



Spring Sections Seminar

April 29 – May 1, 2026

**The Virginian Hotel
Lynchburg**

Requesting 9.0 HRS CLE (1.0 HR Ethics)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29

6:00 PM — **Welcome Reception, *Academy Center of the Arts Patricia Harrington Gallery Building, 600 Main Street (Two blocks from the hotel)***

7:30 PM — **Dine Around Dinners**

THURSDAY, APRIL 30

8:00–9:00 AM — **Breakfast & Registration**

9:00–10:00 AM — **Legislative Update, 1.0 HR** (Organized by Legislative Committee)

10:00–11:00 AM — **Study of Recent Sovereign Immunity Cases, 1.0 HR** (Organized by Local Government)

Speakers will discuss the evolving doctrine of Sovereign Immunity in Virginia with detailed discussion and analysis of recent cases and decisions of the Courts of Appeals and Virginia Supreme Court, including special insight into recently remanded cases. The session will also reference proposed legislation in the General Assembly seeking to limit the doctrine's application.

Melissa A. Hamann, *City of Chesapeake*

Adam J. Lantz, *City of Chesapeake*

11:00-11:15 AM — **Break**

11:15–12:15 PM — **Is Your Indemnification Provision Enforceable? Applying Virginia Code § 11-4.1, 1.0 HR** (Organized by Corporate & Commercial)

Summary: Indemnity provisions relating to construction projects arise in a variety of circumstances. Since the Virginia Supreme Court's decision in *Uniwest Construction, Inc. v. Amtech Elevator Services* in 2010, in which the Court interpreted Virginia Code § 11-4.1, courts and practitioners alike wrestled with the limits of indemnification provisions in construction contracts. This panel will provide an overview of the fifteen years of Virginia state and federal case law that followed the *Uniwest* decision, including practical guidance for how to draft permissible indemnification provisions, how to avoid potential issues with such provisions, and how to litigate potentially void provisions.

Andrew O. Gay, *Gentry Locke*

Clay S. Hester, *Spotts Fain*

THURSDAY, APRIL 30 (Continued)

12:15-2:00 PM — **Lunch and Work Break**

2:00–3:00 PM — **Court of Appeals Update: Reflections on the Brave New World of the Right of Civil Appeals, 1.0 HR** (Organized by Appellate Advocacy)

This panel will feature a discussion with an appellate lawyer and three judges of the Court of Appeals of Virginia on the Commonwealth's new right of appeal and its impact on civil appellate practice across Virginia. The judges will discuss appellate procedure, common pitfalls to avoid, and effective briefing and oral advocacy.

Hon. Marla Graff Decker, *Court of Appeals of Virginia*

Hon. Frank K. Friedman, *Court of Appeals of Virginia*

Hon. Lisa M. Lorish, *Court of Appeals of Virginia*

Moderator: W. Thomas Chappell, *Woods Rogers Vandeventer Black*

3:00-3:15 PM — **Break**

ATTEND EITHER THE GENERAL SESSIONS OR MEDICAL MALPRACTICE

GENERAL SESSIONS

3:15–4:15 PM — **Advanced Removal Strategy: Winning the Fight Over Federal Jurisdiction, 1.0 HR** (Organized by Policy Coverage)

This session explores strategic removal and remand practice, including snap removal, fraudulent joinder, nominal parties, realignment, and abstention. Designed for civil defense counsel, it offers practical guidance on securing federal jurisdiction, anticipating remand challenges, and understanding evolving case law.

Kathryn Bonorchis, *Lewis Brisbois*

John Mumford, *Hancock Daniel*

4:15–5:15 PM — **Right to Repair Laws, 1.0 HR** (Organized by Products & Toxic Torts)

Right to Repair laws require manufacturers to provide owners and independent repair shops with access to parts, tools, and documentation to repair digital electronic equipment. Proponents of these laws want to give consumers the right to repair the products they purchase and forego relying on manufacturers to repair faulty equipment. The question becomes, then, who bears the responsibility for faulty repairs that cause injury? We will discuss these new laws and regulations, case developments, and possible exposure for faulty repairs. We will discuss how courts will allocate responsibility among manufacturers, independent repair shops, and consumers. In addition, we will discuss potential defense strategies. For the last few years, bills have been introduced during the General Assembly session in Virginia which would require manufacturers to provide access to tools, parts, and documentation so that individual consumers can repair their own digital products. The bills have died in session, but they will continue to be pushed.

OR

THURSDAY, APRIL 30 (Continued)

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE (PART 1)

3:15 -4:15 PM — **Defending the Medicine: Translating Complex Care for Virginia Juries - A Trial and Carrier Perspective, 1.0 HR**

This session will prove strategies for presenting complex medical care to juries in a clear, credible and persuasive way while keeping their attention throughout the duration of the trial. It will also incorporate observations from the carrier side - including how they have seen changes in plaintiff strategies at trial (theatrical, getting closer to Golden Rule use, anchoring) and implementing methods to counter.

Amber Bockin, *The Doctors Company*

4:15 -5:15 PM — **The Invisible Advantage: What Modern Trial Teams Are Doing Differently, 1.0 HR**
Description TBD

Matt Banks, *River City Trial Solutions*

Susan Mitchell, *River City Trial Solutions*

Omar Maldonato, *River City Trial Solutions*

5:15-6:30 PM — **Networking Reception**

6:45-9:00 PM — **Dinner on Your Own**

6:45-9:00 PM — **Optional Women's Section Dinner**

9:00-10:30 PM — **Late Night**

FRIDAY, MAY 1

8:00-9:00 AM — **Breakfast**

ATTEND EITHER THE GENERAL SESSIONS OR MEDICAL MALPRACTICE

GENERAL SESSIONS

9:00-10:00 AM — **Session Title/Speaker(s) TBD** (Organized by Auto & Transportation)

10:00-11:00 AM — **The Requirements for a Willful Misconduct Defense to Workers' Compensation Claims in Virginia, 1.0 HR** (Organized by Workers' Compensation)

A willful misconduct defense can be a complete bar to a claimant's request for benefits. However, navigating a successful defense involves many intricacies and procedural requirements that will be explored in this presentation. Specifically, this presentation will explore the timeline requirements to assert the defense, as well as the threshold required in each prong to successfully assert the defense.

Albert Gutierrez, *Woods Rogers*

OR

FRIDAY, MAY 1 (Continued)

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE (PART 2)

9:00–10:00 AM — **Virginia Consumer Protection Act, 1.0 HR**

Description TBD

Ed Bailey, *Hancock Daniel*

10:00–11:00 AM — **How to Attack Damages, 1.0 HR**

Description TBD

Michala Black, *Harman Claytor Corrigan & Wellman*

Kambria Talley, *Hancock Daniel*

11:00–11:20 PM — **Box Meals Available for Working Lunch**

11:20–11:30 PM — **Wellness Minute & Wellness Basket Raffle Winner Announced**

11:30–12:30 PM — **Session Title/Speaker(s) TBD** (Organized by Professional Liability, 1.0 HR ETHICS)

12:30 PM — **Adjourn**