



Spring Sections Seminar

April 29 – May 1, 2026

**The Virginian Hotel
Lynchburg**

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)

Session Description TBD

Melissa Hamann, *City of Chesapeake*

11:00–11:15 AM — **Break**

11:15–12:15 PM — **Uniwest Case, 1.0 HR** (Organized by Corporate & Commercial)

Session Description TBD

Andrew Gay, *Gentry Locke*

Clay Hester, *SpottsFain*

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

2:00–3:00 PM — **Appellate Court Update, 1.0 HR** (Organized by Appellate Advocacy)

Session Description TBD

Thomas Chappel, *Woods Rogers Vandeventer Black*

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

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

3:00–3:15 PM — **Break**

THURSDAY, APRIL 30 (Continued)

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

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 Maldonado, *River City Trial Solutions*

THURSDAY, APRIL 30 (Continued)

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

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 Lunches Available**

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**