



FDCC
DEFENSE LAWYERS. DEFENSE LEADERS.



August 1, 2025 -- Issue 288

Good Afternoon!

Usually at 10:00AM ET, we send out the Friday 5's newsletter (thanks for reading!). However, our newsletter was a bit delayed today, as the 2025 Annual Business Meeting is taking place here in Park City, UT, and we wanted to provide you with the most current updates on the 2025-2026 Board Election and the 2025 Award Winners.

#1 FDCC's 2025 Annual Meeting Was a Winner!



Over 500 FDCC members and their families attended this year's Annual Meeting here in Park City, UT, which will close out with a "Mingle On The Mountain" event this evening. We "Trained Like Champions" as the Plenary and Substantive Law Section meeting rooms were the venues for exceptional programming by our members and inspirational keynote speakers - and then spent the afternoons taking in the enjoyable on-site and off-site excursions.

From all the feedback received so far, the meeting was a great success. Congratulations to our Convention Chairs [Tiffany and Stephen Alexander](#), and Program Chairs: [Lee M. Hall](#) and [Kile Turner](#). Click on the link for the [papers and presentations](#) (you can also download them from the FDCC365 mobile app). More details and photos will be provided in the next issue of the *Steven Alexander Flyer* magazine.

If you missed being with us this week, please Save the Dates for our upcoming meetings:

- September 14-16, 2025: **Corporate Counsel Symposium** - Chicago, IL. [Click here to register](#), and on the link for [hotel reservations](#) at the InterContinental Hotel Magnificent Mile.
- November 5-7, 2025: **Insurance Industry Institute** - Westin Times Square Hotel in New York City, NY. Registration coming soon.
- February 24-March 1, 2026: **FDCC Winter Meeting** - JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort in Scottsdale, AZ. Registration coming soon.
- July 26-31, 2026: **FDCC Annual Meeting** - The Corinthia Hotel in Lisbon, Portugal. Registration coming soon.

We look forward to welcoming you at these exceptional meetings and venues.

#2 FDCC 2025-2026 Board of Directors Announced



The Federation's 2025 Nominating Committee, chaired by [Paul Finamore](#) of Pessin Katz Law, P.A. in Columbia, MD met here at the Annual Meeting yesterday to interview all candidates standing for election to next year's Board of Directors.

Other members of the Committee were:

Kelly Brilleaux; J. Richard Caldwell; Chelsey Golightly; C. Bailey King; Linda Knight; and Past Presidents: Robert Christie; Michael Glascott; Scott Creamer; Howard Merten and Elizabeth Lorell.

The recommendations of the Committee were moved for approval at the just concluded Annual Business Meeting. The membership in attendance voted to accept the Committee's recommendations, thereby constituting the FDCC's 2025-2026 Board of Directors:

Secretary Treasurer:

[Sean Griffin](#)

Senior Directors of the Board:

- [Lee Hall](#)
- [Dan McGrath](#)
- [Francisco Ramos](#)
- [Kile Turner](#)
- [Charlie Frazier](#)

- [Jeff Guillory](#)
- [Valerie Kellner](#)
- [Alycen Moss](#)
- [Micalann Pepe](#)

Directors of the Board:

- [Shelly Masters](#)
- [Jody Briandi](#)
- [April Berman](#)
- [Richard Dukes](#)
- [Joseph Falasco](#)
- [Chad Hatmaker](#)
- [Nat Jordan](#)
- [Jimmy Wilkins](#)
- [David Zuber](#)

These Board members now "get" to join the Officers and FDCC President [Marc Harwell](#) who was presented the gavel and took the stage a few moments ago to deliver his inaugural address. Along with President Harwell the Officers who will lead the Federation this year are:



President-Elect: [Jennifer Johnsen](#)

Secretary Treasurer: [Sean Griffin](#)

Board Chair: [Heidi Goebel](#)

Please join us in congratulating and wishing them well in the exciting year we have ahead.

#3 FDCC 2025 Award Winners Announced at Today's Annual Business Meeting



[Larry S. Ebner](#)

Capital Appellate
Advocacy, PLLC

**John Alan Appleman
Award**



[David M. Fuqua](#)

Fuqua Campbell, P.A.
FDCC Connect Award



[Sarannah McMurtry](#)

First Acceptance
Insurance Co.

**FDCC Corporate
Members' Forum Award**



[Jennifer A. Hoffman](#)



[Elizabeth A. Fitzpatrick](#)



[Shelly Masters](#)

Carr Allison

Island Companies

Cokinos | Young

**FDCC Awardee of the
Year**

Andrew C. Hecker Award

Andrew C. Hecker Award



Joseph R. Falasco

Quattlebaum, Grooms & Tull, PLLL

Joseph R. Olshan Award



Carolyn Ramos

YLAW, P.C.

Diversity Award

Each year the Federation recognizes members whose efforts further define our "Over & Above" reputation in the defense bar. Please join with us as we congratulate these colleagues and their well-deserved recognition among their peers and a grateful FDCC. The awards were announced at this morning's Annual Business Meeting in Park City, UT.

#4 The FDCC's New "Hype" Video



The Annual Meeting kicked off Monday morning by welcoming attendees as this video played on the screens in the Plenary Ballroom. Created by FDCC Defense Counsel Member, [Lee M. Hall](#), Co-Chair of the Annual Meeting Program and a Partner with Jenkins Fenstermaker in Huntington, WV, the video captures the many trusted friendships and experiences members, sponsors, and their families have had at FDCC events throughout the year.

[Let us know](#) what you think!

#5 Legal Operations: Getting It Done

By Shelly D. Masters, and Alonzo D. Washington,



Shelly Masters



Alonzo Washington

In-house legal teams today must function as strategic business partners, delivering value efficiently while managing risk. Critically, legal ops professionals help lawyers focus on core legal work by handling strategy, finance, projects and technology. For example, CLOC notes that legal ops staff support areas like *strategic planning, financial management, project management and technology investment*, freeing lawyers to concentrate on advice. ACC similarly defines legal operations as any activities “focused on optimizing legal services” through business fundamentals, using processes, data, and technology to build consistency, efficiency and value.

In practice, this means adopting data-driven tools, streamlining processes, and aligning legal work tightly with business goals. Industry observers point out that general counsel are boosting tech budgets and redefining contracts to address new challenges (like AI) as part of this shift. For instance, a law-tech expert from Morgan Lewis predicts “*every organization in the US [will] evaluate the impact of AI on its business,*” updating playbooks and templates to manage AI-related IP, privacy, and cybersecurity risks. And surveys show many corporate teams are indeed increasing tech spend—one-third of large organizations plan to raise their legal-tech budgets next year, primarily to gain efficiency.

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

This article will be one of those presented at the FDCC's upcoming [Corporate Counsel Symposium](#), September 14-16, 2025 in Chicago, IL. [Shelly Masters](#) is a partner with [Cokinos | Young](#) in Austin, TX where she focuses her practice in multiple areas of litigation, with a particular focus on construction, commercial, employment and product liability matters. [Alonzo Washington](#) is a partner with [Flaherty Sensabaugh Bonasso](#) in Morgantown, WV, where he specializes in product litigation, commercial litigation, medical malpractice defense, construction, surety, maritime/admiralty and other complex litigation matters.

#5.1 Welcome to Our New Members!



Please join us in extending a warm welcome to our newly admitted members:



John L. Kubis is a partner with **Teague Campbell Dennis & Gorham, LLP** in Asheville, NC, where he specializes in defending insurance companies, businesses, corporations, government entities, and individuals. In addition to complex insurance litigation, John's practice focuses on the needs of public sector clients. He is co-chair of the Public Sector Services team and currently serves as interim County Attorney for Jackson County, NC. He supports the public sector team on a variety of substantive issues, including local governance, contracts and ordinances, and litigated matters.

John is the past Chair for the Construction Law Section of the North Carolina Association of Defense Attorneys (NCADA), and a past member of the NCADA Executive Board Young Lawyers' Committee. He is also a member of the Property and Liability Resource Bureau and the Association of Defense Trial Attorneys. He and his wife Gretta reside in Asheville, NC.



Scott D. Rembold is a partner with **The Rembold Law Group, PLLC d/b/a Rembold Hirschman** in Coral Gables, FL where he represents and defense contractors, subcontractors, and it design professionals in litigation related to alleged construction defects and personal injury matters related to the construction industry. Scott's practice focuses in the areas of Insurance Defense, Construction, General Civil Litigation, Complex Commercial Litigation, and First Party Property Defense.

He and his wife, Myrna reside in Boca Raton, FL.

Welcome Aboard!

#5.2 What's On the Docket



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

- **September 14-16, 2025: Corporate Counsel Symposium** at the InterContinental Hotel in Chicago, IL. Co-Chairs: [Chelsey Golightly](#), [Nicole Benjamin](#), and [Tim Moore](#), Click on the links for the [Brochure](#) and to [Register](#).

- **November 5-7, 2025: Insurance Industry Institute** at the Westin Times Square Hotel in New York City. Co-Chairs: [Sarannah McMurtry](#) and [Jeff Van Volkenburg](#). Registration coming soon.
- **February 24-28, 2026: Winter Meeting** at the [J.W. Marriott Desert Ridge Resort](#) in Scottsdale, AZ: "**Together We Rise From the Valley**". Convention Chair: [Frank Ramos](#); Program Chair: [Micalann Pepe](#).
- **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](#).
- **February 28-March 4, 2027: Winter Meeting** at the [Fountainbleu Hotel, Miami Beach, FL](#).
- **July 25-30, 2027: Annual Meeting** at the [Fairmont Banff Springs, Banff, Alberta, Canada](#).

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

Heidi G. Goebel!



Heidi Goebel is managing partner of [Goebel Anderson](#) in Salt Lake City, UT, and has been President of the Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel for this past year. Today, at the Annual Business Meeting in Park City, UT, she became Chair of the Board of Directors as she passed the gavel to our President for 2025 - 2026, Marc Harwell.

As Heidi's remarkable year as President of the FDCC draws to a close today, we extend our heartfelt congratulations and deepest gratitude for her exceptional leadership and unwavering dedication to our organization.

Throughout her tenure, Heidi has exemplified the very essence of what the FDCC represents. She has brought to life our organizational "why" – "To be **the** inspired community of vetted defense counsel, exceptional leaders and even better people" – not just through words, but through her actions, vision, and the inspiring example she has set for our entire membership.

Under Heidi's capable leadership, the FDCC Board has operated with remarkable efficiency and purpose. Our financial standing has never been stronger; over 300 defense and corporate counsel and industry professionals have been nominated for membership this past year; and we have issued and joined more amicus briefs ever before. Her ability to guide discussions, build consensus, and drive meaningful initiatives has strengthened our organization's governance and positioned us for continued success. Her collaborative approach and strategic thinking have been instrumental in fostering unity and progress within our leadership ranks.

Perhaps one of Heidi's most significant contributions has been the development and implementation of our comprehensive five-year strategic plan. This forward-thinking roadmap will serve to ensure the FDCC continues to evolve and thrive in an ever-changing legal landscape. Her vision for our future demonstrates not only her commitment to our current membership but also her dedication to the generations of members who will follow in our footsteps.

As our representative to the broader defense bar, Heidi has been an outstanding ambassador for the FDCC. She has elevated our organization's reputation and profile, strengthened our relationships within the legal community, and advanced our reputation as the premier organization for defense and corporate counsel. Her professionalism, expertise, and genuine passion for our mission have opened doors and created opportunities that will benefit our membership for years to come.

Throughout this exceptional year, Heidi has demonstrated that leadership is not just about holding a title – it's about inspiring others, creating positive energy and change, and leaving an organization better than you found it. She has done exactly that, and we are all beneficiaries of her passion, dedication and hard work. Her presidency has been marked by vision, accomplishment, and an unwavering commitment to excellence that reflects the very best of what our organization stands for. We are grateful for her leadership and proud to call her a colleague and friend.

Congratulations, Heidi, on a job exceptionally well done.

Please join us by thanking Heidi for a truly exceptional year of service.

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Why FDCC?

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