

NYSIA 2019 ANNUAL MEETING

SPEAKER BIOS



Jared Bretas is Senior Counsel at the New York City Law Department. He has been practicing Workers' Compensation Law since 2012. His main focus is defending and administrating workers' compensation obligations pertaining to all covered City of New York employees.

Mr. Bretas earned his J.D. in 2011 from New York Law School and his B.A. in 2000 from North Carolina State University. Prior to joining the Law Department, Mr. Bretas was Executive Chef at Rocky Top Hospitality in Raleigh, NC.

Dr. Jonathan Glassman is an orthopedic surgeon in Mineola, New York and is affiliated with multiple hospitals in the area, including Montefiore Medical Center and NYU Winthrop Hospital. He received his medical degree from McGill University Faculty of Medicine and has been in practice for more than 20 years.



Assistant Director of Upstate Claims **Denise Hughes** has accumulated great system expertise during the 35 years she's worked with employers and injured workers in both the Claims and Compliance areas of the Workers' Compensation Board. Today, Denise manages the five district offices in the Upstate region of New York, including their entire claim process. Previously, with her knowledge of the electronic claim filing process, she was instrumental in establishing the highly successful payer compliance process that educated insurers in the importance of the injury filing and benefit payment process. She also oversaw the Uninsured Employers Fund and the No Insurance area. Earlier in her career, Denise supervised and managed eight customer service centers across the state, as well as a calendaring and indexing unit. Highly knowledgeable in both employer and employee perspectives in workers' compensation, Denise has received several agency-wide commendations from the Chair over the course of her career. She earned two different distinctions related to the Board's move from paper to an electronic environment, and another for going above and beyond to provide excellent customer service.



Hon. Clarissa M. Rodriguez of Queens County is the Chair of the Workers' Compensation Board. Before joining the Board in 2016, Mrs. Rodriguez worked as an attorney for the Queens County Legal Aid Society of New York in the Foreclosure Prevention and Predatory Lending Unit, and in the Housing Unit. Mrs. Rodriguez also worked in the Civil and Matrimonial Parts of the Nassau County Supreme Court. She served with the Civil Rights Bureau of the New York State Office of the Attorney General, the City University of New York's (CUNY) Office of General Counsel, the Municipal Employees Legal Services at District Council 37, and the Homelessness Outreach and Prevention Project of the Urban Justice Center, among others, prior to joining the Bar.

Earlier in her career, Mrs. Rodriguez was the project editor/legislative liaison of the National Parents and Teachers Association in Washington D.C. In addition, she was the community organizer for the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, and a social services counselor at the West Side Campaign Against Hunger in New York City. She sat on the Board of Directors of the Cypress Hills Local Development Project from 2012 to 2017 and is a member of the Latino Lawyers of Queens County, Dominican Bar Association, and the Hispanic National Bar Association.

Mrs. Rodriguez is the recipient of the Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) Fellowship of the American Bar Association, and El Diario/La Prensa's 9th Annual NYC Outstanding Latina Award. She is a graduate of the City University of New York School of Law and holds a BA in political science from the State University of New York, Purchase College.



Janice Van Allen is the Senior Director of Walmart's Risk Management responsible for Workers' Compensation. In this role, Ms. Van Allen is responsible for the management of Workers' Compensation claims for all divisions of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., including Walmart Stores, Sam's Club, and Walmart's Logistics, and Transportation operations.

Ms. Van Allen came to the risk management business with a solid understanding of Walmart's operations, having worked for 15 years in store management, store training, and in the Optical Division. During her 10 years in Walmart's Risk Management, she has also had responsibility for directing the General Liability, Auto Liability, Druggist Liability, and Workers' Compensation claims management teams.

Since moving to the role in workers' compensation, Ms. Van Allen has been involved in developing strategies to improve overall claim outcomes, as well as to improve efficiencies for claims adjusters. These strategies involve all three TPAs managing Walmart's claims. They include working closely with

defense counsel to identify and take advantage of the best possible methods to provide quality care to injured associates, as well as working with claim analytics to help identify medical providers who can provide quality care. Ms. Van Allen believes the key to success in this area is for all parties involved in claims administration and the defense of work injury claims to work together to achieve a shared goal for success.

Ms. Van Allen assembled a working group at Walmart in 2007 to prepare for Medicare Secondary Payers Act, SCHIP Section 111 reporting requirements. She has led this team in: understanding CMI and Walmart's reporting obligations, implementing changes in claims data gathering, determining the best method of reporting, and preparing the first official report to CMS.

Ms. Van Allen also leads Walmart's ongoing efforts to determine whether insurance or qualified self-insurance represents the best risk financing method for funding work injuries in each state. Recently, as part of this process, she led Walmart's initiative to provide an ERISA alternative for workplace injuries in Texas and qualified self-insurance in Maine.

Ms. Van Allen is an active board member of the New York Self-Insurers' Association.



Thomas Warsop is a transformational leader with three decades of experience leading global businesses and changing the status quo.

Warsop joined York, a leading risk solutions provider, as Chairman of the Board in June 2017 to champion transformational change and accelerate York's value through operational excellence. Warsop is committed to delivering superb quality in an industry where consistency is everything. He believes the results that matter the most are the ones you can see and feel. Since coming to York, his impact has reverberated across the organization and is driving York's ability to live out its mission of reducing risk and getting people and organizations back to health, work and productivity.

Previously, Warsop served as CEO of The Warranty Group for almost five years where he championed a complete technology and business process transformation. Prior to The Warranty Group, Warsop was Group Vice President of Fiserv, one of the world's largest financial service technology solution providers. He began his career at Electronic Data Systems Corporation (EDS), where, over an 18-year tenure, he advanced from the financial development program to the global leader of the financial services business.



Michele Carroll has been in the insurance industry for over 30 years. She has multi-line experience as Examiner, Supervisor and Claims Manager. Over the tenure of her insurance career, Michele has held various leadership roles, primarily in the Workers' Compensation product line.

In her current role as Claims AVP, Michele is responsible for the managerial oversight of 110 Claim Professionals located in the Rochester and Syracuse, NY offices. These colleagues handle claims in seven jurisdictions including Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania.

Michele earned a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Business Management from LeMoyne College in Syracuse, NY. She earned the Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters (CPCU) designation in 1995.



Wesley Hyatt, Senior Vice President and Manager, Workers Compensation Claims Liberty Mutual Insurance and Helmsman Management Services, LLC

Wesley leads the Workers Compensation Claims organization for Liberty Mutual and Helmsman which includes more than 1,800 claim professionals and managed care teams countrywide. She has a proven track record of successfully developing and managing teams that deliver better outcomes and service for customers, agents and brokers.

Wesley began her career with Liberty as a Workers Compensation claims adjuster in California in 2003. She worked as an adjuster and Team Manager for seven years before making a career move to Distribution & Service Management in New England. Working as a Client Service Manager, she learned the account management function and developed a deep appreciation for our agents, brokers and customers. Wesley rejoined Claims in 2012 and has taken on roles of increasing responsibility since. She has been leading WC Claims since June 2017 and is based in Boston, MA.

Wesley holds a bachelor's in American studies from Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont.



Mark Pew, senior vice president of product development and marketing for Preferred Medical, is a passionate **educator** and **agitator**. Known as the RxProfessor, Mark is focused on the intersection of chronic pain and appropriate treatment, particularly as it relates to the clinical and financial implications of opioids, benzodiazepines and other prescription painkillers, along with the evolution of medical marijuana. He is a strong champion for the workers' compensation industry to #CleanUpTheMess, a movement he created to drive attention to the importance of individualized appropriate treatment for injured workers. Mark is a vocal advocate of the BioPsychoSocialSpiritual treatment model.

With more than 35 years of experience in property and casualty, healthcare and technology, Mark has been the mastermind behind solutions that transform the way the workers' compensation industry navigates utilization management and treatment, particularly in the area of opioids and other potentially high-risk medications.

Mark is a popular speaker at workers' compensation, insurance, legal and healthcare conferences around the country and frequently provides continuing education sessions to carriers, self-insured employers and third party administrators. Since 2012, Mark has presented educational content more than 500 times to more than 41,000 people in 41 states and the District of Columbia. He is also an accomplished writer, regularly blogging and tweeting and with many articles published in national magazines. His blog was recognized in 2016, 2017 and 2018 as a WorkersCompensation.com "Best Blog."

Mark received the WorkCompCentral Magna Comp Laude award in 2016 and the IAIABC's Samuel Gompers Award in 2017.

Mark is comfortable serving as a speaker for keynotes, general sessions, panels and breakout sessions. Example of his workers' compensation speaking engagements include:

- National Workers' Compensation and Disability Conference (2012, 2015, 2016)
- National Alliance of Medicare Set-Aside Professionals (2013, 2015, 2016)
- National Work Comp Defense Network (2014, 2016)
- Work Comp Institute (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018)
- ExecuSummit (2015, 2018)
- American Association of State Compensation Insurance Funds (AASCIF)
- Statewide conferences in Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia

He has also spoken at other major events, including:

- Abuse Deterrent Formulations Summit
- American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
- American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine
- American Society of Addiction Medicine

- Brain Injury Business Practice College
- Case Management Society of America
- Mentors for Military
- National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms
- National Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit (2014, 2016, 2017)
- Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM)
- State Bar of Georgia
- State Bar of North Carolina
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A frequent media source for stories on pharmacy, marijuana, chronic pain and the BioPsychoSocialSpiritual treatment model in workers' compensation, Mark is also a regular article contributor to Claim Management Magazine, Workers' Compensation Magazine, Insurance Thought Leader and PC360.

Mark serves on the Medical Issues Committee of the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions and the Workers' Compensation Committee for the Self-Insurance Institute of America. In addition, he serves as technical advisor to regulators and legislators in jurisdictions, 20 and counting, on subjects such as drug formularies, treatment guidelines, Opioid Task Force initiatives, encouraging support of non-pharma treatment options and the medicinal use of cannabis.



Renee E. Heitger is a partner in the law firm of Hamberger & Weiss LLP, with offices located in Buffalo and Rochester, New York. Hamberger & Weiss is the New York State member of The National Workers' Compensation Defense Network and limits its practice to the representation of insurance carriers and self-insured employers in workers' compensation claims, W.C.L. Section 120 discrimination claims and Loss Transfer arbitrations; representation of municipalities in line of duty injury claims by police and firefighters under Section 207 of the General Municipal Law. Renee holds a B.A. degree from Miami University of Ohio and a J.D. degree from the University of Toledo College of Law. She has extensive experience in handling all aspects of the defense of a workers' compensation matter, including development of defenses for controverted claims, interview of witnesses, preparation of Notices of Controversy, preparation of Pre-Hearing Conference Statements, making claims' recommendations, and handling hearings, trials and depositions. Ms. Heitger's experience also includes legal research and preparing Memoranda of Law, Applications for Board Review, Rebuttals to Applications for Board Review. Additionally, she has extensive experience in appellate work with the filing of Appellant Briefs, Respondent Briefs and oral arguments at the Appellate Division, Third Department. She is a frequent speaker at seminars across the state pertaining to workers' compensation matters, and recently authored the Medical Treatment Guidelines Chapter of the New York State Bar Association publication on *Workers' Compensation Law and Practice in New York*. Ms. Heitger is a member of the New York State Bar Association, Erie County Bar Association, and the Workers' Compensation Committee of the Erie County Bar Association.



Eric R. Chase is a partner at Wolff, Goodrich & Goldman LLP located in Syracuse, NY. He has been a practicing member of the firm since 2003 and a partner since 2015 where his primary focus is in the defense of employers, carriers, administrators, state agencies, and self-insured employers in claims before the New York State Workers' Compensation Board.

Mr. Chase has written and lectured on legal topics relating to the New York State Workers' Compensation and Disability Laws including legislative changes, application of treatment guidelines, and other related topics. He is a member of the Onondaga County, New York State and Massachusetts Bar Associations.

Mr. Chase earned his J.D. in 2002 from Boston College Law School and his B.S., *summa cum laude*, in 1999 from Springfield College. He is admitted to the bars of New York State and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

When not in the office, Mr. Chase is a Board Member of Circare of Syracuse, NY, a non-for profit organization that supports individuals and families find and secure services needed for interdependent life.



Robert W. Manning is a senior partner in the law firm of Stewart, Greenblatt, Manning & Baez, and is licensed to practice law in New York and New Jersey. The firm represents the needs of insurance carriers, third party administrators and self-insured employers at the New York State Worker's Compensation Board, Third Department and Court of Appeals. In addition the firm's practice includes defense in liability matters and intercompany arbitration. He has represented the needs of employers and carriers at the New York State Workers Compensation Board for over 30 years and has argued before the Appellate Division, Third Department and Court of Appeals. His contact information can be found at www.sgmlaw.com



James Cousins has dedicated his entire career to the practice of NY Workers' Compensation Law, and he knows that good courtroom presentation, backed up with thorough preparation and careful research, is the key to success at trial.

Before joining The Law Office of Melissa A. Day, PLLC, James trained by both prosecuting and defending workers' compensation cases, and garnered a unique and valuable perspective, sometimes having litigated the same issue from the opposite sides of the table – sometimes on the very same day. From this experience, James knows the subtleties of fact, the nuances of law, and the often opaque motivations that drive the parties through litigation.

James uses his experience on a day to day basis to help insurance carriers, self-insured employers and group self-insured trusts to face the monumental task of defending workers' compensation claims where the law is very often no ally, and where success or failure rests on preparation, research and good communication. He is a passionate and tenacious litigator who is dedicated to providing his clients with the very best and most cutting edge defenses available.

James has also lectured extensively on a variety of topics and issues that arise in workers' compensation matters through CLE presentations, association talks, and through "On the Bench" on LOMAD TV, the monthly, irreverent live online TV show offered by The Law Offices of Melissa A. Day, PLLC.

James grew up in Venetia, PA and is a graduate of Dickinson College and the University of Buffalo School of Law. He is admitted to practice in NYS, the Western District of NY and the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Western District. He is an Eagle Scout, NY Guard Officer, President of the Buffalo Claims Association and Trustee of his church. James lives in Williamsville, NY with his wife and three daughters. In his free time, James loves a game of chess with his daughters, nine holes of golf or a good BBV murder mystery.



Dr. Aaron Spingarn is a New York native. As a child, he moved to northern California with his family. He attended college at the University of California in Berkeley, and then medical school at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles before returning to New York to practice medicine. He trained in general surgery at what is now New York Presbyterian Hospital before specializing in Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery at the Manhattan Eye, Ear & Throat Hospital. A practicing otolaryngologist in Westchester County as well as in other locations in New York City since he finished training in 1995, Dr. Spingarn also lives in Westchester County with his wife and, when they are home from college, twin boys. Dr. Spingarn is board-certified by the American Board of Otolaryngology, and is a fellow of the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery. He is also a member of the Westchester County Medical Society. Dr. Spingarn's hospital affiliations are St. John's Riverside Hospital, [White Plains Hospital Center](#) in White Plains, NY, and Mount Sinai/Beth Israel Medical Center in Manhattan.



Steve Labudzinski is a Research and Design specialist at Con Edison. The majority of his career has been focused on R&D related functions and deliverables. Earlier in his career, Steve was focused on Drug Delivery of Pharmaceutical Compounds using a Patented Technology for Controlled Release Drug Delivery—"Once a day products". Currently, he is focusing on identifying and evaluating innovative devices/technologies that will enhance Environment, Health and Safety processes. This includes wearables which gives the wearer instant feedback and information. He has presented at various meetings the benefits/challenges of wearable technologies and is tasked with identifying and evaluating the latest in wearables and its acceptance in the work environment. He is listed as an inventor on several patents and the recipient of several innovation awards and an outstanding graduate award.



Mindy Kapner Roller is Deputy Chief at the City of New York Law Department since 2002. Prior to her current role, she was Assistant Corporation Counsel from 1995-2002. Ms. Roller earned her J.D. from Brooklyn Law School. She is a frequent speaker on various Workers' Compensation topics for the New York State Self-Insurers Association, the New York Claims Association and NYS Association of Self-Insured Counties. Mindy is past President and Special Counsel to the Board of the New York Claims Association and a past member of the WCB Advisory Committee. She is a NYS High School Mock Trial coach and a NYSIA Program Committee member. Ms. Roller is married to Jonathan Roller, a private practice attorney and has three married children and is the proud grandmother of seven grandchildren.