



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 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 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 Marta-Ann Schnabel

Firm/Company O'Bryon & Schnabel, PLC

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Education:

B.A. Honours, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada; J.D., *cum laude*, Loyola College of Law, New Orleans, LA

Awards and achievements:

Top 25 Women Lawyers in LA 2012-2021; SuperLawyer 2007-2021; LA Bar Foundation Calogero Justice Award, 2014; LABF President's Award 2008; LABF Hornblower Award 2006; LA State Bar Association President's Awards 1998, 2004, 2010 & 2015; LSBA David A. Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award, 2010; Loyola College of Law Gillis Long Public Service Award; "Woman of the Year" Award New Orleans City Business, 2015 (one of a number of women honored); AV rating in Martindale-Hubbell

Areas of practice:

Legal Ethics and Professional Malpractice defense; Insurance Coverage; Insurance Casualty; Commercial Litigation; Premises Liability defense; Construction Litigation; Business Management Counseling; Mediation

Employment history (Please do not include years):

Associate and then Partner, Hammett, Leake & Hammett in New Orleans; Founding and Managing Partner, Leake & Andersson in New Orleans; Founding and Managing Member, O'Bryon & Schnabel, PLC in New Orleans.

Noteworthy defense work:

As is evidenced by the reported cases listed below, my litigation practice has had a long reach and has involved diverse types of clients. These cases are a sampling of what I have done, from advocacy in the Louisiana Supreme Court in commercial litigation (representing commercial oyster fishermen in contract disputes) to defending local municipalities in class action litigation brought by a firefighters' union. In working for insurers, I have defended lawyers, accountants, realtors and design professionals in matters before the appellate courts, as well as individual insureds in auto accident cases threatening excess exposure. I have been involved in complex coverage disputes and have defended national corporations in mass injury claims arising out of catastrophic events. Often, however, my representations go unreported, as I assist lawyers and other professionals in solving, or even trouble-shooting, business difficulties. On a volunteer level, I

regularly represent children in “Child In Need of Care” cases, one of which is set forth below.

Vekic v. Popich, 259 So.3d 445 (La. App. 4 Cir. 2018), rev’d 236 So.3d 526 (La. 2017)
Dunn v. City of Kenner, 187 So.3d 404 (La. 2016)
Palmisano v. Ohler, 204 So.3d 1134 (La. App. 5 Cir. 2016)
Burriss v. DCFS, 167 So.3d 1053 (La. App. 1 Cir. 2015)
Sullivan v. Malta Park, 156 So.3d 751 (La. App. 4 Cir. 2014)
Sullivan v. Malta Park, 156 So.3d 1200 (La. App. 4 Cir. 2014)
Lawrence v. Government Employees Ins. Co., 151 So.3d 917 (La. App. 4 Cir. 2014)
Mason v. Garrett, 96 So.3d 650 (La. App. 4 Cir. 2012)
Crooks v. Metropolitan Life Ins. Co., 785 So.2d 810 (La. 2001)
Gilpin v. State Farm Mut. Auto. Ins. Co., 735 So.2d 921 (La. App. 5 Cir. 1999)
Leake & Andersson, LLP v. Loo-Hernandez, 704 So.2d 924 (La. App. 4 Cir. 1997)
Lambert v. Pepsico, Inc., 698 So.2d 1031 (La. App. 4 Cir. 1997)
Rafferty v. Government Employees Ins. Co., 613 So.2d 727 (La. App. 4 Cir. 1993)

Professional affiliations:

Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel (Past President); Louisiana State Bar Association (Past President); New Orleans Bar Association (Past President); New Orleans Association of Defense Counsel; Louisiana Bar Foundation; American Bar Association; ABA Center for Professional Responsibility; Claims and Litigation Management Alliance; International Association of Defense Counsel; Eastern District of Louisiana Disciplinary Committee

Have you been a DRI member for 5 or more years?

Yes. I am a 30+ year member.

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.

A DRI member for over 30 years, I am a member of the Life, Health and Disability, the Medical Liability and Health Care Law, and the Law Practice Management Committees, as well as a participant in DRI International. I have participated in/attended seminars and programs for the Diversity and Inclusion, DRI International, Cybersecurity and Data Privacy, Life Health and Disability and Litigation Skills Committees.

The intersection of the work of regional defense organizations and the substantive law committees has solidified the connection between my practice and DRI. While chairing various subcommittees of the Law Practice Management Committee and rising through the leadership track of the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel, I was also afforded the opportunity to contribute to the work of the Center for Law and Public Policy. Thus, my experience with DRI has been multi-dimensional. Here is a summary:

I became the Louisiana State Representative to DRI from 2016-2018, which afforded me the privilege to attend many Regional SLDO meetings.

As the publications chair for LPM and the editor of the LPM Newsletter from 2013-2017, I wrote the following articles for **The Voice** and for **It's Your Business**: *The Secret to Loss Prevention: Creating A Positive Firm Culture; Keeping the Workplace Safe; The Mentoring Trend; Lessons in Concentration: Learn from an Expert; We Are All In This Together; Winter Is Coming; Including Substance Abuse and Mental Health Training in Mandatory CLE; Making Inclusion Count: The Nuts and Bolts of Initiatives for Women and Minorities; Lawyers and Addiction: the Law Firm Management Perspective; Career Counseling is Part of Firm Management.*

I was a contributing editor to the **Law Firm Practice Management Guide** published by DRI as part of its "Library Series" in 2014.

I served on the first Small Firm Initiative Committee providing DRI with input on how to reach out to small firms. I am also currently working with Pam Carter on the implementations of that initiative (which dovetails with LPM).

I served as Chair of the Law Practice Management Committee from 2019-2021.

I worked with and helped to author two **White Papers for the Center for Law and Public Policy**: (1) *Third Party Litigation Funding: Civil Justice and the Need for Transparency*; and (2) *Artificial Intelligence and Legal Practice Management and Ethics*.

I have authored the following articles in **For the Defense**: *Lessons From The Lockdown; Diversity in Practice Management and Navigating Generational Divides; Embracing Change As Opportunity; The Challenge of Being the Right Lawyer for the Right Client.*

I presented at the **2018 DRI Annual Meeting** in a program called "Lost in Translation: Communication Skills for Practice Management." I served as a "local" representative on the Annual Meeting Planning Committee in 2019 in New Orleans and facilitated local speakers as well as tours of the city led by local

lawyers/spouses. I presented as a panelist for the **2019 Managing Partners and Firm Leaders Conference** in Denver on “Transparent Management: A Key to Hiring and Keeping Lawyers.” At the **2021 Managing Partners and Firm Leaders Conference** (August 2021), I will speak on “Having the Talk” to address succession planning and other difficult conversations that must be had as part of firm management. I was scheduled to speak at the International Law Conference in 2020 on “Hot Topics in International Law,” for which materials were prepared (I still hope to do this in the near future).

List any leadership roles in other defense organizations:

In 2006, I was elected as the **first woman President of the Louisiana State Bar Association** (which is not a defense organization, although it felt like one because of Hurricane Katrina, which hit shortly before I took office). I also served as **President of the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel** in 2015-16, having worked my way up through the 5 year leadership track. Earlier in my career, I was **President of the New Orleans Bar Association**. In conjunction with the Presidency of the LSBA and the NOBA, I became a sustaining member of the **National Conference of Bar Presidents**. I also served two successive terms on the ABA’s Standing Committee on Bar Services, during which I was involved in the production and staffing of the ABA **Bar Leadership Institute (BLI)** and assisted many state and local bar associations with governance issues, long range planning and leadership development.

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

I have considerable experience in serving on boards of lawyer organizations confronting difficult internal and external circumstances, most particularly as President-Elect and President of my state bar when Hurricane Katrina hit. While the pandemic lock-downs/difficulties are not identical to what was faced post-Katrina, there are parallels. Serving on the DRI Board now presents an opportunity to steer our organization through a difficult period, and to share with DRI the unusual set of skills that I developed under fire in 2005-07.

Smaller firms are the “back-bone” of DRI, and we must make it easier for those firms to participate. We can make volunteerism more beneficial to the members and the organization. If DRI offers value and opportunity, members will join and participate. To do this, DRI likely needs to step outside of its comfort zone and develop ways to support members’ adaptations to technology, cybersecurity, and the use of Artificial Intelligence. Having been the managing partner of several small to medium sized firms and relying on knowledge developed as Chair of the Law Practice Management Committee, I intend to bring practical experience to the boardroom.

I endorse the recent efforts to promote collaboration amongst the Committees, and I think that DRI would benefit if that effort were expanded. Committees can unintentionally operate like silos; opportunities for collaboration are a net positive for the committees and the organization as a whole.

This is a good time to explore new ways to expand meaningful collaboration between the SLDOs and DRI (my sense is that this may be possible in a post-pandemic world now accustomed to video conferencing). An honest dialogue with local organizations will likely strengthen their affinity for DRI. SLDOs can and should be a fertile recruitment ground for the SLCs.

The graying of the profession is reflected in DRI membership and in the levels of affinity felt for the organization. We need to take an honest look at our demographics as they impact the future of DRI and the future of the defense bar.

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

I am not sure that my concerns about the profession are limited to the “defense bar.” A big issue confronting all lawyers is whether the current system is working as it should or working in a way that guarantees fair and reasonable outcomes in keeping with the Rule of Law as a cornerstone of democracy. While this can be framed as a societal issue and has been unduly politicized in recent years, I believe that the defense bar is uniquely situated to support and maintain the system as it should work.

In terms of what challenges defense lawyers on a day-to-day basis, I honestly believe that it is the economics of the practice. This is the reason I have devoted so much time and energy to Law Practice Management in my work with DRI. Most traditional defense firms have experienced a serious economic squeeze over the past decade. While we have been able to find adaptations that keep us reasonably comfortable in the moment, the future does not bode well, particularly for smaller/medium sized firms committed to quality lawyering. The COVID crisis will likely increase the levels of frustration and conflict between defense lawyers and their clients and will make it harder for younger lawyers to emerge from education debt. I believe that DRI can play a significant role in facilitating better communications between institutional clients and their lawyers.

Moreover, I think the defense bar should have more of a voice on matters such as law school training, the cost of a legal education, and the licensing/competency of lawyers and paraprofessionals. Our members can and should seriously influence bar governance writ large, including competition from internet-based entities and artificial intelligence vendors.

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

It is difficult for me to characterize this better than DRI has itself. “The Voice of the Defense Bar” is a pitch-perfect representation both of what DRI is and what it can be. In bringing together insurers, corporate representatives and defense lawyers from across the country (and indeed the world), there is space for commonality and diversity while at the same time creating opportunity for positive dialogue about the realities of the business world. The Center for Law and Public Policy provides the national defense bar with a respected voice on policy issues. The focus on expertise in substantive law affirms the fundamentals of the Rule of Law and of the legal system.

All in all, I believe that DRI has found its appropriate place in the bar organization universe. Of course, nothing and no one is perfect, so DRI must continue to work toward the right balance of collegiality, substantive law expertise, business practicality and policy idealism.