

## **2017 NATIONAL BOND CLAIMS SPEAKER BIOS**

### **Luis Aragon**

#### ***Liberty Mutual***

Luis Aragon is Surety Claim Counsel for Liberty Mutual Insurance Company. Prior to Liberty Mutual, Luis spent over two years as a surety attorney in the Seattle office of Watt Tieder Hoffar & Fitzgerald. Luis has a B.A. in History with Honors and a B.S. in Biochemistry, both from the University of Washington. Luis also receives his J.D. from the University of Washington. Luis simply cannot find it in himself to leave Seattle. Outside of work, Luis has a wife who is a better lawyer than he is, and two amazing young daughters. When the ladies let him out of the hose, he enjoys playing soccer. He'll leave the excellent golfing to John McDevitt.

### **Todd R. Braggins**

#### ***Ernstrom & Dreeste, LLP***

Todd R. Braggins is Managing Partner of Ernstrom & Dreeste, LLP, in Rochester, New York. Mr. Braggins concentrates his practice in the fields of contract and commercial suretyship and construction law. In addition to Mr. Braggins' membership in the National Bond Claims Association, Mr. Braggins is an active member of the Fidelity and Surety Law Committee ("FSLC") of the ABA's Tort Trial and Insurance Practice, currently serving as a Vice-Chair, as well as Co-Editor of the FSLC Newsletter. Mr. Braggins is also a member of the Surety Claims Institute, the Pearlman Association, the Chicago, Atlanta and Philadelphia Surety Claims Associations, and the ABA's Forum on the Construction Industry. Mr. Braggins graduated with honors from Binghamton University and received his Juris Doctor from the Washington College of Law of The American University.

### **Albert L. Chollet, III**

#### ***Watt, Tieder, Hoffar & Fitzgerald, L.L.P.***

Bert Chollet is a Partner in the Chicago office of Watt, Tieder, Hoffar & Fitzgerald, L.L.P. Exclusively counseling sureties and entitles within the construction industry, Bert represents clients in investigations, transactions and litigation arising out of projects located throughout the United States and internationally. His clients include sureties, contractors, design professionals, engineers, and other corporate entitles engaged in publicly and privately owned projects. He is experienced in handling and managing litigation and construction claims, project defaults, creditors' rights in bankruptcy, bid disputes, lien and bond claims, MBE/WBE compliance, and licensing matters.

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### **Jonathan P. Cohen**

#### ***Jonathan P. Cohen, P.A.***

Jonathan P. Cohen is an attorney at the law firm of Jonathan P. Cohen, P.A. in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. His practice is focused on surety, construction, and commercial matters. Originally from Pennsylvania, Mr. Cohen received his B.S. (104) from University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, and his J.D. (2002) from Widener University of Law, Wilmington, Delaware. Mr. Cohen is admitted to practice in Florida and Pennsylvania, and in the United States District Courts for the Northern, Middle, and Southern Districts of Florida, and the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Prior to a career in law, Mr. Cohen was licensed as a Series 7, 63, and 53 investment officer in a large financial institution where he advised business and retail clients with respect to investing in fixed-income securities.

### **Rex Crosswhite**

#### ***Fort Worth District of USACE***

Rex Crosswhite is the District Counsel for the Fort Worth District, US Army Corps of Engineers. He received his legal education at Southern Methodist University and his undergraduate degree from the University of Texas at Arlington. He has been employed as an attorney for the US Army Corps of Engineers in excess of 30 years working primarily on contract formation issues, contract claims, contract litigation, and issues relating to Miller Act Performance and Payment Bonds. He served many years as a trial attorney litigating construction contract issues before the GAO, Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals, Court of Federal Claims and the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. He has also litigated NEPA cases in US District Court as a Special Assistant US Attorney. Prior to his employment with the Corp of Engineers, he was an attorney for Fidelity and Deposit Company of Maryland handling legal issues arising from an array of Federal, state and private surety bonds, primarily those bonds issued in connection with construction contracts. He is the lead legal instructor for the USACE Learning Center in the Construction Contract Administration Court, and has been an adjunct professor at UT Arlington teaching construction law and AE professional liability in the School of Engineering.

### **Mark Degenaars**

#### ***The Vertex Companies, Inc.***

Mark Degenaars is the Executive Vice President of the Construction Consulting group with in The Vertex Companies, Inc. He has been with VERTEX for over 5 years with a primary focus as a consultant to the surety claims industry and private/public developers. Mark brings over 20 years of project management, facility management, private/public development and construction experience to each assignment. Mark has successfully managed a large variety of projects ranging from various types of vertical construction to heavy highway/civil design projects. Mark has served as an expert and fact witness for a variety of projects. Prior to joining VERTEX, Mark owned and managed his own consulting firm for nearly a decade.

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### **Rudy Dominguez**

#### ***Liberty Mutual***

Rudy A. Dominguez is Surety Claims Counsel for Liberty Mutual Surety in Dallas, TX. Rudy handle contract bond claims for Liberty's Central Region. He is a graduate of The University of Texas and The University of Texas School of Law. He is a member of the Texas State Bar and has obtained his CPCU, AFSB and Are designations.

### **Jennifer Fiore**

#### ***Dunlap Fiore, LLC***

As a principal in Dunlap Fiore, LLC, Ms. Fiore specializes in surety law, construction law, business law, litigation as well as Public Finance. She serves as a Vice-Chair on the American Bar Association's Fidelity & Surety Law Committee and is also a committee member of the American Bar Association's Fidelity and Surety Law Committee - Construction Law Subdivision. Ms. Fiore's practice includes representation of regional, national, and international clients in all phases of the construction industry. Ms. Fiore represents sureties, building contractors and subcontractors and has been actively involved in negotiations with project owners, creditors, and financial troubled contractors during all states of the construction process. Ms. Fiore has handled all matters concerning default, project completion, and financing arrangements. Ms. Fiore has experience in contracting issues involving the Federal Acquisition Regulation and has assisted clients with compliance of the Federal Contractor ethics rules.

### **James Keating**

#### ***Allied World Insurance Company***

James A. (Jim) Keating is Assistant Vice President and Head of Surety Claims at Allied World Insurance Company. Mr. Keating is a member of the ABA/TIPS Fidelity and Surety Law Committee, and is an FSLC Vice-Chair for 2015-2016, is on the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Claims Association, a member of the National Bond Claims Association, and is a member of the Surety & Fidelity Claims Institute and PA Bar Association. Mr. Keating is a 2002 graduate of the Widener University School of Law. He earned his undergraduate degree from St. Joseph's University in 1999.

### **John McDevitt**

#### ***Liberty Mutual***

John McDevitt is the Regional Vice President of Global and Specialty Surety Claims for Liberty Mutual Insurance Company. Prior to joining Liberty Mutual Insurance Company in 2012, he was Bond Claim Counsel for The Hanover Insurance Group for 6 years, and, before that, in private practice in Boston primarily representing contractors in construction-related disputes (on those rare occasions when dispute arose on construction projects). He has a B.A. in History from bates College and a J.D. from Suffolk University Law School. John does not think it's possible for him to be a worse golfer, but he remains willing to keep trying.

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### **John W. Morris**

#### ***McElroy, Deutsch, Mulvaney & Carpenter, LLP***

John W. Morris is co-chair of the Construction/Surety Practice Group at McElroy, Deutsch, Mulvaney & Carpenter. Mr. Morris practices in the areas of construction litigation, surety and fidelity coverage litigation, bankruptcy law, environmental litigation, and subrogation involving construction-defect and builders' risk matters.

Representative clients include public and private owners, general contractors, subcontractors, utility and heavy highway contractors, completing sureties, contract and commercial sureties, and general liability, property, and builders' risk underwriters facing construction disputes and project completion issues.

Mr. Morris' environmental experience pertains to contractor pollution liability cases and cost-cap issues, as well as related compliance and litigation matters. Mr. Morris also concentrates in the area of federal procurement involving bid protests, negotiation of change orders and equitable adjustment claims, as well as the prosecution of such claims through the Board of Contract Appeals and the Federal Court of Claims.

### **Daniel Oldenkamp**

#### ***CNA Surety***

Dan Oldenkamp received his B.A. in Political Studies from Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa in 2004. He went on to earn both a Masters of Arts in Liberty Studies (M.A.L.S.) in Ethics and Values and a J.D. at Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Indiana. Dan joined CNA Surety as a contract surety claims adjustor-attorney in 2008 and was promoted to Senior Claims Counsel in 2014, and he regularly participates in the Chicago Surety Claims Association and other industry forums. He, along with his wife and three children, live in South Holland, Illinois, and he keeps especially active with school board, church activities, leading a boys' club, enjoying the outdoors, and building home and hobby projects.

### **Scott Olson**

#### ***SureTec***

Scott Olson is Vice President and Director on Contractor Support Service for SureTec Insurance Company and SureTec Information Systems, Inc., SureTec's Risk Management division in Austin, Texas. Mr. Olson received a B.S. from the University of North Texas.

### **Ali Salamirad**

#### ***Salamirad, Morrow, Timpane & Dunn LLP***

Ali Salamirad is a founding partner at Salamirad, Morrow, Timpane & Dunn LLP in Irvine, California. Mr. Salamirad received his law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law. He represents the Nation's leading sureties in a wide range of litigation and transactional matters.

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### **Richard E. Tasker**

#### ***Sage Associates, Inc.***

Richard Tasker is President of Sage Associates, Inc. and has been active as a Construction and Surety consultant for approximately 40 years. He is honored to have worked for most, if not all of the Surety companies which attend the NBCA and looks forward to renewing acquaintances. He has provided professional services through the U.S. and Caribbean, been designated and testified in multiple State and Federal jurisdictions and has functioned as a standing neutral on very large construction matters. Mr. Tasker's most recent professional challenge is to utilize his experience as an early state Construction Mediator. He has many non-work interests including traveling, skiing, golfing, big game hunting, high altitude mountaineering and fishing.

### **John P. Wilson**

#### ***Sompo International***

John P. Wilson is the Vice President for the Surety Claim Department at Sompo International, whose principal place of business is 750 Third Avenue, 10th Floor, New York, NY. Mr. Wilson has been in the surety bond industry for over 25 years.

Mr. Wilson handles and manages a variety of commercial surety and contract/surety matters, concentrating in construction surety disputes involving federal, state and local government entities. In this capacity, Mr. Wilson is experienced in negotiating resolution of defaulted contracts, through either financing efforts of the defaulted contractor or reprocurement through substitute contractors. Mr. Wilson's experience includes the development and management of claims and litigation associated with recovery efforts in connection with the prosecution of contractors' claims for disputed extra work, differing site condition, and delay claims.