

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF ARBITRATORS



WHERE DO  
WE GO FROM  
**HERE?**

STRATEGIES FOR A  
CHANGING WORLD

SEVENTY **79<sup>th</sup>** NINTH

**ANNUAL MEETING  
& EDUCATION  
CONFERENCE**

**MAY 20-23, 2026**

INTERCONTINENTAL CHICAGO MAGNIFICENT MILE

**CHICAGO**  
ILLINOIS



## Thursday, May 21, 2026

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. ....Plenary  
*Avenue Ballroom (Lobby Level)*

### **The Changing Structure of Work: How is the workplace changing? How is it changing our work? And how do we respond?**

The modern workplace is shifting faster than ever – from new technologies to evolving employee expectations. Join this panel as they explore what’s driving these changes, how the workplace differs in the U.S. and Canada, and what it means for the practice of arbitration. A lively Q&A will follow to tackle your questions.

#### **Moderator:**

[John C. Alfano](#), NAA, *Avenue, MD*

#### **Panelists:**

[Kevin Banks](#), NAA, *Wakefield, QC*



[Robert Bruno](#), Professor of Labor and Employment Relations, Director of the Labor Education Program, *Chicago, IL*

[Stanley T. Dobry](#), NAA, *Warren, MI*

[Andrew J. Zeiser](#), Assistant Professor, Management, Marketing and Supply Chain Department, Boler College of Business, John Carroll University, *Cleveland, OH*

#### **Materials:**

1. [Zeiser Workplace slide deck](#)
2. [Banks Presentation slide deck](#)
3. [Bruno Labor Management Arb slide deck](#)
4. [Dobry Workplace](#)



## Thursday, May 21, 2026 (cont'd)

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. ....Plenary  
*Avenue Ballroom (Lobby Level)*

### **Med-Arb: An Alternative Approach (The Good, the Risks and Why It's Worth a Try)**

Curious about new approaches to labor arbitration? Med-Arb combines mediation and arbitration, offering both opportunities and challenges. Join this experienced panel as they explore when and how Med-Arb can be used, its risks and rewards, and best practices to follow. Gain insights from both U.S. and Canadian perspectives on this evolving process.

#### **Moderator:**

[Jules B. Bloch](#), NAA, *Toronto, ON*

#### **Arbitrators:**

[Mark L. Asbell](#), NAA, *Sherwood Park, AB*

[Steve M. Bierig](#), NAA, *Highland Park, IL*

#### **Union Advocate:**


[Jerry Marzullo](#), Partner, Asher, Gitter & D'Alba, Ltd.,  
*Chicago, IL*

#### **Management Advocate:**

[Amy Moor Gaylord](#), Partner, Akerman LLP, *Chicago, IL*

#### **Materials:**

[Mediation-Arbitration in Ontario: Labour Relations, Human Rights, and Beyond?](#)



**Thursday, May 21, 2026 (cont'd)**

12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. .... **Distinguished Speaker Luncheon**  
*Renaissance Ballroom (Fifth Floor)*

**Introduction:**

[Rosemary Pye](#), NAA, *Chevy Chase, MD*

**Speaker:**

[David M Prouty](#), Member, NLRB, *Washington, DC*

**Materials:**

[Notable NLRB Decisions](#)

1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Camelot (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)*

**College Sports: It Ain't Just Sports**

College sports aren't what they used to be. Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) deals and new attempts to organize athletes are creating complex disputes that demand professional resolution. Join this panel of experts – two attorneys and an academic-arbitrator – as they explore the emerging issues, the future of college athletics, and the role skilled labor arbitrators may play.

**Moderator:**

[Peter R. Meyers](#), NAA, *Chicago, IL*

**Panelists:**


[Adam Abrahms](#), Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP  
*Los Angeles, CA*

[Michael H. LeRoy](#), LER Alumni Professor of Labor and  
Employment Relations, University of Illinois,  
*Urbana-Champaign, IL*

[Joshua Nadreau](#), Fisher Phillips, *Boston, MA*

**Materials:**

[Respondent USC Post-Hearing Brief](#)  
[The Reverse Logic of College NIL Contracts](#)  
[Whistles, Wages, and the Workplace](#)



**Thursday, May 21, 2026 (cont'd)**

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Avenue Ballroom (Lobby Level)*

**Evidentiary Quandaries**

To admit or not admit – that is the question. Should arbitrators take a flexible approach to evidence under AAA Rule 28, or follow the Federal Rules of Evidence to streamline hearings? Join advocates and a panel of seasoned arbitrators as they work through a fact pattern, present opening statements, rule on admissibility, and answer audience questions.

**Moderator:**

[Richard K. Hanft](#), NAA, *Highland, IN*

**Panelists:**

[Emily Jackson](#), Jackson ADR, *Kasilof, AK*

[Gina Roccanova](#), *San Francisco, CA*

[Rebekah Smith](#), NAA, *Camden, ME*

**Union Advocate:**

[Zack Seiler](#), *United Steelworkers, Gary, IN*

**Company Advocate:**

[Monica Lowe](#), Assistant Chief Labor Negotiator, City of Chicago


**Materials:**

[Arbitrators and the Rules of Evidence](#)

[Evidence in Labor Arbitration](#)

[Federal Rules of Evidence](#)

[Labor Arbitration Rules](#)



**Thursday, May 21, 2026 (cont'd)**

1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Streeterville (Lobby Level)*

**Advocacy Skills: Navigating Witness Preparation:**  
**Building Credibility from Start to Finish** *(Attendees at three sessions will receive a certificate of attendance.)*

Witness selection, preparation, and presentation can make or break your case before an arbitrator. This session will help you put your best foot forward by ensuring that each of your witnesses presents testimony that is effective and credible. Two skilled advocates and a seasoned arbitrator will lead this lively session, sharing tips and tricks from real-life experiences, both good and bad.

**Moderator:**  
[Kathryn A. VanDagens](#), NAA, *Lansing, MI*

**Panelist**  
[Raymond M. Davis](#), Esq., *Thrun Law Firm, East Lansing, MI*  
[Susan M. Matta](#), Esq., *Alison, Slutsky & Kennedy, Chicago, IL*

**Materials:**  
[Article VI – Opinions and Expert Testimony](#)  
[Article VI – Witnesses](#)  
[Phillip G. Hillen – Opinion and Order](#)



**Friday, May 22, 2026**

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. .... **Plenary**  
*Avenue Ballroom (Lobby Level)*

**The Railway Labor Act at 100: A Century of Survival, and Evolution, and the Challenges to Come**

The Railway Labor Act has governed labor relations in the rail and airline industries for a century – surviving economic upheavals, wartime pressures, and industry deregulation. Join this panel for a retrospective on the Act’s endurance, its key amendments and judicial interpretations, and a forward-looking discussion on what the next century of transportation labor relations may hold.

**Neutral and Moderator:**

[Ira F. Jaffe](#), NAA, *Potomac, MD*

**Union Advocates:**

[Allison Parker](#), Transportation Communications Union,  
*New Market, MD*

[Richard S. Edelman](#), Mooney, Green, Saindon, Murphy &  
Welch, *Washington, DC*


[Arthur Luby](#), Senior Advisor and Chief Negotiator, Air Line  
Pilots Association, *Tysons Corner, VA*

**Management Advocates:**

[Aparna B. Joshi](#), O’Melveny, *Washington, DC*

[Donald Munro](#), Jones Day, *Washington, DC*

[Jeff Wall](#), VP, Labor Relations, CSX Transportation, Inc.,  
*Jacksonville, FL*



**Friday, May 22, 2026 (cont'd)**

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Camelot (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)*

**Advocacy Skills: Zero Tolerance: Does Zero Tolerance Ever Mean Zero?** *(Attendees at three sessions will receive a certificate of attendance.)*

“Red Light, Green Light: Where Rules Meet Judgment”

Zero tolerance policies sound simple – but are they? Join top labor arbitrators as they tackle real-world dilemmas, including fighting, theft, harassment, off-duty conduct, and more, exploring where strict rules meet human judgment. Participate in interactive discussions, vote, ask questions, and gain practical strategies for enforcing policies while ensuring due process.

**Moderator:**

[William E. Hartsfield](#), NAA, Dallas, TX

**Speakers:**

[Dean L. Burrell](#), NAA, Morristown, NJ

[Sarah Miller Espinosa](#), NAA, Alexandria, VA


[Patricia H. McGruder](#), FMS Dispute Resolution Services,  
Arlington, TX

[Lisa W. Timmons](#), Esq., Lisa W. Timmons, PLLC,  
West Bloomfield, MI

**Materials:**

[Zero Tolerance Red Light Green Light](#)

[Zero Tolerance slide deck](#)



## Friday, May 22, 2026 (cont'd)

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Avenue Ballroom (Lobby Level)*

### **Recent Legal Developments**

The labor-management landscape has shifted dramatically over the past year. From executive orders to Supreme Court decisions and agency guidance, these changes may be among the most significant since the Wagner Act. Join this experienced panel as they break down the major developments, explore their impact on parties, arbitrators, and practitioners and consider which changes are likely to endure.

#### **Moderator:**

[Dan Zeiser](#), NAA, *Cleveland, OH*

#### **Management:**

[R. Jason Patterson](#), Franzcek P.C., *Chicago, IL*

#### **Neutral:**


[Michael Z. Green](#), NAA, *Ft. Worth, TX*

#### **Labor:**

[Robert Bloch](#), Dowd, Bloch, Bennett, Cervone, Auerbach & Yokich LLP, *Chicago, IL*

#### **Materials:**

[Labor and Employment Law Update](#)  
[Operational Priorities](#)



**Friday, May 22, 2026 (cont'd)**

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Streeterville (Lobby Level)*

**Advocacy Skills: Mock Arbitration** (*Attendees at three sessions will receive a certificate of attendance.*)

Did she—or didn't she? Only the arbitrator knows for sure. Test your skills alongside seasoned practitioners in this detailed simulation of a labor arbitration hearing in a private-sector discipline case. Observe experienced advocates present evidence, examine witnesses, and argue before a National Academy arbitrator. Attendees will have the opportunity to render a decision, ask questions, and gain practical insights into arbitration, evidence presentation, and decision-making best practices.

**Moderator:**

[Sandra M. Furman](#), NAA, *Bexley, OH*

**Arbitrator Panelist:**

[Richard K. Hanft](#), NAA, *Highland, IN*

**Union Advocate:**

[Brooks Boron](#), Lemmerbrock & Boron, LLC, *Cleveland, OH*

**Management Advocate:**

[Amanda Smith](#), Kastner Westman & Wilkins, LLC,  
*Akron, OH*

**Witnesses:**

Lori Gallo, *Cleveland, OH*



Lynne Nowel, *Lakewood, OH*

**Materials:**

[Best Practices](#)

[McCreary arb Final](#)

[Virtual Hearing Protocols](#)



**Friday, May 22, 2026 (cont'd)**

12:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. .... **Presidential Luncheon**  
*Renaissance Ballroom (Fifth Floor)*

**Introduction:**

Sabina Javits, *Washington, DC*

**President:**

Joshua Javits, NAA President, *Washington, DC*

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Camelot (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)*

**Advocacy Skills: Active Listening for a Successful Labor Arbitration** (*Attendees at three sessions will receive a certificate of attendance.*)


Effective advocacy and sound decision-making start with listening to understand. In this interactive session, participants will gain practical tools for witness preparation and hearings, including active listening techniques—paraphrasing, clarifying, and summarizing—to uncover facts, and strategies to recognize and mitigate cognitive biases that can affect judgment and credibility. Real-world examples and checklists provide actionable strategies to apply immediately.

**Presenter:**

[William E. Hartsfield](#), NAA, *Dallas, TX*

**Materials:**

[Active Listening slide deck](#)



## Friday, May 22, 2026 (cont'd)

1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Streeterville (Lobby Level)*

### **Current Issues in Public Safety Units**

Labor relations in police units, as in many public sector settings, is like a three-legged stool: In addition to bedrock labor and management participants, the independent interests of the public and their representatives have an impact. Recent events have threatened to upend established norms in police and similar protective services units across the country. Arbitration is one such norm, challenged by calls for increased outside oversight of policing standards and discipline. Two advocates and an arbitrator who have followed these developments in Chicago and elsewhere will invite consideration of how these pressures have and may continue to affect labor relations and arbitration in police and other public safety units.

#### **Moderator:**

[Amedeo Greco](#), NAA, *Madison, WI*

#### **Panelists:**

[Mark W. Bennett](#), Esq., Laner Muchin, *Chicago, IL*

Doyle O'Connor, NAA, *Chicago, IL*

[Stephen A. Yokich](#), Esq., Dowd, Bloch, Bennett, Cervone,  
Auerbach & Yokich LLP, *Chicago, IL*

#### **Materials:**


[1. Courthouse News Service Article](#)[2. Cook Count Court decision](#)

[3. Chicago Appellate court brief](#)

[4. Lodge #7 Petition to leave to Appeal](#)

[5. Lodge #7 Bried to Illinois Supreme Court](#)

[6. Amicus Brief from Illinois AFL-CIO, AFFI and AFSCME Council 31](#)



## Friday, May 22, 2026 (cont'd)

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Avenue Ballroom (Lobby Level)*

### **AI Lab: Practical Uses and Professional Responsibility**

AI is Everywhere! It's cutting edge and ever-changing. Don't be left behind in your understanding. Participants will have the opportunity to experiment with AI applications in a collaborative “laboratory” setting, guided by practitioners who will demonstrate real-world uses for the technology. The goal is to gain practical, hands-on experience with *gentle* AI tools tailored for increased productivity. This session aims to help neutrals, advocates, and support staff discover and improve how they can use AI in a responsible way. We will also share some thoughts on how arbitrators can navigate ethical issues – and good practice – when using A.I. tools, including suggestions to help attendees recognize potential pitfalls – some obvious, some hidden – as they come up. Bring your web-enabled device (with an AI application accessible) to maximize the experience.

#### **Presenters:**


[Jeanne Charles](#), NAA, *Pembroke Pines, FL*

[Keith D. Greenberg](#), NAA, *North Bethesda, MD*

[Daniel W. Linna, Jr.](#), Northwestern Pritzker School of Law & McCormick School of Engineering, Senior Lecturer & Director of Law and Technology Initiatives, CodeX – The Stanford Center for Legal Informatics, Affiliated Faculty, *Chicago, IL*

#### **Materials:**

[The AI Lab](#)



**Friday, May 22, 2026 (cont'd)**

3:00 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. .... **Fireside Chat**  
*King Arthur Court (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)*

**Interviewer:**

Judith Helburn, *Austin, TX*

**Interviewee:**

I.B. "Beber" Helburn, *NAA, Austin, TX*



## Saturday, May 23, 2026

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Camelot (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)*

### **Recognizing and Responding to Gender Bias in Arbitration – A Montage and Discussion of Women’s Empowerment**

Starting with a brief overview of the post–World War II women’s independence movement and its influence on individual arbitrators, their families, their practices, and society more broadly, this presentation examines how shifting expectations, newly claimed freedoms, and emerging roles for women reshaped professional and personal dynamics in the dispute-resolution field.

Using a curated montage of pre- and post-movement images and music, we will revisit the challenges women faced during this transformative period and highlight the cultural narratives that emerged during and after the movement. These visual and musical reflections will help us recall the obstacles, the progress, and the ongoing struggles for equity.

Following the montage, we will engage the audience in a discussion about the realities of the time: how gender bias influenced arbitrators’ livelihoods and relationships, and how those historical conditions shaped our own practices and interactions with female arbitrators and professional women as a whole. Please join us and share brief comments regarding your experiences.

#### **Moderator:**


[Sarah Kerr Garraty](#), NAA, *Dedham, MA*

#### **Panelists:**

[John C. Alfano](#), NAA, *Avenue, MD*

[Susan E. Halperin](#), NAA, *Hartford, CT*

[Lisa W. Timmons](#), Esq., Lisa W. Timmons, PLLC  
*West Bloomfield, MI*



**Saturday, May 23, 2026 (cont' d)**

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Avenue Ballroom (Lobby Level)*

**Where Do We Go from Here? Building a Labor Arbitration Practice in a Changing World**

Interested in becoming a labor arbitrator? Join this interactive session as a panel of seasoned and newer arbitrators share practical insights on how to start and grow a labor arbitration practice in today's evolving workplace. Gain strategies, hear real-world experiences, and learn approaches to navigate the challenges of building a successful arbitration career.

**Moderator:**

[Dan Zeiser](#), NAA, *Cleveland, OH*

**Panelists:**

[Danielle L. Hargrove](#), NAA, *Dallas, TX*

[Michael Loconto](#), Loconto ADR, *Boston, MA*


[Jerry B. Sellman](#), NAA, *Columbus, OH*

[Rebekah Smith](#), NAA, *Camden, ME*

[John L. Woods](#), NAA, *Columbia, MD*

**Materials:**

[Nuts and Bolts of Arbitration Practice](#)



**Saturday, May 23, 2026 (cont'd)**


9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Streeterville (Lobby Level)*

**Update from the North**

Get the latest insights on labour arbitration in Canada. Mark Asbell, Region 7 Chair, along with a panel of Canadian arbitrators, will review recent developments and trends across the country. The session will also provide details about the upcoming Region 7/Canadian Labour Arbitration Conference in Canmore, Alberta (September 22–25, 2026).

**Presenter:**

Mark L. Asbell, NAA, *Sherwood Park, AB*



## Saturday, May 23, 2026 (cont'd)

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Camelot (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)*

### **Confident Communication for Arbitrators: Ethics, Confidentiality and Public Engagement**

Effective communication is key for arbitrators facing high-stakes interactions with the media and the public. This hands-on workshop, led by the NAA Media and Communication Strategy Committee and Common Ground Public Relations, equips participants with practical techniques for crafting clear, confident messaging, managing challenging questions, and explaining the arbitration process concisely. Through individual and small-group exercises, attendees will draft statements, practice live responses, and receive targeted guidance to advocate for the profession and strengthen public understanding.


#### **Moderator:**

[Andrea Laiacona Dooley](#), NAA, *Oakland, CA*

#### **Panelists:**

[Denise Bentele](#), APR, President, CEO, and Founder of  
Common Ground Public Relations, *Chesterfield, MO*

[Amy Hanson](#), Account Supervisor, Common Ground Public  
Relations, *St. Louis, MO*



**Saturday, May 23, 2026 (cont' d)**

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Avenue Ballroom (Lobby Level)*

**International Labor Dispute Resolution Procedures: A  
Comparative Analysis and Best Practices**

Explore how labor disputes are resolved around the world. This panel examines dispute resolution methods in Brazil, Ireland, and the UK, highlighting best practices for fair and efficient outcomes. Speakers will draw on their extensive bench experience to share insights and recommendations for effective procedures, with commentary from seasoned NAA members.

**Moderator:**

Jaquelin F. Drucker, NAA, *New York, NY*

**Speakers:**

[Judge Lelio Bentes Correa](#), President of the Superior Labour Court of Brazil, *Brazil*

[Kevin Duffy](#), Barrister and former Chairman of the Irish Labour Court, *Ireland (presenting via Zoom)*

[Professor Alan C. Neal](#), UK Employment Judge (retired) 1995-2025, *England*

**Commentator:**

[Richard D. Fincher](#), NAA, *Paradise Valley, AZ*

**Closing and Thank You:**


[Jules B. Bloch](#), NAA, *Toronto, ON*

**Materials:**

[Access to Labour Justice](#)

[Dispute Resolution in Ireland](#)

[IL Arb Rules](#)



**Saturday, May 23, 2026 (cont'd)**

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. .... **Concurrent Session**  
*Streeterville (Lobby Level)*

**Public School Reform Through a Labor Relations Lens:  
A report on the work of REF grant recipient Professor Saul  
Rubinstein, Rutgers University**

Public school reform often creates friction between teachers' unions, administrators, school boards, parents, and policymakers. This session highlights a different approach, focusing on collaboration and relationship-building to improve teaching quality and student outcomes.

Drawing on the work of REF grant recipient Professor Saul Rubinstein and the Rutgers New Jersey Public School Collaborative, panelists will examine outcomes including student achievement, teacher retention, and labor relations, and explore how collective bargaining can support meaningful reform.

**Moderator:**

Rosemary Pye, *Chevy Chase, MD*

**Panelists:**

Jo Anderson, Jr., Founder, Consortium for Educational Change (CEC), *Chicago, IL*

Saul A. Rubinstein, Professor, School of Management & Labor Relations, Director Collaborative School Leadership Initiative, Rutgers University,  
*New Brunswick, NJ*

Alan A. Symonette, NAA, *Media, PA*

**Materials:**

[Rubenstein & McCarthy US Public School Reform](#)