

## **Speaker Biographies**

### **Taylor Law at 50**

May 10, 2018 | 1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

### **Concurrent Two:**

Considering the Optics of Labor-Management Issues  
in the Age of Instant Information

## **SUSAN J. PANEPENTO**

Susan Panepento was appointed as the fifth Chair of the Board and Director of the Office of Collective Bargaining on March 1, 2015 and reappointed to a second term in January 2018. For ten years prior to serving as Chair, Ms. Panepento was OCB's Deputy Chair for Dispute Resolution functioning as the principal mediator of disputes and overseeing the arbitration process administered by the agency. During that time, she successfully resolved numerous contract, arbitration and improper practice disputes. Throughout her tenure at OCB, Ms. Panepento has provided significant guidance to the parties and promoted improved conflict resolution skills and sound labor relations. She joined OCB's staff in 2001 as the Director of Representation. Prior to joining OCB, Ms. Panepento was primarily involved in private sector labor relations. She served as a Field Examiner and Attorney with the National Labor Relations Board in Brooklyn, New York. Also she practiced with the New York City law firm Cohen, Weiss and Simon, where she represented both national and local unions in federal and administrative proceedings, negotiations and grievance arbitrations. Ms. Panepento is a graduate of Cornell University - NYS School of Industrial and Labor Relations and Brooklyn Law School.

## **CATHERINE CREIGHTON**

Catherine Creighton is a graduate of Cornell University's School of Industrial & Labor Relations and Boston University School of Law. Before the formation of Creighton, Pearce, Johnsen & Giroux in 2002, Ms. Creighton was a partner at Lipsitz Green and prior to coming to Buffalo she was a Field Attorney for the NLRB in Brooklyn, New York.

Ms. Creighton has over 20 years of experience representing private and public sector unions in NLRB and PERB matters, arbitration, contract negotiations, withdrawal liability, and individual clients in discrimination matters, Federal and State litigation, employment contracts, severance agreements, and cases at the Merit Systems Protection Board.

Ms. Creighton is involved in community service and social justice issues. She was appointed by New State Governor David Patterson to serve as a Director of the Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority, and by Cornell ILR Dean Harry Katz to serve as Chair of the Buffalo Living Wage Commission. She serves on the Coalition for Economic Justice's Workers' Rights Board, is on the Board of Directors of the Lawyers Coordinating Committee of the AFL-CIO, the Advisory Board of the Labor and Employment Relations Association of Western New York, has served on the Board of Neglia Ballet, and as an adjunct instructor in the Labor Studies program for the Cornell University ILR Extension. She has lectured for Continuing Legal Education programs for the AFL-CIO, Cornell University and the National Labor Relations Board and has written for legal publications.

Ms. Creighton was awarded the Coalition for Economic Justice Rev. Robert Beck Award and the Communications Workers of America, Western New York Council Eugene J. Mays Citizenship Award.

## **SUSAN DAVIS**

Susan Davis joined the firm in 1982 and became a partner in 1992.

Ms. Davis specializes in the representation of national, regional and local labor unions in all aspects of collective bargaining, litigation, mergers and affiliations, organizing, strategic planning and internal union governance. She currently serves as general or chief outside counsel to unions in the entertainment, health care and public sector arena, and has represented unions in a wide variety of industries including sports, transportation and communications.

Prior to joining Cohen, Weiss and Simon LLP, Ms. Davis was a clerk for the Honorable Constance Baker Motley in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

Ms. Davis is a fellow of the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers, a member and former co-chair of the American Bar Association's Section on Labor and Employment Law Committee on Practice and Procedure under the National Labor Relations Act, and a member of the Council of the American Arbitration Association. She serves on the AFL-CIO Lawyers Advisory Panel and is an Advisory Board Member of the Cornell University ILR School. Ms. Davis has been named as both a Super Lawyer for Employment and Labor Law and one of the Top Women Attorneys in the Metropolitan New York area. Ms. Davis was a 2013 Peggy Browning Fund Honoree.

Ms. Davis has written for and lectured extensively at bar association, attorney and union meetings on a wide variety of issues facing unions and their members. Ms. Davis graduated with honors from the University of California at Berkeley in 1976. She received a law degree with high honors from Rutgers University in 1981, winning the West Publishing Company's annual jurisprudence award and leading the Rutgers moot court team to the American Bar Association's national moot court finals.

## **NEIL H. ABRAMSON**

Neil Abramson is the co-chair of the Labor & Employment Law Department and head of the Public Sector Group. He handles all types of employment litigation, including discrimination claims, claims for breach of contract and claims arising from the collective bargaining relationship, as well as arbitrations, administrative proceedings and collective bargaining.

Neil regularly handles complex collective bargaining disputes for private and public sector employers, including litigating matters before the New York State Public Employment Relations Board, various public interest arbitration panels, private grievance arbitrators and the National Labor Relations Board. Neil leads the legal representation of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in its collective bargaining disputes with transit and railroad workers and the City of New York in its collective bargaining disputes with teachers, police, fire, nurses and hospital staff. Neil also regularly handles collective bargaining disputes for such clients as Major League Baseball, The New York Times, Pratt Institute and The Broadway League. He also provides advice and guidance to clients, counseling employers on how to avoid litigation and achieve their

employee relations objectives. Neil also has litigated single and multiple plaintiff matters in the state and federal courts of New York and a number of other jurisdictions and has extensive appellate advocacy experience.

Among the clients Neil has represented are major corporations in such diverse fields as financial services, higher education, news media, transportation, sports, energy, entertainment and health care, as well as numerous public benefit and public service corporations.

## **MATTHEW VAN VESSEM**

Matthew Van Vessem is a partner in Goldberg Segalla's Employment and Labor Practice Group. He concentrates his practice in the areas of labor and employment litigation, employee discipline, collective bargaining, New York State Education Law, General Municipal Law Section 207-a and 207-c, and municipal law.

Matt represents private and public sector clients — including many of the largest employers in Western New York — in administrative and legal proceedings, including labor arbitrations, agency hearings, and state and federal court litigation. These clients include numerous cities, towns, and other municipalities; school districts and boards of education; and police and fire departments, hospitals, and transit authorities. Before entering private practice, Matt was assistant corporation counsel for the City of Buffalo.

A graduate of the State University of New York at Buffalo Law School, Matt has been selected for inclusion in Best Lawyers in America, Employment Law and Labor Law, and Upstate New York Super Lawyers.