



April 17, 2026 -- Issue 325

Good Morning!

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**#1: Walking Through Lisbon's Past
to Medieval Alfama
By: Lee Hall**

Join the FDCC's 2026 Conference Chair, Lee Hall, in the next chapter showcasing all the things you will be able to see and do at this year's Annual Meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, Today, Lee takes us through the winding streets of Alfama and then to these amazing destinations:

- Praça do Comércio
- São Miguel and the Moorish Maze
- Igreja de Santo Estêvão and the Miradouro
- Miradouro de Santa Luzia and Portas do Sol

....and many more "not to be missed" spots along the way! By the way...over 500 FDCC members and families have already registered for the meeting. Want to join us? Just [click here](#). Let's go!



Castelo de São Jorge

We are going to continue our walk up to the Castelo St. Jorge. This is a difficult walk, which is why we have excursions designed to take you on this same trip by Tram, Van, E-Bike and Tuk-Tuk. But before we meet, let's take a walk through the winding streets of Alfama, where we will stop for some unforgettable views and end at the iconic Castelo St. Jorge.

But first, a little history! Before Lisbon became the Portuguese city we know today, it spent more than four centuries under Moorish rule, beginning in the early 8th century and lasting until the Christian reconquest in 1147. During that period, Lisbon (then known by its Arabic-era name *al-Ushbuna*) developed as a fortified, multicultural river city tied to trade, agriculture, and fishing. The Moors strengthened the city's defenses, expanded irrigation and roads, and left a lasting mark on Lisbon's culture, architecture, and urban form.

This Moorish legacy is still visible in Alfama, where the streets twist and narrow in a way that reflects an Islamic-era urban pattern of design. The winding lanes, compact blocks, and shaded passages developed for practical reasons: they helped create cooler microclimates in summer, offered privacy, and, most importantly, made the neighborhood harder for invaders to navigate. Alfama's maze-like streets reflect medieval Moorish urban planning. The Moorish influence is still visible throughout Lisbon and marks Lisbon as the first global city.

After the earthquake, Alfama was one of the only remaining relatively intact sections of Lisbon, so it was not rebuilt. As a result, Alfama retained its older street plan, preserving the city's medieval and Moorish character.

[Please click here for the entire article](#)



Lee Hall is an FDCC Defense Counsel member and Convention Chair of the **2026 Annual Meeting in Lisbon, Portugal**. She is also a Partner at **Jenkins Fenstermaker** in Huntington, WV where her practice is focused on insurance coverage, insurance defense, and WV bad faith defense. Her insurance defense practice includes sexual misconduct, municipal liability, motor vehicle and trucking claims, premises, and medical malpractice claims.

#2 Indiana Supreme Court Creates a Safe Harbor for Carriers Handling Claims Involving Multiple Claimants and Inadequate Limits

By: Janice Holmes



In late 2025, the Indiana Supreme Court issued a ruling impacting carriers' handling of claims in involving multiple claimants and inadequate limits. The decision expressly permits a carrier to file an interpleader and, in so doing, creates a safe harbor against claims that the carrier handled such claims in bad faith. *Baldwin v. The Standard Fire Ins. Co.* 269 N.E.3d 1197 (Ind. 2025).

Standard Fire insured Trevor and Tommi Hummel through an automobile insurance policy with liability limits of \$50,000 per person and \$100,000 per accident. The matter involved an auto accident that occurred in June 2018. Tommi Hummel was operating their vehicle with two passengers on board – John Hopkins and Jill McCarty. Hummel crashed into a vehicle driven by Bradley Baldwin. As a result of the collision, Baldwin was taken to a hospital by ambulance and Hopkins was airlifted to another hospital. McCarty left the scene.

Shortly after the accident, Baldwin sued the Hummels and thereafter made a demand for the \$50,000 per person policy limit. Standard Fire did not accept Baldwin's demand even though Baldwin's and Hopkins claims were certain to exceed the limits. Standard Fire's concern was that exhausting the policy limits on Baldwin's and Hopkins' claims would leave the insured no available coverage if McCarty also came forward with an injury claim. So, Standard Fire filed an interpleader, deposited the limits into court and continued to defend Hummel in the Baldwin suit. McCarty never answered the interpleader action, so the policy limits were divided between Baldwin and Hopkins.

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

Janice Holmes is an FDCC Defense Counsel member and Senior Counsel with **Clyde & Co.** in Washington, DC, where she advises insurance companies in analyzing coverage in a variety of lines, including commercial general liability, excess and umbrella liability, environmental clean-up, and professional liability policies, and also represents insurers in bad faith and coverage litigation. In addition, Janice has extensive experience in handling toxic and mass torts matters. She has also served as national coordinating counsel for a Fortune 100 company in managing cases involving alleged asbestos exposures in over thirty states. This article is submitted on behalf of the FDCC's **Extra-Contractual Liability Law Section**.

#3 Mandatory Pre-Dispute Arbitration Agreement Invalid Where Case Includes Claims of Sexual Harassment or Sexual Assault

By: Maury Nicely



On February 25, 2026, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit* in *Bruce v. Adams & Reese, LLP*, evaluated a situation at the intersection of two fairly recent employment law “hot topics.”

In the late 1990s, many employers contemplated the creation of mandatory pre-dispute arbitration agreements that would require an employee’s claims against the company to be brought, not through litigation in federal or state court, but rather through arbitration before a third-party neutral.

This process enabled employers to resolve employment claims in a manner which was viewed as confidential, cost-effective, and efficient.

Subsequently, the #MeToo movement, which arose around 2006, served to shine a spotlight upon inappropriate workplace conduct, and specifically sexual harassment of employees in the workplace. As an outgrowth of the #MeToo movement, in 2021 the Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Act (EFAA) was enacted, providing that mandatory pre-dispute arbitration agreements are void with respect to claims of sexual harassment and/or sexual assault.

In the *Bruce* case, the Sixth Circuit was presented with the question whether the EFAA would invalidate *all* claims filed by an employee against their employer if the case included allegations of sexual harassment/assault, or whether the EFAA would only invalidate the sexual harassment/assault claims themselves.

[Please click here for the entire article.](#)

Maury Nicely is a Partner with **Evans Harrison Hackett PLLC** in Chattanooga, TN where he concentrates his practice in the areas of employment litigation, labor law, and general business litigation. He has addressed issues pertaining to all areas of labor and employment law in order to assist clients in preparing and maintaining employee records, making proactive decisions to prevent workplace issues from arising, and addressing formal complaints if and when they arise. This article is presented on behalf of the FDCC's **Employment Practices & Workplace Liability Substantive Law Section**.

#4 - 2026 Barb Currie Diversity Scholarship



The FDCC Foundation is excited to accept applications for the 2026 Barb Currie Diversity Scholarship—a \$10,000 opportunity to support and elevate diverse law students and prospective students who reflect FDCC’s commitment to inclusion in the legal profession. Created in honor of Barb Currie’s enduring advocacy for diversity, this scholarship is an investment in the future of our profession.

Applications are due **May 29, 2026**. Please spread the word by sharing this opportunity with your law school alma maters and eligible students. Please [click here](#) for more information and criteria for the scholarship.

For more information, please contact [Caroline Berdzik](#) - or [Vicki Smith](#).

#5 Chicago Members Get Together



The Windy City is known for many things...including some of the best defense counsel in the profession. Check out this shot from this week's gathering that was put together by FDCC Illinois state representatives Tom O'Carroll and Brian Hunt.

The cocktail reception was held at the offices of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP.

Thanks to FDCC Board Member [Dan McGrath](#) for sharing this photo, and thanks to Tom & Brian for organizing this great gathering!

#5.1 Welcome to Our New Members



William J. Cornell is a Member at **Preg O'Donnell & Gillett** in Seattle, WA, where his practice focuses on all types of general liability, real estate, construction, and complex commercial disputes. He uses his construction litigation experience to provide clients with advice in contract negotiation and drafting. He is also an experienced corporate attorney, providing risk management and related advice to a variety of clients including developers, contractors, landlords and other real estate professionals.

He previously had served as Director of Litigation Management for Fireman's Fund Insurance Company, and as in-house counsel for a regional homebuilder.

Bill is an experienced mediator and arbitrator, and has served in this capacity in a variety of disputes. He and his wife **Diane** reside in Bellevue, WA.





Neil D. Thomson is a Partner with **Ford Wallace Thomson, LLC** in Charleston, SC, where he handles cases involving commercial litigation; products liability; personal injury; HOA/POA disputes; professional liability (primarily medical and pharmacy malpractice); copyright infringement; toxic tort and professional liability defense, real property disputes; and maritime injury cases. He is also a Certified Mediator and Arbitrator.

Neil and his wife **Jackie** live on Isle of Palms, SC, with their two children Davis and Torri.

Welcome Aboard!



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...

Ebony Morris Hughes!



Ebony Morris Hughes is an FDCC Defense Counsel Member and a Partner in **Foley Mansfield's** New Orleans, LA office.

Her practice concentrates on transportation, mass tort, complex casualty, and talc defense litigation matters. Ebony's clients, which

include educational institutions, Fortune 100 and 500 corporations, insurance companies, small businesses, and individuals, trust her to successfully resolve matters which arise during litigation.

She serves on the Board of Directors for the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel, an organization of over 1,100 Louisiana attorneys who are primarily engaged in the defense of civil litigation. In her spare time, she enjoys mentoring younger minority and underrepresented attorneys and serves as a First Assistant Examiner for Constitutional Law for the Louisiana Supreme Court Committee on Bar Admissions.

And tomorrow is her birthday! Please join us in filling her In Box with congratulatory emails:

emorris@foleymansfield.com

Happy Birthday Ebony and all the very best for continued good health, success and happiness in the years to come.

Thank you for being a valued member of the FDCC since 2023!



Why FDCC?

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

