

Section Name:

Prepared by the Chairperson, Jovanna Patrick

Activities and accomplishments: It was another challenging year with COVID continuing to impact our practices. But our section rose to that challenge and was able to stay engaged with our members. The Executive Committee meetings were held via Zoom throughout the year. The section held our annual Bench Bar forum half-day CLE on September 17, 2021, generously hosted on Zoom by Reinisch Wilson Weier, PC. 159 people attended virtually. We had our in-person with Zoom option business meeting and two-day CLE event at Salishan on October 29-30, 2021. At that event, we awarded our annual Professionalism Award to Keith Semple, whose service to the section and commitment to the practice is unparalleled. It was lovely to see so many people in person, and we even had a costume contest where many participated, with attorney Rebecca Fey winning for her spot-on Bob Ross costume.

Katherine Caldwell attended the HOD meeting on October 29, 2021, representing the section. There were no resolutions specific to our section at that meeting this year.

We worked to revamp our website to make it more useful, user friendly, and up to date. This included adding an in memoriam section to honor members who have passed, links to the latest EC minutes, ways to contact the EC, registrations for Bench Bar and Salishan, access to past annual reports, and lists of past EC Chairs and Professionalism Award winners.

Spencer Aldrich, ALJ Jenny Ogawa and Allison B Lesh volunteered to serve as editorial review board members for the Legal Publications Department of OSB. Other section members have also shown interest in participating.

In connection with OWLs, the Section wrote a letter of support for Marcia Alvey to receive the posthumous OWLs President's Award for Diversity and Inclusion. Ms. Alvey was a tireless advocate for the rights of injured and disabled Oregonians and for the LGBTQ+ community. Following her untimely passing in late 2020, there was a great outpouring of memories, support, and grief in the workers' compensation community, which showed what an enormous influence she had on our section.

Our Access to Justice Subcommittee gave a presentation to MLAC of the survey results of the Vocational Benefits survey they had developed the prior year. This subcommittee also continued to work on projects related to post closure medical treatment, the timing of sponsoring exhibits and limitations on deposition requests, non-binary considerations on forms and at hearings, and access to justice issues around COVID, Zoom and telephonic hearings, and unrepresented claimants. This work will continue into 2022.

The section made charitable contributions of \$500 each to OMLA (Oregon Minority Lawyers) and the Classroom Law Project.

Budget:

We ended 2020 with \$16,201. Membership was 325 as of Dec 21, 2020. As of November 30 2021, we had \$17,601 in the bank and membership of 326.

Legislative matters:

Our Legislative and Rules subcommittee plans to develop a newsletter to inform members of any upcoming legislative matters that are of interest to the section. That is planned for the next legislative session. The section did not take a position on any legislation in 2021. The subcommittee has also started looking into the effect of changed post office delivery times on rules that rely in an assumption of a 3-day mailing period. This work continues into 2022.

Recommendations for Upcoming Year:

In the upcoming year, we plan to hold our annual business meeting and multi-day CLE on April 29-30, 2022, again with both in person and Zoom options. Whether Bench Bar will be in person or via Zoom has yet to be determined. Our Going Forward subcommittee hopes to hold an in-person event for new lawyers in the new year, as plans for such an event in 2021 had to be postponed due to COVID restrictions. The Going Forward subcommittee is also working on a mentor program within the section. We hope to move forward with a rule advisory committee on recommendations for uniform denial language that is easier to read and understand.

The EC officers next year will be: Allison B Lesh (Chair); Jovanna Patrick (Past Chair); Christine Coffelt Frost (Chair in Waiting); Andrea K Knight (Treasurer); Martin M Fisher (Secretary). Members at Large will be: Spencer Aldrich; ALJ Ian Brown; Katherine Caldwell; ALJ Trisha Fleishman; Philip Harry Garrow; Heather L Holt; ALJ Halah Ilias; Martie McQuain; ALJ Jenny Ogawa; Karli L Olson; Christo de Villiers; and John Young.

Any other comments:

I want to thank all of the members of our Executive Committee and subcommittees for their hard work for the section during this difficult year. A special thank you to past members rotating off the committee: Linda Conratt (treasurer); ALJ Bruce Smith (past chair); Carrie Wiplinger; Joe Di Bartolomeo; and Colin Hackett. Thank you all for your service.