

**New York State Bar Association
2026 Annual Meeting**

Dispute Resolution Section

Thursday, January 15, 2026

New York Hilton Midtown
1335 6th Ave, New York, NY 10019

Executive Meeting | 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

CLE Program | 1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Reception | 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 – p.m.

3.5 MCLE Credits

1.5 Credits in **Cybersecurity, Privacy and Data Protection-Ethics**

1.0 Credits in **Areas of Professional Practice**

1.0 Credits in **Diversity, Inclusion & Equity**

This program is transitional and is suitable for all attorneys including those newly admitted.

Agenda

1:00 p.m. – 1:05 p.m.

Welcome

William H. Crosby Jr.
Chair of Dispute Resolution Section
New York, New York

1:05 p.m. – 1:25 p.m.

Section Business Meeting

- Approval of 26-27 Officer Slate
- Revised Bylaws
- Chuck Newman Award
- Recognition of Mediation Tournament Awardees

1:25 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Bar Foundation

1:30 p.m. – 1:35 p.m.

Kathleen Sweet

1:40 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.

AI and Technology Use by Neutrals in Arbitrations and Mediations: Navigating the Troubled Waters of Cybersecurity, Privacy, and Data Protection

The first part of the program will be a neutrals' roundtable that discusses why neutrals should be familiar with using a range of technology tools including: AI-powered platforms for virtual and hybrid hearings and mediation

sessions; well-established AI practice management tools; and developing tools such as chatbots and arbots. The roundtable will also emphasize the enhanced risks that come with the use of these tools, and how those risks can be mitigated. The panel will discuss how improper use of technology tools can cause more harm than the improper use of traditional tools. The second part of the program will be led by two established vendors who will help the audience understand that proven technology tools are now available, and that vendors will help neutrals learn how to use the tools, with proven guardrails such as providing closed systems and secure cloud storage.

Moderators:

Paul R. Gupta, Esq.
Arbitrator and Mediator
Connected ADR LLC
New York, New York

Jeffrey T. Zaino, Esq.
Vice President
American Arbitration Association
New York, New York

Speakers:

Gary Doernhoefer, Esq.
Founder and CEO, ADR Notable
Co-Chair, ABA Technology Innovations Committee
New York, New York

James P. Duffy IV, Esq.
Partner
Bracewell LLP
New York, New York

Ann Lesser, Esq.
Vice President
American Arbitration Association
New York, New York

Erika Levin, Esq.
Partner
Fox Rothschild
New York, New York

Jacqueline Schafer, Esq.
Founder and CEO
Clearbrief

Seattle, Washington

1.5 MCLE Credits in Cybersecurity, Privacy and Data Protection-Ethics

3:10 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.

Break

3:20 p.m. – 4:20 p.m.

The Challenges of Mediating Cases Where a Participating Insurer is in a No Pay or Low Value Status

Often an insurer's decision whether to fund a settlement will be the determining factor in the success of a mediator's efforts. This panel will bring insurer's representatives to the table to focus on what is behind an insurer's decision when valuing a case, what is the internal process at the insurance company for reviewing that valuation, and how a mediator may work with the parties when a mediator believes that the case has been undervalued. Panelists will discuss how the mediator may look behind the black box of "settlement authority" in construction, commercial, employment, personal injury, or mass torts disputes.

Lorraine D. Mandel, Esq.

Co-Chair of DRS Insurance Disputes Committee
Mandel Arbitration and Mediation
New York, New York

Speakers:

Sarah M. Abrams, Esq.

Head of Claims, Baleen Specialty, a division of Bowhead Specialty
Chicago, Illinois

Jonathan E. Meer, Esq.

Partner
Wilson Elser
New York, New York

Andrew (Drew) L. Poplinger, Esq.

Chaffetz Lindsey LLP
New York, New York

Leslie C. Treff, Esq.

Co-Chair of DRS Insurance Disputes Committee
Law Office of Leslie Treff
New York, New York

1.0 MCLE Credit in Area of Professional Practice

4:25 p.m. – 5:25 p.m.

Bridging the Generational Divide: ADR in a Multi-Generational Workforce

With five generations now represented in today's workplaces—from Traditionalists to Gen Z—conflict often emerges from differing values, communication styles, and expectations around work culture. This panel will explore how ADR can be used to address and transform generational conflicts in the workplace, examining how mediators, arbitrators, and organizational leaders can adapt their approaches to foster understanding across age groups. Panelists will share real-world examples of generational disputes and techniques for creating policies and dispute resolution frameworks that honor both tradition and innovation.

Speakers:

Maurice Robinson, Esq.

The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
New York, New York

Brian Farkas, Esq.

ArentFox Schiff LLP
New York, New York

Sheri L. Mooney, Esq.

The Mooney Firm
New York, New York

Damali Peterman, Esq.

Jams
New York, New York

1.0 MCLE Credit in Diversity, Inclusion & Equity

5:25 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Closing Remarks/Questions

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Reception