

Morning Keynote

“2018 Federal and State Healthcare Legal Developments”



Mark Nielsen, J.D., L.L.M.

Mark Nielsen’s background includes a broad array of multijurisdictional and complex commercial disputes, including class action litigation. He has practiced before state and federal courts, as well as in arbitration. As a litigator, he has successfully defended plan trustees/sponsors in federal court against breach of fiduciary duty and prohibited transaction claims brought by the Department of Labor/plan beneficiaries. He has also successfully defended plans and their fiduciaries in benefit claim disputes in trial and appellate courts, and has successfully defended employers against claims arising under the ADA. Mark also regularly counsels plan trustees and plan sponsors on their fiduciary obligations under ERISA.



Joel Wood, J.D., L.L.M.

Joel Wood specializes in issues arising under ERISA, the Internal Revenue Code and other regulations as they relate to employee benefits and insurance. He has extensive experience with employee benefits issues under ERISA, the Affordable Care Act, COBRA, issues involving Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangements, integration of state and local laws with employer plans/policies, and issues involving the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA). Joel represents employers, insurance companies, plan administrators, associations, financial institutions and plan trustees. He counsels clients on plan documents, policies, communications and compliance.

Luncheon Keynote

“The Road Ahead: An Economic Update”

Nathaniel Karp, BBVA Chief U.S. Economist



Nathaniel Karp serves as BBVA’s Chief U.S. Economist to assist the group manage its expansion strategy in the U.S. He conducts analyses of macroeconomic variables, monetary policy, and regional and industry trends. Prior to joining BBVA, Karp worked at Republic Bank, the World Bank, Mexico’s Ministry of Education and ATTIS. Karp is a member of the American Bankers Association Economic Advisory Committee. **Karp’s research has been cited by various dailies in the U.S., and his op-eds have been published in several countries. Karp has appeared as a commentator on TV and provided testimony to the Texas Senate. Karp is recognized as one of the top forecasters for 10-year Treasury Yields, unemployment rates and nonfarm payrolls.** Karp obtained his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in economics at ITAM and the University of Warwick, respectively.



Jeff Burbank, Human Resources Manager; Mercedes-Benz U.S. International (MBUSI)

Mr. Burbank joined MBUSI in 2004 and currently serves as the manager for Safety, Security, Medical Services and Direct Manpower Staffing. Prior to joining MBUSI, Mr. Burbank has enjoyed working in multiple industries over a 35 year career.



Tom Garrett, Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer; Brasfield & Gorrie, LLC

Mr. Garrett has served as Corporate Vice President for Brasfield & Gorrie, LLC since 1999, and became Chief Human Resources Officer in 2013. He is responsible for the overall leadership, strategic direction and planning for the Human Resources and Career Development departments. Prior to becoming Chief Human Resources Officer, Tom served in the role of Chief Safety Officer for seven years and Chief Information Officer for ten years.



Mark Jones, Vice President of Human Resources; O'Neal Industries, Inc.

Mr. Jones joined O'Neal Industries in 2013 as Vice-President, Human Resources and is responsible for all holding company-level human resource activities. Prior to joining O'Neal, he served as Manager of Finance, General Counsel and then Senior Manager of Human Resources for Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, an automobile manufacturer in Tuscaloosa, AL. Before that he was Financial Accounting Manager for Russell Corporation in Alexander City, AL.



Dean Tanner, Vice President – Human Resources & People Development; Mayer Electric Supply

Mr. Tanner has served since 2013 as Vice President of Human Resources and People Development for Mayer Electric Supply. From television news to telecommunications consulting, from advertising and PR to executive recruiting, his professional interests and opportunities have been varied. Dean has served on the Workforce Development Committee of the Birmingham Business Alliance and is currently a member of the HR and Management Advisory Council at UAB's Collat School of Business.



Tracy Watts, Senior Partner, National Leader for U.S. Health Care Reform; Mercer, Washington DC

Ms. Watts is a Senior Partner in Mercer's Washington D.C. office and is Mercer's U.S. Leader for Health Care Reform. A consultant with Mercer for 30 years, Tracy specializes in health care cost management, assisting employers in the design, evaluation, and ongoing management of health and group benefit plans for active and retired employees.



Steve Sewell, Executive Vice President; Economic Development Partnership of Alabama (EDPA)

Mr. Sewell joined the EDPA in 1994. He is involved in planning and implementing statewide and national economic development marketing, public relations, communications, and issues management. He has been instrumental in developing an automotive branding strategy, implementing the Mercedes (Rosewood) marketing program, and developing a Nat'l and Int'l media relations plan. Prior to joining EDPA, he worked with the B'ham Area Chamber of Commerce, B'ham Southern College and Luckie Advertising. In 2006, he was recognized as Outstanding Alumnus of the Year in Public Relations from U.A.



Reed King, CPA; Warren Averett CPAs & Advisors

Mr. King has more than 10 years of public accounting experience. Reed's responsibilities at Warren Averett include managing the tax division, high net worth income taxation and tax planning. He is also the firm's Real Estate Coordinator and Tax Best Practice Leader. Reed received his Bachelor of Science and Master of Accountancy from Auburn University.



Donna R. Smith, Ph.D.; DFWP Compliance & Consultation

Dr. Smith has over 30 years' experience and expertise in regulatory compliance. She is a nationally recognized expert in the areas of federal drug testing regulations, drug and alcohol abuse awareness training, medical review officer(MRO) procedures, drug-free workplace policy, and substance abuse prevention and rehabilitation.



Jacqueline Maus Feldman, MD; National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Associate Medical Director

Dr. Feldman is a Professor Emerita with the School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurobiology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Since retiring in July of 2014, she has continued to provide clinical and administrative services for the department, has consulted with Alabama Medicaid, and now serves as the NAMI National Associate Medical Director.



Police Chief Mark McMurray; City of Huntsville, AL

Chief McMurray began his law enforcement career in 1984 as a Public Safety Officer with TVA Nuclear Agency. He is a graduate of the 28th Session of the Huntsville Police Academy. As a Huntsville Police Officer, he also served as a K-9 handler, Field Training Officer and Gang Suppression Investigator. Mark was promoted throughout the sworn ranks of the department with experience in Criminal Investigations, Special Operations and the Uniform Division. He was appointed as the Chief of Police in September 2015.



Craig Pouncey, Ed.D.; Jefferson County Schools Superintendent

Dr. Pouncey has been Superintendent of the Jefferson County School System since 2014. Serving more than 36,000 students in 56 schools, Jefferson County is Alabama's second largest school system. Dr. Pouncey previously served as Chief of Staff for the State Dept. of Education and Superintendent of Education for Crenshaw County Schools. His Ed.D. is from Samford University. In 2018, Dr. Craig Pouncey was named Superintendent of the Year by the School Superintendents of Alabama (SSA) and Classworks.



Reggie A. Parker, SR, MS, LPC, NCC; Catharsis LLC

Mr. Parker is the owner of Parker Counseling & Consulting, LLC and Catharsis, LLC., He is a Licensed Professional Counselor with a background in crisis intervention. Reggie has served as a certified hostage negotiator for 20 years, and consults with employers on active shooter preparedness. Reggie is a member of the American Counseling Association, the Alabama Counseling Association, and Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development.