active member of LCJ, I have presented and also received an outstanding contributor award recently acknowledging my efforts on membership recruitment, etc. The Federation regularly collaborates with other defense organizations to file amicus briefs on important legal issues, demonstrating its commitment to shaping the civil justice system.

The FDCC's involvement with LCJ has allowed it to participate in developing legislative and judicial rule-making programs, further enhancing its influence in the legal community. Likewise, the FDCC's amicus brief activities have addressed a wide range of

critical issues. For example, the Federation joined forces with the IADC to submit an amicus brief to the California Supreme Court regarding take-home exposure asbestos cases. This type of advocacy not only contributes to the development of law but also increases the FDCC's visibility among key stakeholders in the legal system.

I want to continue to foster these efforts and help the FDCC to position itself as a thought leader in civil defense litigation, reinforcing its reputation as an organization comprised of elite lawyers and corporate counsel who drive the agenda and educate the defense legal community. As a board member and officer of FDCC, I understand keenly that it is not about enhancing my professional positions as a partner and/or General Counsel, but rather I stand in a fiduciary relationship to advance the organization's ideals.

In conclusion, I am honored to stand for this position and eager to contribute to the continued success of the FDCC. Together, we can build on our strong foundation, embrace new opportunities, and solidify our position as the preeminent community of defense counsel and corporate leaders.

I humbly ask for your support and the opportunity to serve as your Secretary/Treasurer. Marisa Trasatti is an FDCC Defense Counsel member and a Senior Director on the Board of Directors. She is also a Partner with **[Bowman and Brooke, LLP](#)** in Towson, MD. She is also General Counsel to Sciton, Inc. Contact her at: **Marisa.Trasatti@bowmanandbrooke.com**.