

OREGON STATE BAR
WORKERS' COMPENSATION SECTION
ANNUAL REPORT – 2014

Activities and Accomplishments:

The section held its annual business meeting on May 9, 2014 at the Salishan Spa and Golf Resort at Glededen Beach, Oregon. The meeting was chaired by Jacqueline M. Jacobson. New officers and executive committee members were elected for 2015.

The section sponsored two CLEs this year. The first took place on May 9th and 10th, 2014, at the Salishan Spa and Golf Resort at Glededen Beach, Oregon, in conjunction with the section's annual meeting. The planning committee was lead by ALJ Geoff Wren, Board Member Sally Curey, and attorney Robert Kinney. The keynote speaker was Brad Avakian, Labor Commissioner for the State of Oregon. The seminar was approved for 9 general credits and featured presentations on claim preclusion, Washington workers' compensation law, concussion/mild traumatic brain injury, pain management and addiction, stress claims, temporary disability, and an appellate law update.

Our second seminar, the Bench/Bar Professionalism Forum, was held at the Oregon Gardens in Silverton, Oregon on October 24, 2014. The planning committee was led by attorney Kevin Barrett. The seminar featured speakers on ethics issues specific to workers' compensation practice, and child abuse reporting, and was approved for 2.25 ethics credits and 1 child abuse reporting credit.

In addition to our two primary CLEs, the Going Forward subcommittee, led by Steven Schoenfeld, has continued to work with the Multnomah Bar Association and the Oregon law schools to promote the practice of workers' compensation law. Due to their efforts, the University of Oregon will be offering a workers' compensation practice class in 2015, taught by section member Larry Schucht.

Finally, thanks to section member Rob Guarrasi, our section has published five newsletters electronically, available on the section's website, with a sixth publication planned before the end of the year.

Budget:

The section has maintained its budgetary goals for 2014, under Treasurer Ronald Bohy's leadership, with a beginning fund balance of \$19,660, and projected year-end fund balance of \$22,891. Contributions were made by the section to the Campaign for Equal Justice, and the Oregon Minority Lawyers Association.

Legislative Issues:

The section has two legislative proposals submitted to the Public Affairs office of the Oregon State Bar. One proposal addresses the timelines for appeal of a Notice of Closure by a beneficiary when a worker is deceased. The second proposal addresses the use of interpreters during the reconsideration proceeding.

Matters Considered/Matters Pending:

While the practice of workers' compensation law continues to increase in complexity, our membership has dwindled over the years. The reduction in attorneys practicing workers' compensation law raises significant concerns over access to justice for injured workers, especially in those more rural areas of the State of Oregon. As a result, in addition to the Going Forward committee's continued efforts to promote the practice of workers' compensation law, the section is pursuing two avenues to increase membership. The first involves the redesign of our section website, including the creation of a member directory. The second involves working with the Oregon State Bar's Lawyer Referral Service to reduce or eliminate the 12% referral fee, in the hopes of increasing the number of workers' compensation attorneys willing to participate in the program.

Many thanks to all those section members who have devoted their time to assisting with the section's activities this year.

Respectfully submitted,

ALJ Jacqueline M. Jacobson, Chair
Keith Semple, Chair-Elect
Tom Harrell, Secretary
Ronald Bohy, Treasurer
Norman Cole, Past Chair
Katherine Caldwell
Bin Chen
James Edmunson
Christine Frost
Allison Lesh
ALJ Jenny Ogawa
Carol Parks
Steven Schoenfeld
Dennis VavRosky
ALJ Geoffrey Wren