

April 10, 2026 -- Issue 324

*Good Morning!*

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**#1: Happy Birthday to Us!**

By Marc Harwell - FDCC President



Yesterday on April 9, 2026, the FDCC reached its 90<sup>th</sup> year of service. Today, we honor a legacy that spans generations. We recognize a community that continues to lead, serve, and elevate the practice of law.

In 1936, a small group of defense and corporate counsel came together with a clear purpose. They built an organization that would promote excellence, strengthen relationships, and support the fair administration of justice. They acted with vision and set a standard that still guides us today.

For over nine decades, our members have shaped the legal landscape. They have tried complex cases; advised businesses through risks, wars, depressions, a pandemic, and numerous challenges, opportunities and growth. They have shared knowledge, mentored colleagues, and advanced the rule of law...and most

importantly, they have not stood still. When the circumstances demand them, FDCC members have always been first to step forward to respond, adapt, and lead.

We continue that work today.

- We deliver premier education through our meetings, seminars, and practice groups.
- We promote civility in a time that demands it. We build relationships that foster trust, respect, and collaboration.
  - We also embrace change.

Our strength comes from our people. Our members bring talent, experience, and judgment as they create a culture that values excellence and integrity, and support efforts that strengthen the judiciary and promote balanced justice....and we act as stewards of the legal system.

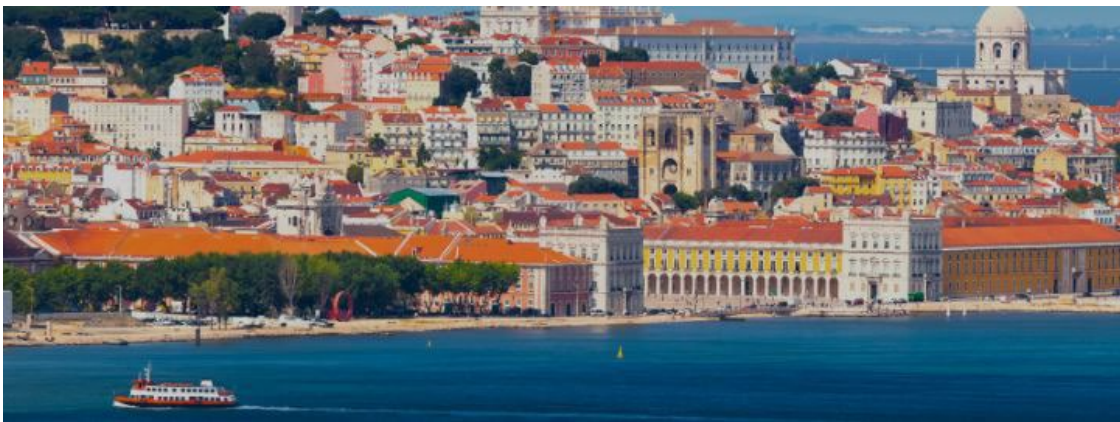
So, today, I think this anniversary invites both reflection and action. As we honor those who built (and continue to build) this Federation, I would like to take a moment to thank our legacy of Past Presidents, past and current Board of Directors and each of you who have and continue to sustain the FDCC. .

Our next chapter and decade begin today. As we work toward our centennial in 2036, we will continue to lead with purpose, serve with integrity, and through all of our efforts, we will strengthen our profession. And we will ensure that the Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel continues to stand as a model of excellence for decades still to come.

I am grateful for your continued trust and membership in the FDCC as we celebrate this milestone together.

## #2 Annual Meeting in Lisbon Update

By: Lee Hall & Alycen Moss



We are taking a break from our walking tour to provide you with some important information about our upcoming meeting.

### **1. Our Room Block at the Corinthia is Full**

The Hotel has repeatedly expanded our room block over the past two months, but we have unfortunately exhausted its largesse, so it is unwilling to further expand our block. Rooms are still available on the Corinthia's website, and are reasonable. It appears that the best rates are available if you join the complimentary loyalty program. The rates and availability change every day, but we found rates in the low 300 Euro range, which is still far less than US rates at many of our meetings.

**If you have a room reserved and need to cancel for any reason, please let us know before you cancel so that we can ask if the hotel will place the room back in our block.**

We will also be circulating a list of nearby hotels, but would love to see everyone be able to stay at the Corinthia if possible. If you are struggling with a room, call or email Martha or me and we will try to help you!

## **2. New and Nearly New Dinner**

On Tuesday, July 28, 2026, we are planning a New and Nearly New Dinner at Olivae, which is a Mediterranean restaurant at the hotel. Like in Park City, you will need to register and pay for this in advance. Dinner will start at around 7:30 or 8:00, which is actually early by Lisbon standards, but we thought that those of you with families might appreciate an earlier start. This is a great way to meet other newish members and have an easy evening at a great restaurant onsite at the Hotel on one of your first nights in Lisbon. Registration for the dinner will open soon.

## **3. More Excursions!**

We continue to add additional excursions!

[Click here to read the entire article](#)

**#3 DEI Under Scrutiny: What Employers Need to Know in 2026**

**By: Jacqueline M. Longfellow**



Many employers have viewed DEI programs as evidence of good corporate citizenship and something they often highlighted to regulators, juries, and the public.

Increasingly, however, these same initiatives are being cited in discrimination lawsuits and demand letters, particularly claims

framed as reverse discrimination under Title VII and similar state and local laws. For employment defense counsel, the shift is subtle but significant. Policies once used to diversify the workforce and support the defense of employment claims are now being repurposed as evidence of discrimination.

### What Changed?

Multiple factors are contributing to this shift. Claims that once might have struggled to gain traction are now being framed as straightforward disparate treatment cases. Courts appear more receptive to these arguments, especially following the Supreme Court's decision in *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President & Fellows of Harvard College*, 600 U.S. 181 (2023). While that case addressed higher education, its reasoning is influencing how similar issues are approached in the employment context. Enforcement priorities have also shifted, with federal agencies signaling greater scrutiny of workplace practices that could be viewed as granting preferences based on protected characteristics. This does not suggest that DEI initiatives are improper, but it does underscore that their design and implementation matter more than ever.

[Please click here to read the entire article](#)



**Jackie Longfellow** is an FDCC Defense Counsel member and a Member of **Baker Sterchi Cowden & Rice** in Kansas City where she defends companies and individuals in lawsuits in state and federal courts, including class action litigation. She also routinely defends employers facing charges of discrimination filed with local, state and federal agencies. Jackie's clients include companies in a variety of different industries, including real estate development, entertainment districts, construction, as well as the retail and service sectors. This article is presented on behalf of the FDCC's **Employment Practices & Workplace Liability Substantive Law Section**.

#### #4 Nominate a Defense "Master"

By: Alan Rutkin



It's Masters Week and we invite you to have your colleagues and friends participate! Or at least, participate in being Masters of the defense bar by joining the FDCC. **Help us recruit.**

The Masters Tournament is built on discipline, tradition, and a strong field. So too is the FDCC. And we need your help in strengthening our field. Who is in your field? Who has the judgment, professionalism, and collegiality that defines the FDCC? Invite them. Sponsor them.

To nominate someone, please **send us an email** with the Nominee's name and contact information...we'll take it from there.

You'll earn the FDCC Masters green jacket (in spirit)!

[Alan Rutkin](#) is a FDCC Defense Counsel member and a Partner with [Rivkin Radler](#) where he handles every aspect of insurance coverage law. He has represented insurance companies in coverage matters for more than 30 years, successfully resolving more than 100 major claims involving the environment, energy, policyholder-owned insurers, and other complex issues. He also writes insurance policies.....and is an exceptional golfer!

#### #5 New Member Spotlight:

**Lance D. Meyer**

FDCC Defense Counsel Member [Heidi Vogt](#) of the [vonBriesen & Roper](#) law firm in Milwaukee, WI is Vice Chair of the [Insurance Coverage Substantive Law Section](#) and recently had the chance to spend some time welcoming one of our newest members who also joined the Substantive Law Section. She gives us this spotlight "behind the bio" view of Lance Meyer!



**Lance D. Meyer** is a Shareholder in the [O'Meara Wagner, P.A.](#) firm in Edina, MN

**Law School:** William Mitchell College of Law,  
2012

**Past, Present & Future:** I clerked at a prior iteration of my current firm during law school. After graduation, I did a one-year clerkship for three judges on the Minnesota Court of Appeals. I then returned to


my current firm as an Associate, primarily working on insurance-coverage matters. I was promoted to partner in January 2019 and elected as a shareholder in January 2024.

**Family:** Emily (wife), Finn (8), Everett (5), and Vivian (1).

**First job:** In terms of a first job, I would say probably either mowing lawns or picking rock. My first punch-in, punch-out job was in the warehouse of the sales business my dad worked for. I was hired to sweep and wash floors, mow lawns, and do other odd jobs, but I was quickly given more responsibility and worked alongside the other full-time employees driving picking and packing orders, driving forklift, and loading and unloading trucks.

**Favorite vacation destination:** This one is hard as my wife and I (and now our kids) love to travel. If I have to pick, I would say Saint John. My wife and I spent a week snorkeling around the island a couple years ago and have been talking about going back ever since.

**Parting thoughts:** When thinking of a favorite quote or saying, the first thing that came to mind is, "Be Kind." With my young kids, I am constantly emphasizing the importance of being kind. But I think it is just as important for us in our work and relationships as adults.





Please register and mark your calendar to attend the following FDCC events of relevant and timely substantive content:

- **April 21, 2026 at 12:00PM ET / 9:00AM PT: Corporate Counsel Roundtable "Playbook for Newly Minted General Counsels"** with [Marisa Trasatti](#), General Counsel of Sciton, Inc., and [Jeff Kelsey](#), General Counsel of IMC Logistics. [Click here](#) for Corporate Counsel members and their colleagues to register.
- **July 26 - 31, 2026: Annual Meeting** at the [Corinthia Hotel in Lisbon, Portugal](#): "A Mosaic of Memories in Lisbon". Convention Chair: [Lee Hall](#); Program Chair: [Alycen Moss](#). [Click here](#) to register.
- **September 27-29, 2026: Corporate Counsel Symposium - "From Bourbon Street to the Boardroom Suite: Navigating Risks & Opportunities"** at the Windsor Court Hotel, New Orleans, LA. Co-Chairs are: [Beth Bauer](#), [Chad Hatmaker](#) and [Geneau Thames](#). Registration coming soon!

- **February 28-March 4, 2027: Winter Meeting** at the [Fountainbleu Hotel, Miami Beach, FL](#). Convention Chair: [Valerie Kellner](#) and Program Chair: [Jody Briandi](#).
- **July 25-30, 2027: Annual Meeting** at the [Fairmont Banff Springs, Banff, Alberta, Canada](#). Convention Chair: [Alycen Moss](#) and Program Chair: [Shelly Masters](#).

..and finally, Have a Nice Day...

**Jack Delany!**



Jack Delany is a Shareholder at [Marshall, Dennehey, Warner, Coleman & Goggin](#) in Philadelphia, PA and Chair of Catastrophic Claims Litigation at the firm.

Jack defends catastrophic, high-profile, high-exposure cases against some of the country's most formidable plaintiff firms. With a focus on construction, asbestos and toxic torts, transportation, fire casualty and product liability, he has taken to conclusion more than 60 jury trials, as well as hundreds of bench trials, arbitrations and mediations. Additionally, Jack represents clients in litigation involving fire and explosion claims, sexual assaults, negligent security, and hospitality and dram shop claims. He also handles specialty, high risk claims in the areas of amusements, entertainment, recreational, sports and specialty events. Additionally, Jack has represented venues, contractors and building managers to name a few, in wrongful death suits and personal injury litigation

involving elevators, electronic door issues and escalators. This litigation dealt with leveling, door closing malfunctions and prolonged elevators stuck between floors.

He represents many Fortune 500 companies directly and as insureds, and handles complex litigation matters at the federal and state levels and in administrative agencies and alternate dispute resolution forums. Jack also serves as national coordinating counsel for several product manufacturers.

And on Sunday, Jack will be celebrating a birthday! Would you join us in sending him a Happy Birthday email to:

[JJDelany@mdwccg.com](mailto:JJDelany@mdwccg.com)

Congratulations Jack and all the very best to you, Juliana and the family for continued good health, success and happiness in the years to come.

Thank you for being a valued member of the FDCC since 2011!

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### Why FDCC?

**"To be the inspired community of vetted defense counsel, exceptional leaders and even better people."**

