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Litigation Committee Spotlight

Interviews and Profiles





Ed Paulis

VICE PRESIDENT AND ASSISTANT GENERAL COUNSEL

What interested you in the in-house practice of law and how did you come to be an attorney at Zurich North America?

Before joining Zurich in 2007, I handled commercial litigation and corporate matters with a law firm in New York City representing a variety of businesses, though primarily banks and other financial institutions. My decision to leave New York City and transition to an in-house position in Maryland was primarily based on family considerations. In hindsight, the move was a great one for me and my family.

What is the single greatest challenge that your law department is facing today, and how are you dealing with it?

While we may be moving beyond the 'do more with less' days, there is continued pressure on law departments to 'do more with the same.' This leaves law departments with a flat budget to respond to increasing regulatory scrutiny, investor activism and business innovation and growth. We bring on tools to help us manage and track work, and balance the workload among the staff, which has a positive effect. But I believe more can be done.

One cost I am particularly keen on addressing is the time and effort spent to repeat tasks that have previously been performed. I think institutions are particularly bad at identifying, gathering, and re-using institutional knowledge. This problem is particularly evident as individuals leave the institution or between separate teams within the institution. Although that nut is not yet cracked, we are working on addressing the challenge.

In October 2015, you succeeded as chair of ACC's Litigation Committee. How did you get involved initially?

I give credit to my involvement in ACC committees to Shawn Cheadle and Jeff Levinson, both former committee chairs. Although I had been a frequent user of ACC resources for some time, they introduced me to the leadership side of ACC's committees, in which I have been involved ever since.

A few years later, I had the opportunity to join the leadership team of the Litigation Committee. It became readily apparent that the team was incredibly talented and deeply committed to providing value to the committee members. I could not pass up on the opportunity to participate and learn from

the team.

How does the Litigation Committee provide value to its members?

The many resources the Litigation Committee supports include the *ACC Docket*, *Briefings*, InfoPAKs, QuickCounsels, Top Tens, and more. The Litigation Committee also supports an active ongoing discussion on ACC's eGroups, a private discussion among ACC members (in-house counsel only), which also permits anonymous postings when requested.

And last but not least is the Litigation Shorts sub-site on ACC's InhouseACCess.com discussion group. We kicked off the Litigation Shorts discussion group after last year's Annual Meeting in Boston, and already about a dozen articles have been contributed, with more in the pipeline. This is an excellent opportunity for our members to try out their interest in writing, and we are expecting this to be a growth resource over the coming year.

What substantive practice issues does your committee address?

The Litigation Committee is very involved with quality programming on all subjects that may be of interest to both litigators, and those in-house professionals who manage litigation.

Over the past year, with the assistance of our sponsors Morrison Foerster and Navigant Consulting, we have held webcasts on such topics as False Claim Act Exposures, Effective Use of Expert Witnesses, and the Amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. We also have a monthly business meeting into which we embed a 20-minute legal refresher, which have included such topics as Cybersecurity, Developments in European Labor Law, and Dealing with Private and Confidential Data in Litigation.

How has the Litigation Committee helped you in your career?

Beyond the availability of resources and tools to do my job better, I have to say that the networking opportunities that committee leadership has afforded me have been tremendous, both locally (I subsequently became active with my local ACC chapter) and nationally. No other opportunity that I know of could have allowed me to make the connections I have with in-house counsel who were dealing with the same issues and concerns as me.

Ed Paulis is vice president and assistant general counsel of Zurich North America, part of the Zurich Insurance Group. In addition to serving as chair of ACC's Litigation Committee, he is on the board of ACC's Baltimore Chapter. He also volunteers with Junior Achievement of Central Maryland and serves on the Ethics Committee of the Maryland State Bar Association.

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of his employer.



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