



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
WORKERS' COMPENSATION JUDICIARY, INC.
PRESENTS

17TH ANNUAL NATIONAL WORKERS' COMPENSATION JUDICIARY COLLEGE

PROGRAM AGENDA

AUGUST 24, 25 & 26, 2026

THE ORLANDO WORLD CENTER MARRIOTT,
ORLANDO, FLORIDA

ORGANIZATION

The National Association of Workers' Compensation Judiciary, Inc. (NAWCJ) is a professional nonprofit organization devoted exclusively to the adjudication of workers' compensation matters at the trial and appellate level. Since its formation in 2008, NAWCJ has sought to provide a national forum for the enhancement of the workers' compensation adjudicatory process and justice system; the improvement of the judicial skills of workers' compensation judges, adjudicators, and administrators through its educational conferences and publications; and the opportunity for these adjudicators and officials nationwide to periodically meet and discuss issues of mutual concern in a supportive environment.

NAWCJ is committed to diversity and a national presence in its officers and membership, and welcomes current and former state, federal, and local judges, administrative law judges, hearing officers, referees, commissioners, and agency heads, including appellate authorities. Members have come from the following states: Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Associate non-voting membership is open to attorneys, law professors, and other professionals involved in the field of workers' compensation law.

MISSION

The mission and goals of NAWCJ are:

- To provide high quality educational training and forums to workers' compensation adjudicators and administrators on matters unique to this system of justice and commonality of issues, regardless of the differing states' substantive workers' compensation laws;
- To develop strong working relationships with other professional organizations that share NAWCJ's objectives for the advancement of workers' compensation law and the improvement of its justice system;
- To develop mutual professional relationships and exchanges of information among its membership;
- To promote scholarly research and discussion regarding issues of common interest to the nation's workers' compensation adjudicators; and
- To monitor changes in the states' workers' compensation legislation and executive directives that impact the adjudication of workers' compensation claims and, when requested by these authorities, to address matters for improvement of the justice system;

It is also the association's objective to work with other educational-based groups in providing leadership and promote justice within the workers' compensation system. NAWCJ presents, in partnership with other organizations, its National Workers' Compensation Judiciary College in conjunction with the annual Workers' Compensation Educational Conference (established in 1949 and currently attracting approximately 7,000 attendees). The educational conference will take place in August this year at the Marriott World Center in Orlando, Florida. As a part of the association's Judiciary College, attendees are permitted to participate in the educational conference, one of the largest gatherings of workers' compensation professionals in the United States, taking advantage of breakouts and the exhibitor halls. For information concerning the annual Workers' Compensation Educational Conference, please refer to its website at www.wci360.com. Continuing legal education credits will be applied for from the various jurisdictions represented by attendees.

WWW.NAWCJ.ORG

GENERAL INFORMATION

The date of the National Workers' Compensation Judiciary College has been set for August 24, 25 & 26, 2025. The College will be held at The Orlando World Center Marriott, 8701 World Center Drive, Orlando, FL 32821, in conjunction with the 79th Annual Workers' Compensation Educational Conference.

PROGRAM:

The program for the Judiciary College is designed to address issues uniquely related to the adjudication of workers' compensation matters allowing participants to interact with others from different jurisdictions on issues of common concern. Although NAWCJ allows associate membership, the College is exclusively for workers' compensation adjudicators and administrators (both at the trial and appellate levels), allowing for a free and open interchange of ideas to improve the adjudicatory process in workers' compensation systems throughout the country. The Judiciary College program will also take advantage of select courses presented by the concurrent Workers' Compensation Educational Conference. For a copy of the complete program of the Workers' Compensation Educational Conference, go to www.wci360.com.



ENTERTAINMENT:

Fortunately, the College is not an “all work and no play” experience. This year, on Monday night, the Conference presents Bret Michaels. Complimentary heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served.

CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION INFORMATION:

Continuing legal education credits will be available to the attendees of the Judiciary College. When registering, please note the jurisdiction or association from which you seek certification.

SHUTTLE:

Complimentary shuttle service will be provided between the Marriott and the Caribe as follows: Sunday 7:00 am – 12:00 midnight, Monday 6:30 am – 1:00 am, Tuesday 7:30 am – 12:00 midnight, and Wednesday 7:00 am – 3:00 pm.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP:

The mission statement for the National Association of Workers' Compensation Judiciary, Inc. (NAWCJ) is contained in this brochure. Association membership is encouraged by members of the judiciary and the non-judiciary. Annual membership fees for the judiciary is \$75.00 per year, which is included in the College Registration Fee, or \$195 for three years. Associate membership for the non-judiciary members is \$250.00 per year.



SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorships in support of the educational efforts of the Judiciary College are available in the following categories:

Judiciary College Sponsorship - \$1000

- Acknowledgement in the Judiciary College materials
- Logo on a sign inside the Judiciary College classroom
- Video and verbal acknowledgement at the Judiciary College
- Attend the reception with the judges and regulators
- Acknowledgement on the NAWCJ website
- Acknowledgement in NAWCJ's Lex and Verum newsletter
- Table-Top Booth (limited number of booths available)

Table-Top Booth - \$500

- Includes a 6 ft. draped table and a chair
- Acknowledgement in the Judiciary College materials

Beverage Break Sponsorship - \$250 per break; \$500 per day

Each Beverage Break Sponsorship includes:

- A sign with company logo posted at the break station and a small cocktail table for company materials
- Acknowledgement in the Judiciary College materials

Beverage breaks will be held in the foyer for the following dates/times:

Monday, August 24th

9:50 – 10:00 a.m.
11:00 – 11:10 a.m.
1:30 – 1:45 p.m.
2:50 – 3:00 p.m.
3:50 – 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, August 25th

9:45 – 10:00 a.m.
10:50 – 11:00 a.m.
11:50 – 12:00 p.m.
2:00 – 2:10 p.m.
3:00 – 3:10 p.m.

Wednesday, August 26th

9:50 – 10:00 a.m.
10:50 – 11:00 a.m.

PROGRAM AGENDA

MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2026

8:00 – 8:50 am **Registration and Information**
Outside of Grand Ballrooms 1 - 6,
Convention Level

NATIONAL WORKERS' COMPENSATION JUDICIARY COLLEGE

Limited to Workers' Compensation Adjudicators and Regulators only.
Grand Ballrooms 4 - 6, Convention Level

8:50 – 9:00 am **Welcome and Introductions**

9:00 – 9:50 am **Practical Safety for Judges
and Their Families**

James Brinson, Deputy Director
Mississippi Office of Homeland Security

This presentation outlines essential security considerations for judges, judicial employees, and their families in home, office, and travel settings. It covers both physical and cyber safety, including risk awareness, protective planning, and how to recognize and respond to threats and active attacks. The session will also discuss contingency planning for dealing with an incident after it occurs.

9:50 – 10:00 am **Break**

10:00 – 11:00 am **Evidence - What Does it Matter?
A Continuing Discussion**

Honorable Jacquelyn Newman, Judge
Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

Honorable Amanda Luedtke
*Administrative Law Judge
Wisconsin Department of Administration
Office of Worker's Compensation Hearings
Division of Hearings and Appeals*

Honorable Michael Alvey, Chairman
Kentucky Workers' Compensation Board

D. Edward Wise, Managing
Deputy Commissioner
*Bristol Regional Office, Virginia
Workers' Compensation Commission*

Honorable Frank R. McKay,
Appellate Judge and Director
*Georgia State Board of
Workers' Compensation*

This panel consists of a moderator and two trial judges and two appellate judges, with one trial judge and one appellate judge from jurisdictions that have an evidence code, and one trial judge and one appellate judge from jurisdictions that don't have an evidence code. The panel will (1) discuss cases from each of the represented jurisdictions where rulings on the admissibility of evidence determined or materially affected the outcome; and/or (2) if there's time, the panel will discuss hypotheticals and whether/how outcomes might change, depending on the existence of strict rules of evidence.

11:00 – 11:10 am **Break**

11:10 – 12:00 pm **Complexity of PTSD and
the Injured Worker**

Gordon J. Horn, Ph.D.
*National Deputy Director of Clinical
Outcomes Services at Sevita*

This presentation examines the diagnosis of PTSD and how it may be recognized as a work-related injury through case examples and application of diagnostic criteria. It explores the condition's complexity, including long-term considerations and lifelong impacts. The session also discusses how PTSD can interact with and complicate other workplace injuries.

12:00 – 12:40 pm **Annual Business Meeting and
Lunch**

Grand Ballrooms 1 & 2

12:40 – 1:30 pm **Comparative Law Panel**

Honorable Shannon Bruno-Bishop
Louisiana Office of Workers' Compensation

Honorable Catherine Tanaka Surbeck,
Judge
*Workers' Compensation Appeals Board
Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry*

Honorable Laura Beasley,
Administrative Law Judge
Kentucky Workers' Compensation Board

Honorable Sylvia Medina-Shore, Judge
Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

It is always interesting to learn how other jurisdictions' policies and procedures vary from ours. The Comparative Law Panel is a perennial NAWCJ favorite where assembled adjudicators get a view of some of the substantive and procedural similarities and differences

in states' workers' compensation laws. This panel will discuss the different agency structures, hearing processes, appellate processes, and settlement processes, as well as the approaches states take in addressing common issues confronted by workers' compensation adjudicators. Audience participation expands the scope of the panelists' perspectives, resulting in, what is always, a very exciting session.

1:30 – 1:45 pm **Break**

1:45 – 2:00 pm **Announcements**

2:00 – 2:50 pm **Tips for Opinion Writing to Avoid Reversal**

Honorable Michael Alvey
*Chairman, Kentucky Workers'
Compensation Board*

Honorable Timothy W. Conner
*Presiding Judge, Workers' Compensation
Appeals Board
Tennessee Bureau of Workers' Compensation*

This session involves identifying common mistakes, errors, and pitfalls, in decisions and orders issued by adjudicators. The panel will provide suggestions for writing more effective decisions and creating/preserving the appellate record.

2:50 – 3:00 pm **Break**

3:00 – 3:50 pm **Judging in the Moment**

Honorable Pamela Beason Johnson
*Workers' Compensation Judge
Tennessee Court of Workers'
Compensation Claims*

Attendees will view scripted videos of mock hearings with various vignettes/scenarios commonly seen in workers' compensation disputes. Judge Johnson will then lead a discussion with the attendees to discuss ways to address the issues presented in the videos.

3:50-4:00 p.m. **Break**

4:00-4:50 p.m. **Judging in the Moment** *(continued)*

4:50 pm **Adjourn**

5:00 – 6:00 pm **NAWCJ and SAWCA Reception**
Grand Ballrooms 1 & 2

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2026

8:45 – 9:45 am

Live Surgery

Palms Ballroom, Canary

10:00 – 10:50 am

Remembering the Basics of Legal Writing and Bridging the Gap to a New Generation of Practitioners.

Grand Ballrooms 4-6, Convention Level

Kristy D'Angelo-Corker
*Associate Professor of Law
Coordinator of Legal Research and Writing
Barry University
Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law*

The days of IRAC were long and true, and are still used for test-taking purposes, but students today are learning CREAC as the structure for legal analytical writing when writing for practice. Our communication will be enhanced by understanding their formatting, and perhaps by adjusting ours. This session will include overviews of how lawyers are currently being instructed, challenges in legal writing generally, and ways that our structure, context, and product can provide better service to the parties and practice.

10:50 – 11:00 am

Break

11:00 – 11:50 am

Working with Self-Represented Litigants

John Gabriel "Gabe" Goggiola,
*Commissioner
South Carolina Workers'
Compensation Commission*

Honorable Lisa A. Lowe, Workers'
Compensation Judge
*Tennessee Court of Workers'
Compensation Claims*

Honorable Tonya M. Clemons,
Administrative Law Judge
Kentucky Workers' Compensation Board

Self-represented litigants pose a wide range of challenges. This session will explore best practices for maintaining neutrality while ensuring access to justice. The discussion will include communication and courtroom management techniques, ethical considerations and tools to promote fairness, efficiency and respect where one or more parties lack representation.

11:50 – 12:00 pm **Break**

12:00 – 1:00 pm **Lunch**
Grand Ballrooms 1 & 2

1:00 – 2:00 pm **The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly: Bizarre, Unusual, and Pivotal Workers' Compensation Cases from 2025 and 2026**

Honorable Wesley G. Marshall,
Commissioner, Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission

Commissioner Marshall will lead a lively, interactive discussion of bizarre, interesting, and pivotal workers' compensation cases from across the Country for 2025 and 2026. There will be plenty of opportunities to ponder and learn. Don't miss the chance to weigh in and offer your opinion on why some workers' compensation courts got it right or got it wrong!

2:00 – 2:10 pm **Break**

2:10 – 3:10 pm **The Science of Memory**
Joyce W. Lacy, PhD
Clinical Associate Professor
University of Buffalo

How does a person's brain process seeing the occurrence of a single event, and how does the memory of the event get "stored" in the brain for later recall? Find out the answers to these questions and more in this thought-provoking presentation on the science of memory.

3:10-3:20 p.m. **Break**

3:20-4:20 p.m. **Interacting with Those with Whom They Work: How Judges Got Themselves In Trouble.**
Marshall L. Davidson, III, Esquire
Chief Disciplinary Counsel
Tennessee Board of Judicial Conduct

There is no shortage of ways judges can run afoul of ethical standards designed to foster public confidence in the judiciary's impartiality, integrity, and professionalism. One frequent source of difficulty for judges stems from how judges interact with court clerks, court staff, colleagues, and others. This session focuses on a judge's ethical obligations when dealing with those with whom they work and the myriad ways judges have gotten themselves in trouble while doing so.

4:20-4:30 p.m. **Announcements**

4:30 pm **Adjourn**

6:00 pm **NAWCJ Dinner**

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2026

Grand Ballrooms 4-6, Convention Level

9:00-9:50 a.m. **Mental Health Under High Stress**
Marcio W. Vallardes, Esq.,
Assistant Director
Florida Lawyers Assistance

Presenter will illuminate common challenges of being on the bench and explore various ways you can maintain mental and physical fitness for a productive, rewarding and happy tenure of service.

9:50-10:00 a.m. **Break**

10:00-10:50 a.m. **Rise of the Machines: AI and the Future of Workers' Comp**
Mr. Robert Wilson, President
WorkCompCollege.com
John Koenig, Director of
Information Technology
Kentucky Employers' Mutual Insurance
Micheal I. Fish, Esquire
Fish, Nelson & Holden, LLC

An honest look at the technologies transforming the industry — the extraordinary promise, the significant dangers, and the choices that will determine whether they serve recovery or simply make the current system faster at doing the wrong things.

10:50-11:00 a.m. **Break**

11:00-11:50 a.m. **Survey Says Workers' Comp!**
Honorable Shannon Bruno Bishop, Judge
Louisiana Office of Workers' Compensation
Honorable Pamela Beason Johnson,
Workers' Compensation Judge
Tennessee Court of Workers' Compensation Claims

Participants will step into a lively, workers' comp-themed version of the classic Family Feud game. Using real survey results collected from adjudicators, attendees will compete to guess the most common responses to practical, day-to-day challenges in workers' compensation adjudication.

11:50 a.m.

Closing Comments and Adjournment

REGISTRATION FORM

Name

Agency Name (as you wish it to appear on name badge)

Title

Business Mailing Address

Agency Website

City

State

ZIP

Telephone Number

Fax Number

Email Address

Continuing Legal Education or Bar License Number

State/Jurisdiction/Association

Will you attend the lunch on Monday, August 23, 2026? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Will you attend the lunch on Tuesday, August 24, 2026? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Will you attend the dinner at Big John's Rockin' BBQ on Tuesday, August 24, 2026? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, do you need transportation to Big John's Rockin' BBQ? ☐ Yes ☐ No Cell number: _____

☐ Check here if you have special needs that require attention.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS: For your convenience a block of sleeping rooms has been reserved at the Caribe Royale Resort & Conference Center (8101 World Center Drive, Orlando, FL 32821) for this event. The sleeping room rate is \$140.00 single/double per night, plus tax. Cut-off date is July 14, 2025. Shuttle service will be provided to and from the Marriott World Center from the Caribe. The Caribe has a self-parking fee of \$20.00, plus tax, per day for overnight guests, plus a resort fee of \$20 per night, which includes wifi. Valet parking \$40.00 per night. To make your reservation go to <https://book.passkey.com/event/50956607/owner/186/home>. Sleeping rooms must be confirmed with credit card along with first night's deposit, refundable up to 3 days in advance of arrival. Checkout prior to guest's reserved checkout date will result in an early checkout fee equal to 1 night's room, plus tax.

COLLEGE REGISTRATION FEE: Advance Registration for Members of NAWCJ - \$225; \$265 after July 20, 2025. Advance Registration for Non-Members of NAWCJ - \$350; \$360 after July 20, 2025. Call for discounted registration fees for five or more attendees from the same agency.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP: To become a member of NAWCJ please select from the following:

☐ Member \$75 - one year (Workers' Compensation Judges)

☐ Associate Member \$250 - one year

☐ Member \$195 - three years (Workers' Compensation Judges)

SPONSORSHIPS: Please select sponsorship type:

☐ Judiciary College Sponsorship \$1000

☐ Table-Top Booth \$500

Beverage Break Sponsorship - ☐ \$250 per break ☐ \$500 per day

METHOD OF PAYMENT: ☐ Check ☐ Mastercard ☐ VISA ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Credit Card Account Number

Expiration Date

CVV

Signature

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: The National Association of Workers' Compensation Judiciary, Inc.
FEIN # 26-4598530

ONLINE REGISTRATION AVAILABLE AT WWW.NAWCJ.ORG.

REGISTRATION: To register, mail the completed registration form, along with credit card information (VISA/MC/AmX/Discover) or a check made payable to: The National Association of Workers' Compensation Judiciary, Inc., P.O. Box 16126, Tallahassee, Florida 32317; email form to carolyn@blackcatnetworks.net; or register online at www.nawcj.org. Registration for the Judiciary College will include conference handout materials, access to the exhibit area, Monday night reception, lunches, dinner at Big John's Rockin' BBQ, and participation in the Annual Workers' Compensation Educational Conference. The registration fee is \$225.00 for members of the NAWCJ; \$350.00 for non-members. Onsite Registration is \$265.00 for NAWCJ members; \$360.00 for non-members, or if received after July 19, 2025 For more information, contact the National Association of Workers' Compensation Judiciary at (321) 946-2892. This is a "business casual" program. **YOU MUST BE AN ADJUDICATOR OR REGULATOR TO ATTEND.**

Contributions, gifts or dues to the National Association of Workers' Compensation Judiciary are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

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