



Hellenic Bar Association
OF ILLINOIS

CAREER CORNER 2023

MEET YOUR PANELISTS

Career Corner is designed to provide an interactive experience for both the young attorney/law student and the Hellenic Bar Association of Illinois (HBA) member. During the event, small group sessions will be led by distinguished members of the HBA from various fields of the law, including: large, medium and small firms, corporation counsel, government (local and federal), solo practitioners and members of the judiciary. Among the many topics that will be covered are networking strategies, resume writing, preparing for an interview, and more!

LARGE FIRM PANELISTS



Elpitha Lambros

Elpitha Lambros is a senior litigation associate at Akerman LLP, where she focuses her practice on a wide range of complex matters, including high-stakes commercial disputes and white collar investigations. Elpitha represents clients in both federal and state courts through all phases of litigation and across various industries in matters involving breach of contract, defamation, insurance coverage, employment disputes, and more. She also has experience in government investigations, where she has led investigative teams in response to government inquiries and participated in an international monitorship of a global financial institution. In addition to her litigation work, Elpitha counsels clients on a variety of employment matters and conducts investigations into claims of workplace misconduct, including claims of sex discrimination, hostile work environment, and retaliation. Elpitha also maintains an active pro bono practice, representing individuals seeking asylum and prisoners in federal civil rights actions.

Elpitha received her J.D. in 2015 from The University of Chicago Law School and her B.A. in Sociology from DePaul University in 2012. Elpitha currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Hellenic Bar Association of Illinois and the Associate Board of Directors for Chicago Scholars.



Vasiliki Mitrakos

Vasiliki is an associate in Winston & Strawn's Chicago office and represents clients in a variety of real estate matters. Prior to joining Winston, Vasiliki served as a judicial extern for the Honorable Anthony Kyriakopoulos in the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Vasiliki was a U.S. Fulbright Scholar in Athens, Greece in 2013-2014.



Nicole Mouzakiotis

Nicole Mouzakiotis is an associate in the Insurance and Financial Services group in Sidley Austin LLP's Chicago office. Nicole received her J.D. from DePaul University College of Law, where she graduated magna cum laude and was elected to the Order of the Coif. During law school, Nicole served as the editor-in-chief of the DePaul Law Review and as a student lawyer in the DePaul Business Law Clinic. In addition, Nicole received the CALI Award for Mergers and Acquisitions. Prior to law school, Nicole received her B.S. in Advertising from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Maria Palivos

Maria Palivos focuses her practice in employment defense litigation. She represents employers in a broad range of labor and employment matters including discrimination, harassment and retaliation. Maria has experience in state, federal and appellate courts. Additionally, Maria has experience in administrative agencies such as the Illinois Department of Human rights, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Illinois Department of Labor. She also advises employers on complex wage and hour issues.

Maria was in the top 10% of her class at the Loyola University Chicago School of Law, graduating magna cum laude. During law school, Maria served as a senior articles editor for the Loyola University Chicago School of Law Journal. Maria has served as a judicial intern at the Illinois Appellate Court and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.



Olivia Paxinos

Olivia Paxinos defends all aspects of litigation claims involving commercial litigation, construction, premises liability, product liability, general liability, and transportation. She counsels her clients and develops litigation strategies that integrate with their business operations.

Olivia's clients range from small, privately-held entities to Fortune 500 companies, several of which she represents on a regional or national basis. Olivia not only helps clients navigate and understand the matter at hand, but provides them with personalized and tailored solutions for whatever legal issues they may be facing.



John Secaras

John Secaras is an associate attorney in Winston & Strawn's Chicago office. He concentrates his practice primarily on mergers and acquisitions and private equity matters. John regularly works with both privately held companies and public company clients on buy- and sell-side transactions. He also has experience representing lenders as well as obtaining financing for corporate borrowers in various finance transactions. Prior to joining Winston, John spent time as an extern at the Securities and Exchange Commission in the Office of Derivatives Policy and as a law clerk at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois.

John received his undergraduate degree from Northwestern University in 2014 and his J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center in 2017. He currently serves on the Hellenic Bar Association Board of Directors and on various HBA committees, including as Co-Chair of the HBA's Law Day Program.

MID-SIZED FIRM PANELISTS



Spyridon J. Demakis

Spyridon "Spyro" Demakis is an equity partner at Cunningham, Meyer & Vedrine PC, which has offices in Chicago and Warrenville. Spyro's practice focuses on the casualty defense of wrongful death and other catastrophic injury cases. His specialty is the defense of doctors, hospitals and nurses in medical malpractices cases. Spyro also represents healthcare professionals before state licensing boards including the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Responsibility. Spyro also serves on the Parish Counsel at Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church and is a proud member of AHEPA Lakeshore Chapter 205. He is a 1993 graduate with honors from The George Washington University Law School.

SMALL & SOLO FIRM PANELISTS



Dimitra Anderson

Dimitra Anderson earned her J.D. from Chicago Kent College of Law, her B.S. in accounting from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and is also a CPA. She advises families in wealth preservation and succession planning and all aspects of gift, estate and income taxation. She represents fiduciaries and beneficiaries in probate and trust administration. She advises parents and guardians of minors and disabled adults, including special needs planning. She also serves as court-appointed Guardian ad Litem in guardianship proceedings.



Athena Farmakis

Athena currently represents Plaintiffs in all areas of personal and catastrophic injury including: medical malpractice, motor vehicle accidents, premises liability, constructions accidents, nursing home abuse and wrongful death. She is known for her zealous advocacy and ability to handle complex cases and is skilled in preparing, presenting and cross-examining factual, medical and expert witnesses in both deposition and trial settings.

Athena is a former prosecutor of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office where she held supervisory positions and advocated for the rights of victims and their families of homicide, sexual assault, child abuse and other violent crimes. Athena has tried 68 jury trials to verdict and hundreds of bench trials affording her with vast, wide-ranging trial expertise and knowledge of the litigation process.

Athena graduated with a B.A. from Northwestern University and received her law degree from DePaul University College of Law.

IN-HOUSE PANELISTS



Lia Kasios

Lia Kasios is in-house counsel for the North American Region of Barry Callebaut Group, the world's leading manufacturer of high-quality chocolate and cocoa products. Her areas of focus are in contract law and employment law. She has a diverse background and started her legal career as a consumer bankruptcy attorney in 2011. She has pivoted her career several times, transitioning from bankruptcy practice to litigation, later joining the oil and gas industry and ultimately accepting her current position in 2022. During law school, Lia focused on litigation and was a member of both Moot Court and Mock Trial and was on her law school's Moot Court National Team.



Efie M. Vainikos

Efie is Vice President, Associate General Counsel and Assistant Secretary at Discover Financial Services with over 23 years experience in corporate governance. Efie has sat on the HBA Board of Directors for 15 years, and is an active member of the organization. She has chaired the Scholarship Selection for over 10 years.



George Vinihakis

George Vinihakis serves as Corporate Counsel at CMN, a concert touring and artist management company, representing acts like Bad Bunny, J Balvin, Marc Anthony, and Nicky Jam. His responsibilities have a great deal of breadth; from drafting and negotiating touring, venue, and production agreements to advising internal stakeholders on all business/legal affairs. Prior to joining CMN, George was Counsel for Wilson Sporting Goods. He is a graduate of Wabash College and DePaul Law.

JUDICIARY PANELISTS



Hon. Frank J. Andreou

Hon. Frank J. Andreou is currently an Associate Judge in the Circuit Court of Cook County and in the Second Municipal District. Prior to being sworn in, Frank was a principal at Andreou & Casson, Ltd. in 2002. Frank was licensed to practice law in 1995 and is a former Cook County Assistant State's Attorney. He has tried more than 50 jury trials to verdict; has written more than 70 appellate briefs and has argued before the Illinois Appellate Court and 7th Circuit Appellate Court. Frank's areas of practice include personal injury; employment; and, commercial litigation in both federal and state court in both the trial and appellate courts. Frank is licensed to practice in the State of Illinois, the United States District Court, Northern District, the Seventh Circuit of the United States Court of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court.



Hon. Jeffery Chrones

GOVERNMENT PANELISTS



Lydia Faklis

Lydia Faklis is a trial attorney at the U.S. Department of Labor, Region V in Chicago. She focuses on enforcing federal labor and employment laws like OSHA, ERISA, FLSA, and others in federal district courts across the Midwest and before administrative law judges. Prior to the DOL, she worked for two years as a judicial law clerk for the Honorable Anna H. Demacopoulos at the Circuit Court of Cook County, Chancery Division. She received her J.D. from the University of Illinois College of Law in Champaign and also graduated with a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Cathy Hareas

Catherine S. Hareas is a Cook County Assistant Public Defender. Over the years, she has worked in several courtrooms throughout the county handling felonies & misdemeanors.

An active member of the Hellenic Bar Association since Law School, Ms. Hareas is a Past President of the HBA. It was through her efforts that the HBA Became A Member of the Alliance of Bar Associations.

Ms. Hareas teaches CLE Courses and is involved in several philanthropic organizations.



Loukas N. Kalliantasis

Loukas N. Kalliantasis graduated from Loyola University of Chicago School of Law in 2014. From there, Loukas worked for nearly four years in civil litigation where he handled plaintiff's personal injury and medical malpractice cases. In 2018, Loukas began working as an Assistant State's Attorney with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, where he was assigned to the Criminal Prosecutions Bureau. During his time with the office, Loukas has been responsible for various aspects of criminal prosecution, including: reviewing and investigating new crimes, conducting preliminary hearings to establish probable cause, preparing and presenting criminal cases to the Grand Jury for indictment, and trying countless misdemeanor and felony cases to verdict. He is currently assigned to the felony trial division within the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. In his spare time, Loukas also works as an adjunct professor where he teaches and coaches mock trial students at Loyola University of Chicago School of Law.



Konstantina J. Tsatsoulis

Konstantina J. Tsatsoulis joined the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) in 2009 as Legal Counsel to the Illinois Liquor Control Commission. Since 2016, she has been an attorney with the Sales Tax Litigation Unit of IDOR. Previously, Ms. Tsatsoulis was in private practice with a boutique firm in Chicago's Loop that specialized in liquor law and civil litigation matters. She received her Juris Doctor degree from Tulane University Law School, where she was a member of the Moot Court Board, and her Bachelor of Arts degree from Tulane University. For several years, Ms. Tsatsoulis has served on the Board of Directors of the Hellenic Bar Association, in addition to having served as a Sub-Committee Chair of the State of Illinois Administrative Hearings Review Committee.