

2022 Western States Bar Conference

Speakers



Daniel "Kaniela" Kahikina Akaka, Jr. was born and raised in Nu'uano and Pauoa Valleys. He received his B.A. in Hawaiian Studies from the University of Hawai'i. Mr. Akaka is presently employed at the Mauna Lani Auberge Resorts Collection on the Island of Hawai'i, as the Kahu Hānai of the Living Culture Department. His position at the resort allows him to share the history and culture of Hawai'i with the hotel guests as well as the many school groups that come to Mauna Lani to learn about Hawaiian aquaculture as well as the history and stories of this ancient land known as Kalāhuipua'a.

Although he has been employed at Mauna Lani for 39 years, his business career has also included Aloha Airlines, Hawaiian Holidays, the Hawai'i Maritime Center, and American Hawai'i Cruises. In his work today, Mr. Akaka is involved in perpetuating the culture, the essence, and the Spirit of Hawai'i. To that end, he serves on a number of boards, including for the Bishop Museum, the Akaka Foundation for Tropical Forests, and the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame.

Mr. Akaka comes from a family of seven, which include his parents, Daniel (deceased) and Millie Akaka. He and his wife, formerly Anna Lui-Kwan (KS Class '72), have 5 children, one daughter, four sons and 2 grandchildren with one more on the way.



Erwin Chemerinsky is Dean and Jesse H. Choper Distinguished Professor of Law, University of California, Berkeley School of Law. Prior to assuming this position, he was the founding dean of the University of California, Irvine School of Law, and a professor at Duke Law School, University of Southern California Law School, and DePaul Law School.

He is the author of 14 books, including leading casebooks and treatises about constitutional law, criminal procedure, and federal jurisdiction. He also is the author of more than 200 law review articles. He is a contributing writer for the Opinion section of the Los Angeles Times, and writes regular columns for the Sacramento Bee, the ABA Journal, and the Daily Journal, and frequent op-eds in newspapers across the country. He frequently argues appellate cases, including in the United States Supreme Court.

In 2016, he was named a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2017, National Jurist magazine again named Dean Chemerinsky as the most influential person in legal education in the United States. In January 2021, he was named President-elect of the Association of American Law Schools.



Zachariah J. DeMeola is the Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Law School Admission Council (LSAC). Until recently, Zack was the Director of Legal Education and the Legal Profession at the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (IAALS), a national, independent research center at the University of Denver dedicated to facilitating continuous improvement and advancing excellence in the American legal system. At IAALS, he worked to improve the delivery of legal services through projects focused on education, licensing and admission into the profession, the intersection of law and technology, and the regulation of the legal profession. A former lawyer himself, DeMeola led the IAALS Unlocking Legal Regulation Project.

Today, as the new Director of Strategic Initiatives at LSAC, Zack contributes to new and innovative ways to educate and train lawyers while opening the profession to include more diversity. Zack remains committed to supporting regulatory innovation and continue that work on his own time. He is a featured speaker on these issues and his writings appear in publications across the country. He is also an advisor to states seeking guidance on regulatory innovation and access to justice.

Zack is a member of the Governing Council of the ABA Center for Innovation and a co-founder of the Denver Legal Hackers. He graduated from William & Mary School of Law, obtained a Master's degree in American Studies from the College of William and Mary, and received his B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania.



Joel F. England currently serves as Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of the State Bar of Arizona. Before coming to the Bar, Joel was the Chief Judge of the Yavapai-Apache Nation, a federally recognized Indian Tribe in Camp Verde, Arizona. He was responsible for the overall administration of the Court and presided over criminal and civil cases as well as an alternative disposition Wellness Court.

Prior to being a judge, he served for over 21 years in the United States Air Force. He held a variety of positions, including service as a prosecutor, defense counsel and as a deployed combat operations attorney advising on the law of armed conflict. His final assignments included serving as the Chief of Professional Responsibility for the Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corps and as the General Counsel for the 56th Fighter Wing at Luke Air Force Base. During his tenure at Luke Air Force Base, his team was recognized as the Arizona Corporate Counsel In-House Legal Department of the Year in 2016.

Joel graduated with academic distinction from the United States Air Force Academy with a B.A. in Legal Studies. He holds a JD from the University of Arizona College of Law, where he graduated summa cum laude and served as the Editor-in-Chief of the Arizona Journal of International and Comparative Law. Joel is a member of the Arizona, California, and District of Columbia bars.



Deborah Enix-Ross, a senior adviser to the International Dispute Resolution Group of Debevoise & Plimpton in New York City, is president-elect of the American Bar Association. Enix-Ross served as chair of the ABA House of Delegates, the ABA Center for Human Rights, the ABA International Law Section, and the ABA Section Officers Conference. She has also served as vice chair of the International Bar Association's Bar Issues Commission, ABA representative to the IBA, and as vice president of the World Justice Project.

Enix-Ross joined Debevoise & Plimpton in 2002. Previously, was senior legal officer with the World Intellectual Property Organization Arbitration and Mediation Center in Geneva, Switzerland. She also was a director of international litigation with Price Waterhouse and the American representative to the International Chamber of Commerce International Court of Arbitration.

Enix-Ross was appointed as one of the original eight U.S. members of the trilateral NAFTA Advisory Committee on Private Commercial Disputes. She is a member of the Advisory Committee of the New York Law School Alternative Dispute Resolution Skills Program. She is also a former member of the advisory board of the Institute for Transnational Arbitration, the ADR Advisory Board of the International Law Institute, and the Board of Directors of the American Arbitration Association.

Enix-Ross earned a B.A. in broadcast journalism from the University of Miami and J.D. from the University of Miami School of Law. She also received a diploma in comparative law from the Parker School of Foreign and Comparative Law of Columbia University and a certificate in international law from the London School of Economics.



Eric J. Farber is the Founder and CEO of Creators' Legal, the Legal Zoom for the Entertainment Business, the first and only DIY Legal Platform for content creators. Prior to founding Creators' Legal, Mr. Farber spent over 20 years as a Sports and Entertainment attorney. He represented Amaru Entertainment (the Estate of Tupac Shakur) for more than 18 years, as well as dozens of professional athletes and highly visible businesspeople. Mr. Farber is also the Founder and former CEO of Pacific Workers, The Lawyers for Injured Workers, which he grew from 4 people to over 80 with 6 offices.

In 2020, Mr. Farber published *The Case for Culture, How to Stop Being a Slave to Your Law Firm, Grow Your Practice and Actually Be Happy*. *The Case for Culture*, quickly hit #1 Bestseller on Amazon and was named by

Forbes as a top 8 book to "rethink work relationships."

Mr. Farber was on the Cultural Affairs Commission of the City of Oakland. He is a former president of the Inns of Court of San Francisco and formerly on the Board of Advisors for the Entrepreneurship Program at the Studio School, a Film and Acting University based in Los Angeles, where he also served as their first entrepreneurship professor.

In 2022, Mr. Farber was appointed to the United Nations commission on Latin American Human Rights. He grew up in Toronto, Canada and Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. Farber has a B.A. in Political Science from Arizona State University and a J.D. from Golden Gate Law School.



Judge Robert D.S. Kim, was sworn in on November 21, 2017, by Chief Justice Mark E. Recktenwald to serve as Judge of the Circuit Court of the Third Circuit (Kona). He is Chief Judge for Third Circuit and was an active participant in the Chief Justice Committee on Operations, which was established to address court operations issues due to COVID.

Prior to his appointment, Judge Kim was in private practice concentrating in criminal defense, family law, civil litigation, personal injury, and other administrative proceedings. He graduated from the University of Hawaii-Hilo with a B.A. in Political Science, and from the William S. Richardson School of Law at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.



Ann Morgan is a Director in the employment and labor law group at Fennemore Law in Reno, Nevada. Her work includes employment law, aviation and general business law matters. She serves in a general counsel capacity to private individuals as well as the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority. Ann is the past chairman of the Legal Affairs Committee for Airports Council International-North America, an industry group for airports throughout the United States, Canada and Europe.

Originally headed to graduate school in library science, Ann's plans changed when she fell for a guy and followed him to law school. She recently celebrated her 42nd wedding anniversary with "that guy," and the couple have enjoyed fortuitous careers in the law, including being the first husband and wife to serve as presidents of the State Bar of Nevada as well as the Washoe County Bar Association. In her work as an employment attorney, she

likes to analyze and prioritize, looking for opportunities to resolve her clients' issues in a manner that makes both business and legal sense. She truly loves being a labor attorney, and listening to clients – and her favorite moment is when she thinks: "I would love to work on solving that problem."

She enjoys mentoring young attorneys and is a frequent speaker on the practice of law, most recently on the subject of improving law firm diversity.



Patrick A. Palace is the owner of Palace Law and Palace Personal Injury Law Group. He is and has been a partner in a number of joint ventures with tech companies developing new tools for lawyers.

Patrick is a member of the National Conference of Bar Presidents, where he served on the Executive Counsel and chaired the 21st Century Lawyer Committee. He also serves on the editorial Board for GPSolo Magazine and was the convening editor for GPSolos “COVID and the Law” edition and the Reregulation edition (July – Aug 2021). He is on the ABA Center for Innovation Board and on the Data Standards Committee and is a Past President of the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA).

Patrick has presented at the Clio Cloud Conference, AVVOs Lawyernomics, the ABA TechShow, NCBP Annual and Midyear Conventions, and regularly presents at webinars and seminars at the local, state and national levels.

He has aired on over 60 podcasts, including podcasts by Bob Ambrogi (LawNext), the Lawyerist, Lawsome, Clienting, and multiple podcasts on Legal Talk Network’s “On the Road” and Jeena Cho’s “The Resilient Lawyer.” He regularly writes for legal publications including ABA GPSolo Magazine, NW Lawyer, and other magazines.

Patrick is a dedicated practitioner of yoga. He writes about mindfulness and speaks nationally of the topics regarding the future of the legal profession, data metrics, the state of legal regulation, practice management and life balance.

Finally, in 2015, Patrick opened a winery, Sunken Cellars, whose vintages include Cabernet Sauvignon, Albariño and an Italian red blend (“Tesoro Rosso”). (SunkenCellars.com).



Lucy Ricca is the Director of Policy and Programs for the Stanford Center on the Legal Profession. Before starting this role, Ricca was the first Executive Director of the Utah Office of Legal Services Innovation, a new regulator of legal services launched by the Utah Supreme Court.

Ricca has been immersed in the movement to reform regulation of the legal profession to increase innovation, market diversification, and access to justice. She was a Special Project Advisor at the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (“IAALS”), advising on the Unlocking Legal Regulation project. She served as the Executive Director of the Stanford Center on the Legal Profession from 2013 – 2018. She also served as a Lecturer at Stanford Law School and has written on the regulation of the profession, the changing practice of law, and diversity in the profession.

Ricca clerked for Judge James P. Jones of the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia. Before clerking, Ricca practiced white collar criminal defense, securities, antitrust, and complex commercial litigation as an associate at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe. Ricca received her B.A. cum laude in History from Dartmouth College and her J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law.



Dean Stephen Rispoli earned his political science degree from Baylor University in 2009, his J.D. from Baylor Law in 2012, and his LL.M. from the University of Texas School of Law in 2018. Rispoli serves as Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Strategic Initiatives and as the Director of Innovation and Scholarship for the school’s Executive LL.M. in Litigation Management.

Upon graduation from Baylor Law, Dean Rispoli began working with Professor Leah Teague to create and implement a Leadership Development Program for law students. Together, they created the Leadership Engagement and Development Course, which they have been teaching since 2012. In 2020, Associate Dean and Professor Patricia Wilson joined the team and the three co-taught the class. Last year, Dean Rispoli, Professor Teague, and Professor Elizabeth Fraley teamed up to write Fundamentals of Lawyer Leadership, a textbook aimed at encouraging all law students and lawyers to use their time, talent, and training to make a positive

difference in the world, no matter their position or title.

Fundamental to Baylor Law’s mission is to prepare all students to be competent, ethical lawyer-leaders at graduation and beyond, who are prepared to serve their clients and their communities. As Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Strategic Initiatives, Rispoli seeks new ways to accomplish this mission and help law students succeed at Baylor Law and in their future careers.



Ellyn S. Rosen is the Regulation and Global Initiatives Counsel of the American Bar Association Center for Professional Responsibility. She advises the ABA Standing Committee on Professional Regulation. The Committee’s mission is to assist the judiciary and the bar in the development, coordination, and strengthening of professional regulation throughout the United States, including the assessment of the ramifications of global legal regulatory and practice developments.

Ms. Rosen was Counsel to the ABA Commission on Ethics 20/20 (2009-2013), which reviewed and recommended changes to the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct and the U.S. system of lawyer regulation in response to the challenges that globalization and advances in technology present to clients, lawyers, law firms, and the public.

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She provided professional regulatory advice to the ABA Commission on the Future of Legal Services and advises the ABA Standing Committee on International Trade in Legal Services. She is the Chair of the International Bar Association's Bar Issues Commission Regulation Committee and has been a member of that Committee since 2016. She served on the International Bar Association's Professional Ethics Committee (2009-2010).

Ms. Rosen speaks frequently at international, state, and local bar programs regarding ethics, the regulation of the legal profession, and professionalism.

Prior to joining the Center in 1996, Ms. Rosen was a senior litigation counsel with the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission of the Supreme Court of Illinois. Ms. Rosen received her J.D. with honors from the Indiana University School of Law in Bloomington, Indiana.



Frank E. Stevenson is the 2021-22 president of the Western States Bar Conference. He is a past chair and past president of the State Bar of Texas and of the Dallas Bar Association. He has founded programs to advance professionalism for beginning lawyers and to expand diversity, as well as the nation's largest legal incubator, the Texas Opportunity and Justice Incubator (TOJI), which was his State Bar presidential initiative.

Frank is a past trustee of the Texas Bar Foundation, a past chair of the Dallas Bar Foundation, served on the Texas Commission to Expand Civil Legal Services, is a member of the State Bar's Pro Bono Workgroup, and won two awards from his region's legal-aid provider. He has led various Dallas civic and arts organizations, is a trustee of Grace Presbytery PC(USA), and served his alma mater, Amherst College, in numerous capacities and was awarded its Medal for Eminent Service.

A partner in the Dallas office of Locke Lord LLP, Frank has practiced real estate, transportation, governmental, and finance law there for 41 years. Frank graduated with a B.A. magna cum laude from Amherst in 1977 and received his J.D. from the University of Virginia in 1980. He and his wife, Helen, have three intermittently adult children and four glorious granddaughters.



Matthew Stubenberg graduated from Maryland Law School in 2013. Interested in using technology to change how the law is practiced, he first developed a mobile app named, "Not Guilty App" to more easily navigate the Maryland courthouses. Matthew then used his training in expungement law to create MDExpungement.com, a website which automated the expungement process and has been used to expunge more than 116,000 cases since launching in 2015.

Matthew worked at both Maryland Legal Aid and the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS) where he developed a fully searchable database of cases on Maryland Judiciary Case Search.

Currently, Matthew is the Associate Director of Legal Technology at Harvard Law School's Access to Justice where he conducts randomized controlled trials to determine which interventions in access to justice issue work and which do not. He is also an adjunct professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, William S Richardson School of Law.



Alex Vakula has practiced law in Arizona for 35 years. His practice emphasis is in the areas of real estate and business matters. Vakula graduated from Arizona State University, B.S. (Economics) summa cum laude and the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, J.D. He is chairman of the Arizona Community Foundation (Yavapai County) and a member of the Arizona Supreme Court Committee on Alternative Business Structures.

Vakula is also a past President of the State Bar of Arizona and has served on dozens of non-profit boards and committees. He is also a member of the Million Dollar Advocates Forum and has had an AV* Preeminent rating from the national legal directory Martindale-Hubbell for over 25 years. He lives in Prescott with his wife of 30 years, Maureen.



Tony Weiler was hired as the Executive Director of the State Bar Association of North Dakota (SBAND) in June 2013. Before coming to SBAND, Weiler was North Dakota's Labor Commissioner having been appointed by Governor John Hoeven in September 2010. He continued in that role under Governor Jack Dalrymple until his selection as Executive Director.

Weiler was a litigator with the Maring Williams Law Office from 2002 to 2010, concentrating in plaintiff's personal injury, and business and corporate law. Prior to that he was a general practitioner with the Wheeler Wolf Law Firm. Weiler clerked for the Honorable Dale V. Sandstrom of the North Dakota Supreme Court from 1998 until 1999. Weiler is a 1998 graduate of the University of North Dakota School of Law.

During his time as the Executive Director of SBAND, Weiler has served on various bar and Supreme Court Committees. He's also been an active member of the National Association of Bar Executives (NABE), serving in several leadership roles and is currently on the NABE Board of Governors.

Weiler is a Ft. Yates, ND native who now resides in Bismarck with his four children.



Leah Wilson was appointed to the position of Executive Director for the State Bar of California in 2017 and reappointed in 2021. In that capacity, she manages a \$206 million budget and 550 staff who are responsible for regulation, licensing, and discipline of California attorneys, as well as for promoting access to legal services and diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

Before joining the State Bar, Ms. Wilson served as the Court Executive Officer for the Alameda County Superior Court. There, in addition to being responsible for overall court operations, personnel, budget and policy, she took a particular interest in collaborative courts, and advocated for the use of risk assessment tools and an expansion of effective alternatives to incarceration.

Ms. Wilson holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy and a Juris Doctorate, both from the University of California, Berkeley, and is a member of the California State Bar. She also served as President of the Berkeley Unified School District's Board of Education.



Patricia Wilson, a graduate of Northwestern University Law School, has been a member of the Baylor Law faculty since 1993. In 2021, she assumed the position of Associate Dean, with responsibility for faculty and academic matters. During her time at Baylor Law, Dean Wilson has taught courses on Employment Discrimination, Employment Relations, Labor Law, and Family Law, and co-taught the LEAD course, along with Dean Stephen Rispoli and former Associate Dean Leah Teague. She taught the first year Property course for 12 years, and she has also taught courses on Antitrust, Intellectual Property, Consumer Protection, and Legal Writing.

Dean Wilson has served on or chaired numerous University and Law School committees, including more recently the Underrepresented Minority Faculty Working Group, created to make recommendations about improving the experiences of minority faculty members at Baylor, and for which Dean Wilson was appointed chair by the Baylor University Provost. Dean Wilson has also served on the boards of a wide variety of non-profit organizations. She is currently the Moderator of the Global Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Her bar activities include serving as a member of the Consumer and Commercial Law Council of the State Bar of Texas and as President of the Waco-McLennan County Bar Association.



Elizabeth Wright is the Executive Director of the Utah State Bar. Prior to her role as Executive Director, Ms. Wright served as General Counsel for the Utah State Bar from 2014 until 2021. She is a graduate of Hamilton College and Case Western Reserve School of Law. She is admitted in New York and Utah.
