

## Chair's Salishan remarks, 2025

Hello colleagues, it's great to see so many of you here today. I'm Ian Brown, I'm an ALJ and I've been chair of the workers' compensation section's executive committee for not quite four months. It's been an honor to be on the executive committee, and it's been an honor to work with you. The professionalism and collegiality of this section is remarkable. If you're new to the section or if this is your first time to Salishan, I hope you feel welcome.

I'd particularly like to recognize Martin Fisher, my predecessor as chair, with a plaque recognizing his service.

[past chair plaque]

Time is short, but I want to recognize our subcommittees. Without them, I don't know what good the executive committee would be.

Obviously, the **Salishan** committee puts this annual event together where claimants' and defense attorneys, Board members and staff attorneys, ALJs and support staff can get together and get to know each other outside of the litigation context. It's fun, there are always great presentations, and it's a tremendous value in terms of dollars for CLE credits. It's an amazing event because of decades of hard work by the members of this committee, past and present, who have made the Salishan meeting an institution and the defining event of the section.

The **Bench Bar** committee puts on our second big annual event. It's been through more changes, as they've been trying to find a venue big enough for the crowd. It's a great problem to have, too much demand for the event. It's CLE credits, it's fun and food, and it's less expensive and less of a time commitment than Salishan. It's a more accessible event and it's a great value.

The other committee whose events you might want to attend is **Going Forward**. I hope you got the email from its chair, Katie Krametbauer, yesterday. We want to engage and attract lawyers to this area of law, to stabilize and grow the section. The committee is planning to have two events this year. I'd like you to consider participating regardless of where you are in your career.

The **Access to Justice** committee works to remove barriers to justice in workers' compensation matters and you'll hear more from them in a couple hours.

We have two other committees, the **Nominations** and **Professionalism Award** committees. I'm particularly excited to get off the stage and get on with the Professionalism Award presentations, two this year, honoring Karli Olson, this year's recipient, and Bruce Smith, last year's recipient.

But before I do, money. In the interests of time, Andrea Knight, our treasurer, won't do a separate presentation. She did give me a ton of information before I came up here. I'll start with our balance, \$45,564 as of March 31. That number is a little deceptive, because it includes a lot of Salishan revenue but no Salishan expenses. Maybe more interesting is that we started the year with \$12,679, and we expect to end the year with a little more. The post-pandemic picture really looked bad, we ended 2021 with \$17,581, down to \$13,597 at the end of 2022, and \$12,157 at the end of 2023.

We have four sources of revenue, and we stabilized our budget by getting more money from all of them. Section dues and Salishan registration went up, we're charging for Bench-Bar, and we've been soliciting sponsorships for our events. Last year, when we were up about \$500 overall, that included \$4,300 of sponsorship revenue. Without our sponsors, we really might not be able to make our events happen.

Because we have two big expenses: Salishan and Bench-Bar. We have some basic expenses to even be a Bar section, starting with the state Bar support assessment of \$12 per member, there's also credit card processing fees, Zoom subscription, the cost of the awards. Years ago, we made donations to worthy causes, but we didn't do that in 2023 or 2024. We expect to spend a little money on Going Forward events. But the two big ones are Salishan and Bench Bar. Last year, Salishan alone was about 75% of overall section spending. And even though Bench-Bar is charging something for

attendance, it's still heavily subsidized by other section revenue to keep it more accessible. Those events make our budget look very different from most Bar sections, and we would have a very small and very predictable budget without them.

A note about membership. As of the end of March, we had 278 paid members and 298 total members. That's great! Up compared to 2024, which ended with 243 paid members and 274 total. We're about where we were at the end of 2023, not quite where we were at the end of 2022.

Obviously, the number of members paying \$35 is a source of income, but the membership dues also define the reserves we can carry over from year to year. If our balance exceeds membership times dues times two, the state Bar doubles our support assessment. So with our current membership and dues, we could carry over a cushion of about \$20,000 without getting in trouble. Again, we're not likely to get close to that, although we're doing okay. So bottom line: our section has worthwhile events, and events cost money, so we'll keep trying to figure out how to pay for them, and we're doing okay for now.

And with that, I've spent more time than I wanted to.