



Declaration of Candidacy

Candidates for election as Second Vice President or Director Elected Nationally must complete this form and submit it to the Executive Director at the principal headquarters of DRI by 5:00 PM (CDT) on July 1st of the year in which the election is held.

National Director Requirements - Directors Elected Nationally or by Region must be Individual Members of the Corporation admitted to the practice of law. Each such director must meet the following qualifications at the time of election: (a) The candidate shall have been a DRI member for a total of at least five (5) years, and (b) The candidate shall have been a member of at least one DRI substantive law committee for at least three (3) years, and (c) The candidate must have registered for and attended at least one (1) DRI Annual Meeting within the previous three (3) years, and, within the three (3) years prior to the final day of the Annual Meeting, the candidate must have 1) registered for and attended at least two (2) DRI seminars, or 2) registered for and attended one (1) DRI seminar and one (1) DRI Regional Meeting.

Position sought

☐ Second Vice President* ☐ Secretary- Treasurer x☒ **National Director**

*If you have declared your candidacy for Second Vice President and are not the successful candidate, will you consider the Secretary - Treasurer Officer position?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Name **Leonor M. Lagomasino**

Firm/Company **Hinshaw & Culbertson**

Address **2525 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Ste. 400, Coral Gables, Florida 33134**

Telephone **305-428-5079**

Cell Phone **305-632-7684**

E-mail llagomasino@hinshawlaw.com

Born (location) **Hartford, Connecticut**

Education

University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, Juris Doctorate; Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana, Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting.

Awards and achievements

As set forth below, I have moved up the ranks at DRI each year. I have also been invited to sit on the board of two non-profits organizations, as also set forth below, based upon my volunteer work and reputation in the community.

Areas of practice

Insurance defense, primarily in life, health and disability (“LH&D”); commercial litigation

Years as a defense attorney

22 years.

Employment history

Hinshaw & Culbertson (2015 – present); Carlton Fields (2005 – 2015); Greenberg and Lagomasino (1997 – 2005); Greenberg Lopez and Best (1996 – 1997); Katz Barron Squitiero and Faust (1992 – 1996); Stinson Lyons Gerlin & Bustamante (1998 – 1992); Peat Marwick & Mitchell (1983 – 1985); Tidewater Corporation (1983).

Noteworthy defense work

My insurance defense practice work focuses primarily on individual life and disability defense which is a specialized area of the law. I have been representing life and disability insurers for over twenty years.

Professional affiliations

DRI; Florida Bar; American Bar Association; past member of International Claims Association; past member of Cuban American Bar Association; past member of Florida Association for Women Lawyers.

DRI member since 2006

Please describe your previous involvement in DRI, including but not limited to, leadership positions held. Projects contributed to, Committee memberships, presentations given, and written materials authored. Special accomplishments should also be noted.

Positions held within the Life, Health & Disability (“LH&D”) Committee:

- Committee Chair, October, 2016 – October, 2018
- Committee Vice-Chair, October, 2014 – October, 2016
- Program Chair, 2014
- Program Vice Chair, 2012 – 2013
- Membership Chair, 2010 – 2012
- Membership Vice-Chair, 2009
- Dine-Around Chair, 2007 – 2009

Presentations:

- Boot Camp, Corporate Representative Depositions, November, 2017
- Boot Camp, Corporate Representative Depositions, November, 2015
- Boot Camp, Corporate Representative Depositions, November, 2013
- Annual Seminar, Recurring Individual Disability Issues, April, 2013
- Boot Camp, Key Policy provisions, November, 2011
- Annual Seminar, Agent Misconduct, April, 2009
- DRI Annual Meeting, Hot topics in Disability Insurance, October, 2008

Publications:

- I will be publishing an article in the upcoming In House Defense Quarterly.
- I authored the Florida chapter for the 50-state compendium on Rescissions to be published this year jointly by the Insurance Law and LH&D Committees.
- I authored the Florida chapter for the 50-state compendium on Life Insurance Claims published last year by the LH&D Committee.
- As Chair of the Committee, I write a column for the quarterly newsletters and regularly post on the online community.
- As Chair of the Committee, I authored an article in the For the Defense publication which featured our Committee.

Special accomplishments:

Diversity. In my various leadership roles over the years, I have genuinely and enthusiastically extended the same warmth and hospitality to the prospective, new, and existing members of our Committee which was extended to me when I joined. I strive to ensure that everyone feels he or she has a place and a stake in the workings of our Committee. In particular, I am vocal and passionate about finding a place for women and other diverse members within our Committee.

Specifically, I recognized early on that most women who came to the seminar on the first night -- when dine-arounds are not scheduled -- were having dinner alone in their hotel rooms. Together with Michelle Czapski, I organized for the first time a Women's Dinner on the first night of the seminar. The Women's Dinner is formatted as one big dinner instead of smaller group dinners in order to foster a convivial and high-energy environment. This event was immediately well attended and we now have to arrange for electronic registration in advance because the dinner for 50 fills up almost immediately.

Along these same lines, a few years ago I also started the Ladies' Lunch and Spa during the Fly-in when I recognized there was an opportunity for such an event between the time we arrived in Chicago and the traditional Thursday night dinner before the Friday meeting. Many of the women now fly in earlier to attend this event. Each year, our conversations at lunch start where last year's left off. This more intimate event allows for continuity to the relationships we are trying to build.

Over the last couple of years, several women on the Committee have been elevated to positions of leadership through their hard work and dedication. My last appointments of key positions were for the following women: Sarah Delaney, 2020 Program Chair; Jamie Moore, 2021 Program Chair; Kristina Holmstrom, Membership Chair; Fallyn Cavalieri and Elizabeth Doolin, co-Marketing Chairs; and Julie Wall, Public Service Chair. These appointments were not to the exclusion of more qualified men, but represent the rise of these talented women who have felt empowered to take a leadership role in our Committee and who have done an outstanding job in the process. I am very proud of them.

Substantive law. Once I became Program Chair in 2014, I worked to expand our educational scope in order to address the shrinking number of LH&D clients and caseloads. In 2014, I added a health track to our Wednesday programming. We had never done this before given that we did not traditionally offer sufficient health-related programming to attract health insurance practitioners and, in particular, health insurers themselves. Nevertheless, Bryan Bolton took charge of this new goal and has done a tremendous job. The health-track sessions are better attended year after year and our members are grateful to be exposed to this area of the law which potentially expands their practice.

Along these same lines, several years ago, Mark Schmidtke and I discussed expanding the scope of our work to include regulatory programming. After raising the issue at the Fly-in, we received approval from the Executive Committee. Mark and Ford Stephens have been working on how to incorporate regulatory subjects in our traditional litigation-oriented programming. We will be including a Webinar this year on this topic as well as including a plenary session at next year's annual seminar.

Membership. At the suggestion of Maureen Mulville from Illinois Mutual, one of the projects which I am emphasizing is to target smaller insurers for membership recruiting and, further, to find ways for in-house counsel members to engage each other on numerous topics through various means, including webinars and through their own on-line communities. Steve Broer of Guardian Life has been tasked with these effort which have proven challenging, but which I sincerely hope will continue once I am no longer Chair.

Our Committee also completed the “Westlaw Project” this past year under the direction of Larry Kristinik with the assistance of Rob Lesko, Pat Begos, Jamie Moore, and several others. The Westlaw Project consisted of identifying through Westlaw searches the names of non-DRI members handling LH&D cases in key states. We reached out to these attorneys prior to the annual seminar in April and will continue to extend invitations to them to join DRI. We will be analyzing the results of our efforts in the coming months by correlating the names of seminar attendees as well as new members with the Westlaw List. This is a project which would seem to be well-suited to replication by other committees.

List any leadership roles in other defense organizations.

I was active in the International Claims Association for approximately seven years until 2016. While at ICA, I gave one or two presentations at each of their annual seminars and attended the mid-year planning meetings. I enjoyed working with this organization, but resigned when I became LH&D Committee Chair because I would not have been able to devote the amount of time required to ICA.

Describe your goals if you are elected to the above position.

The LH&D Committee has often been described to us as the “poster child” of how a committee should be run. If elected, I would like to share with other committees where appropriate the best practices the LH&D Committee has developed over the years.

I would also like to explore ways to increase membership in general and, more particularly, to find ways to make women and other diverse members find a welcoming place and a meaningful voice at DRI. I also understand that the percentage of Hispanic members is quite low. As a first generation American born of Cuban parents, I would like to address this issue as well.

What do you believe is the most important issue confronting the defense bar?

I am profoundly concerned by the extreme partisanship in this country which has tainted the legal profession by undermining the rule of law, law enforcement, and the role of the judiciary amidst a circus-like atmosphere. My concern extends beyond party lines and I believe the entire legal profession needs to recognize and address the inherent dangers in our present day-to-day discourse -- regardless of party affiliation.

Define the appropriate role for DRI as the national defense bar organization.

At the committee level, DRI should (and does) identify the challenges facing each specific practice area as well as those challenges facing our clients as we defend them. Having identified those challenges, DRI should (and does) further identify strategies or solutions to those challenges and educate its membership on executing those strategies or solutions. On a broader scale, DRI's efforts to educate the judiciary and advocate for the defense bar should continue. Finally, an area of DRI's efforts as to which I am not as familiar as I would like involves integrating the state defense bar associations with DRI nationally. Although I have enjoyed meeting and discussing these issues generally with the state defense organizations at the January leadership meeting, I have not seen how the two worlds intersect other than at the leadership meeting. This is an area I would like to explore further.

Hobbies and/or interests

My hobbies include oil painting, reading, and gardening. Photography has also been a hobby since high school but I rarely take out my camera anymore in light of the convenience of my iPhone.

My interests also include historic preservation. I sit on the board of the Deering Estate Foundation and am a member of the 100 Ladies of Deering -- each dedicated to the preservation of the Deering Estate at Cutler. Until last year, I also served on the board of the Dade Historical Trust dedicated to historic preservation in Miami-Dade County. Two years ago I bought a small Old Spanish home built in 1926.

(As an interesting aside with a Chicago connection, the Deering Estate was built by Charles Deering of the Deering and McCormick (International Harvester) prominent Chicago families. The Chicago Art Institute features a Deering Family wing dedicated to Medieval and Renaissance art. The Chicago Art Institute also displays a beautiful portrait of Charles Deering painted by his friend and extraordinary artist, John Singer Sargent.)

Family

I am the oldest of five in a tight-knit Cuban family. My parents came to the United States as exiles fleeing Castro in 1960. I was born in Connecticut but spent my childhood and early teens in Bethesda, Maryland before my family moved to Miami to be with our extended family.

My parents, siblings, their spouses and children all live in Miami. I have a 29-year old nephew whom I adore and two very young nieces who will be extraordinary women one day. Unfortunately, I went through an unwanted divorce several years ago after 20 years together but I am blessed with the love and support of my family and friends, including those at DRI.