



## Declaration of Candidacy

Candidates for election as Second Vice President or Director Elected Nationally must complete this form and submit it to the Chief Executive Officer at the principal headquarters of DRI by 5:00 PM (CDT) on July 1<sup>st</sup> 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       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

Melissa Roeder

---

Foley Mansfield PLLP

---

999 Third Avenue, Suite 3760, Seattle, WA 98104

---

W: (206) 456-5360; C: (206) 713-0036

---

mroeder@foleymansfield.com

---



## Education

---

1989: Bachelor of Science, South Dakota State University (Go Jackrabbits), Brookings, SD  
2000: J.D. Thomas M. Cooley School of Law, Lansing, MI

## Awards and achievements

---

- Washington Super Lawyers®, 2012-2019
- *Profile / Melissa Roeder: Pedal to the Metal*, KCBA Bar Bulletin, December 2018.
- DRI Rudolph Janata Award for Best State and Local Defense Organization (WDTL) 2016 (Immediate Past President)
- Testimony before Senate Law & Justice Committee on behalf of WDTL opposing increase in dollar amount from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for civil claims that are subject to mandatory arbitration, under SHB 1248, March 16, 2015
- Top 50 Women Attorneys, Washington Law & Politics, 2014
- *Featured in an article in the Super Lawyers magazine entitled "Farm Girl," by Susan G. Hauser. "Melissa Roeder brings a rural work ethic to the civil defense table."* 2013
- Washington Rising Stars®, 2007-2011
- Washington Law & Politics, "Outstanding Litigation Associate" by WDTL, 2008

## Areas of practice

---

Cannabis Litigation/Advisement  
Toxic Tort (asbestos, talc, radon, benzene, mold)  
Products Liability  
Employment Law

## Years as a defense attorney

---

20 Years

## Employment history

---

Internship with Minnesota Senator Paul Wellstone	1993
American Seafood Company, Commercial Fisherman in the Bering Sea	1994-1997
Extern for 6 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, Judge Richard Fred Suhrheinrich	1999-2000
Preston Gates & Ellis, Contract Attorney, Seattle, WA	2000-2001
Murray Dunham Murray, Associate, Seattle, WA	2001-2003
Forsberg & Umlauf, Associate to Equity Partner, Seattle, WA	2003-2015
Foley & Mansfield, Of Counsel, Seattle, WA	2015-Present

## Noteworthy defense work

---

- **2020:** Defending a THC oil extractor in a vaping product liability lawsuit.
- **2019-2017:** Average 2-3 asbestos trials per year.
- **2018:** First chaired 12-day asbestos jury trial and received a defense verdict in 15 minutes.
- **2017:** First chaired 10-day asbestos jury trial and received a defense verdict.
- **2016:** Second chaired 15-day husband and wife (two injured parties) asbestos jury trial where the jury deliberated for a day and a half before returning a defense verdict on both the wife's brain mesothelioma claim and the husband's asbestosis claim.
- **2013-Present** (on appeal): Noll v. American Biltrite, Inc. et al. – Trial court granted defendant's Motion to Dismiss for lack of personal jurisdiction over a Wisconsin component-part manufacturer. Issue has been to the Washington Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals three separate times.

## Professional affiliations

---

### **DRI (Member since 2005)**

Board of Directors, Northwest Regional Director (WA, OR, ID, WA, MT and AK)

DRI Seminar Chair, Marijuana Law Seminar, 2018-2020, Vice Chair, Marijuana Law Seminar, 2017-2018

DRI Annual Meeting Chair and Vice Chair, Sponsorships, 2017-2018

DRI Workers Compensation Committee Liaison, 2017-2020

DRI Public Activities Committee (PAC) Chair, 2019-2020 and Vice Chair 2018

DRI State Representative for Washington State, 2016-2018

### **Washington Defense Trial Lawyers (WDTL) (Member since 2003)**

President, 2014-2015

Board of Trustees, 2008-2018

Chair, Toxic Tort Section, 2008 to 2014

### **Federation of Defense and Corporation Counsel (FDCC) (Member since 2016-2020)**

Vice Chair of the Women's Commission, 2019-2020

### **Washington State Bar Association (Member since 2000)**

Co-Chair, Cannabis Section, Litigation, 2019-2020

**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.**

## Board of Directors (Regional Director for NW)

---

I am completing my third year as Regional Director for the Northwest (WA, OR, ID, WY, MT and AK). I have also been active as a co-leader with the Pacific region (CA, AZ, NV and HI). As the regional director, I have hosted monthly phone or Zoom calls with the State and Local Defense Organizations (SLDO) leadership for information sharing and networking opportunities. In 2018

and 2019, I was able to attend the SLDO meetings for each of my states and presented at the following:

1. **Wyoming:** 2020. Co-presentation with Mind Matters Jury Consultants on Voir Dire and Picking a Jury (a mock selection) and 2019 Cannabis Litigation with Angie Perez.
2. **Montana:** 2019. Co-presentation with Marc Williams on Lawyer Mental Health and Marketing and co-presentation with toxicologist Angie Perez on Cannabis 101.
3. **Washington:** 2019. Young Lawyers Boot Camp with Tom Hurney and Jeff Tilden.
4. **Alaska:** 2019. Cannabis 101 with co-presenter Angie Perez.

I also planned the itinerary and location for the Pacific/NW regional meetings in 2018, 2019 and 2020 with an average of 25 SLDO leaders with 2018 being a “super meeting” to include the MidRegion and attendance of over 50 leaders.

### **Public Activities Committee (PAC)**

---

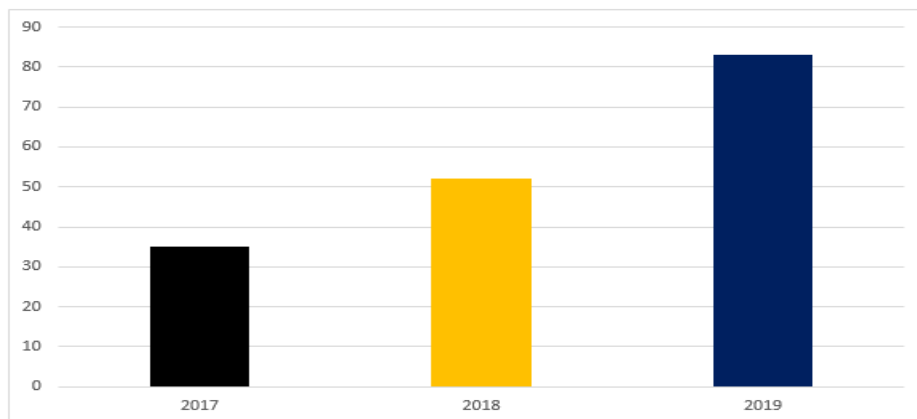
2019-2020: Chair

2018: Vice Chair

The PAC has grown expediently over the past three years and has made an impact on thousands of lives. Actives under the umbrella of the PAC include:

1. **Public Service:** Activities have grown from 35 projects in 2017, 52 projects in 2018 and 83 projects in 2019 with seminal projects taking place at the Annual Meeting.

#### **#DRICares Project Chart**



Over the past three years, the PAC has raised over \$50,000 in monetary donations and has donated over 1,000,000 items ranging from toiletries to books to stuffed animals. It has also inspired our Sister organizations to create their own public service efforts and FDCC and recently created FedServes, which is a new FDCC public service initiative. Finally, every region has hosted a public

service project over the past two years. Here are just a handful of the projects the PAC assisted and promoted:



2. The PAC also hosted its first 5K to raise \$3,500 for Veteran Suicide Prevention programs.
3. **Raffle and Auction:** Collect, arrange and organize (ask for donations, collect items, sell tickets and promotion) for the Annual Meeting Raffle and Auction to raise money for the National Foundation of Judicial Excellence (NFJE). Raised a combined total of more than \$125,000 in 2017-2019.
4. **Memorials and Tributes:** Recognize and honor DRI members and raise funds for The Foundation and Diversity Scholarships.
5. **Awards:** Promote and encourage nominations for the DRI Annual Meeting awards and tributes to its members.

### **Cannabis Seminar Chair**

---

How do you create new book of business and chair a DRI committee all within five years? You look for cutting-edge DRI programming like the 2015 inaugural cannabis seminar in Boulder, Colorado. I attended this seminar, absorbed all that I could, talked with then DRI Executive Board member John Parker Sweeney and said, “How can I get involved?”

That five-word question “how can I get involved” resulted in John introducing me to DRI members Matt Biscan and Steve Plunkett and my becoming the Vice Chair of the 2016 Marijuana seminar. The Cannabis Seminar continues to grow. I predict it will be one of the largest programs that DRI will offer once marijuana is legalized on the federal level.

Five years later, I am presenting around the country on cannabis product liability and risk assessment and have built a new book of business thanks to the vision and help of DRI. These are the types of stories DRI can share with its members to show the value of both membership and seminars (whether virtual or live).

## Articles for DRI, Sister Organizations and Local Bar/SLDO

---

- *DRI The Voice - Five Foley Mansfield Offices Give Back to Their Communities*, January 2019
- *DRI - A Conversation with...* Melissa Roeder and DRI colleagues discuss their involvement in DRI's public service initiatives 2019
- *Profile / Melissa Roeder: Pedal to the Metal*, King County Bar Bulletin, December 2018
- *Operation Hazards of Indoor Cannabis Cultivation*, Federal Defense and Corporate Counsel Publication, 2019
- *What is the Future of Cannabis Product Liability Litigation?* The Defense News, Washington Defense Trial Lawyers Association, June 2018
- *Growing Cannabis Industry: Product Liability Concerns and the Crystal Ball of Predicting Litigation*, DRI The Voice, June 2018
- *CANNABIS INDUSTRY: Packaging, Labeling, Warning and Advertising, Practice Tips on How to Stay Ahead of Litigation*, DRI Marijuana Seminar Publication, June 2018
- *Growing Cannabis Industry: Product Liability Concerns and the Crystal Ball of Predicting Litigation*, DRI The Voice, February 21, 2018
- *A Revised Law Firm Dress Code*, WDTL Defense News, Spring 2017.
- *And the Defense Wins*, overview of product liability win featured in DRI, The Voice of the Defense Bar, June 1, 2016

## Presentations for DRI and Sister Organizations

---

- DRI Toxic Tort Seminar, Cannabis Panel, Feb. 2020
- *"Toxicology: What Is It and How Do You Utilize a Toxicologist on the Stand,"* DRI Marijuana Seminar, June 2018
- *"Cannabis Product Liability Litigation: How to Prepare and Defend Cases,"* Louisiana Defense Bar, May 2018
- *"Claims in the 21st Century,"* Puget Sound Adjusters Association Claims College, 2016
- WDTL Associate Marketing CLE, September 2016
- Planner and speaker, Washington Defense Trial Lawyers Asbestos Seminar, May 16, 2016
- Organizer and presenter, OR/WA Joint Bar Asbestos CLE, 2013
- WDTL: *"Rules and Experts North of Portlandia,"* 2013
- *"Asbestos Litigation Potpourri: Expert Exclusion 2.0,"* Resolute MidAtlantic, Resolute Midwest and QBE, 2013
- WDTL: Organizer, *"Taylor Trial in Review,"* 2011
- WDTL: Organizer, *"2009-2010 Washington State Asbestos Trial Overview"*
- WDTL: Organizer, *"Asbestos Opinions Around the Country,"* 2011
- WDTL: Organizer, *" Multi-District Litigation in Asbestos Trials,"* 2010
- WDTL: Moderator, *"Judicial Panel Perspective on Asbestos Litigation: From the Trial Court to the Court of Appeals,"* 2010

**List any leadership roles in other defense organizations.**

---

**WDTL**

President, 2014

Executive Board, 2010-2014

Creator of the Defender Donut Dash 5K, 2012-2015

Creator of the Speaker Fund Auction, 2012-Present

2008 WDTL Associate of the Year

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

---

**The Jetsons Approach:** Who knew the Jetsons with their video calls, smart watches and telecommuting would accurately predict our current work environment. There are lessons to be learned from the Jetsons that DRI can utilize in helping its DRI members now and in the future. Law firms of all sizes will be assessing the need for brick and mortar spaces, will have increased needs for cyber security and the in-person civil jury trial has become even more difficult to obtain.

COVID-19 has caused us all to re-evaluate activities and behaviors. Similarly, DRI is being forced to consider how we serve our members around the world. The former mindset of utilizing large in-person seminars needs to be reconsidered. We need to modernize our educational methods and integrate a strong online platform so we can continue to deliver value to our members. We have started the process but there is additional work to be done. More than ever, DRI members' need their online content and electronically stored information secure and in compliance with local and worldwide privacy protection laws.

DRI must be nimble. COVID-19 proved that DRI can produce high quality content and webinars in a short period of time. The DRI seminars, webinars and publications are exceptional; however, the turn-around time to address timely topics is typically three to six months. The development of a committee that can help identify, develop and establish a platform to deliver timely virtual content will further position DRI and its speakers as authorities and will attract the attention of current/future members, firms and corporations. Perhaps this could be a subsection of the Future of the Law Institute.

Regional seminar platforms should be considered. Traveling in-state or within your time-zone may be more appealing than flying 5 hours to attend a yearly seminar. These are questions we need to ask the DRI membership. Investing in or creating a DRI-owned "virtual seminar" could be a viable alternative to in-person attendance and it is a platform DRI could market to other associations. Enabling an internal "Zoom-like" video platform would also be a benefit for DRI members to connect and stay in touch.

**Juneteenth, Black Lives Matter and Pride Month** are occupying my mind as I am preparing my declaration of candidacy. The DRI affinity groups – Diversity & Inclusion, Women in the Law, Young Layers and Veterans - provide a stronger, deeper presence and connection for DRI members. Supporting these affinity groups will assist in DRI's continued growth and success.

People join firms, organizations, churches and potentially DRI to be part of a community in which they identify. Looking at the growth, or lack of growth, provides information on where to focus DRI's attention and resources.

Committee	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Through May 2020
Diversity and Inclusion	539	577	594	569	584	576	573	589
Women in the Law	795	1,011	1,105	1,112	1,132	1,161	1,112	1,149
Young Lawyers	4,011	3,649	3,613	3,242	2,599	2,391	2,222	2,366

DRI could grow its affinity groups by adding or growing (1) public service; (2) SO (significant other) group; and (3) a further break-out of the diversity & inclusion group. DRI's continued support, programming and growth of its affinity groups will be key to a stronger membership. The strength is in passion and commitment, not in numbers.

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

---

**What's Law Got to Do with It?** The defense bar is consistently outspent by the plaintiffs' bar around the country. This results in a skewed number of judges and legislatures winning office from funding by the plaintiffs' bar. The question is how to rebalance the scales of justice?

The NFJE is a great start but more needs to be done. The question is where does the funding come from? DRI needs to work with its corporate partners, firm leaders and SLDOs to create opportunities for the defense bar to participate in rule and regulatory committees on local, state and national levels. Some SLDOs have the benefit of a lobbyist but many don't. Having resources in place will address items such as the threat of non-attorney practice of law, litigation funding and bad faith laws. Looking at the root of the problem (who the decision makers are) instead of the systemic effect (the individual issues) should be a priority and long-term goal of DRI.

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

---

DRI has the size and infrastructure to work with its Sisters (FDCC, IADC, ADTA) and the SLDOs/International bars in supporting the defense bar by:

- Tackling the lack of diversity and inclusion in leadership roles in firms/corporate partners;
- Spotting new tactics (such as the reptile theory);
- Searching for public service partnerships around the U.S. and abroad; and
- Promote the public service handbook with step-by-step procedures to put on and/or support a public service project.

**Hobbies and/or interests:** Harley Davidson motorcycles and shoes (ranging from high heels to running shoes) - my personal email address is [harleysandheels@gmail.com](mailto:harleysandheels@gmail.com). My running adventures have taken me to the Great Wall of China, Berlin, NYC, Chicago, Zion, Joshua Tree, Grand Tetons, Yosemite and I have the Smokey Mountain half marathon coming in September (fingers crossed). Finally, #DRICares has prompted personal fundraising efforts from the Innocent



Project where I raffled off a cross-stitch of the Notorious RBG to raise \$2,700 to promoting Girls on the Run which is a running program for elementary girls.

### **Family:**

**Erik Roeder** is my husband and we share a passion for long distance motorcycle rides around the world, with our most recent highlight being Spain where we covered 2,300 miles in seven days, which even involved a police escort.

**Patty Habeck** who taught me hard work pays off. I don't believe my Mom slept more than 4 hours a day between 1965 and 1989. She worked the night shift at Campbell Soup Company cleaning the manufacturing facility, raised three daughters, helped my Dad farm, cooked all meals, washed our clothes in her wringer washing machine and managed to love life no matter how hard it was. On my best day, I cannot accomplish a quarter of what she accomplished in a day; thankfully I inherited her work ethic.

The lessons I learned from my Mom led me on the path to be the first person in the Habeck family to attend college. These lessons also gave me the courage to move from Brewster, Minnesota to Seattle in my early 20s with no job, family or friends waiting for me, and encouraged me to adventure to Alaska to work on a commercial fishing boat on the Bering Sea.

I look forward to the possibility of using my tireless work ethic, community building skills, and sense of humor to benefit the members of DRI and look into inventive ways to continue the elevation of DRI as the leading civil defense organization.