



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: James E. Weatherholtz

Firm/Company: Womble Bond Dickinson (US), LLP

Address: 5 Exchange Street, Charleston, South Carolina 29401

Telephone: 843-720-4628

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E-mail: james.weatherholtz@wbd-us.com

Education:

B.A., 1996, The Citadel, History, *magna cum laude*

J.D., 1999, University of Virginia School Law

Awards and achievements:

- Martindale-Hubbel AV rating
- Best Lawyers in America (2014 – present)
- Best Lawyers 2019 Construction Law “Lawyer of the Year” in Charleston, SC
- South Carolina Super Lawyers honoree (2014-present)

Areas of practice:

Product Liability, Construction Litigation, Business Litigation

Employment history:

Buist, Moore, Smythe & McGee, PA, which merged with Womble, Carlyle, Sandridge & Rice, PLLC, which became Womble Bond Dickinson (US), LLP

Noteworthy defense work:

National counsel for defense of multiple class action lawsuits involving building products; national counsel for litigation claims and post-settlement disputes in multiple class actions.

Professional affiliations:

- DRI
- ABA Forum on Construction Litigation
- South Carolina Bar Association
- Charleston County Bar Association

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

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.

- Chair, Product Liability Committee, 2019-present
- Vice Chair, Product Liability Committee, 2017-2019

- Program Chair, 2014 Product Liability Conference
- Chair, Building Products Specialized Litigation Group, 2010-2012
- Speaker - Defending Class Action Warranty Claims in Building Product Cases, February 2015, DRI Product Liability Conference
- Speaker - Psychological Impediments to Mediation Success, April 2012, DRI Product Liability Conference
- Speaker - I Like My Odds: Using Statistical Evidence to Defend your Building Products Case, February 2008, DRI Product Liability Conference
- Speaker - Separating Product Liability Claims from the Construction Defect Case, April 2010, DRI Product Liability Conference
- Speaker - Making Mediation Work - A Model for Clients and Lawyers, September 2006, DRI Construction Law Seminar
- Member, Class Action Task Force, Center for Law and Public Policy

List any leadership roles in other defense organizations.

- South Carolina Bar
 - Chair, Construction Law Section, 2012-2013
 - Member, Judicial Qualifications Committee, 2009-2012
 - Section Delegate, Construction Law, 2014-2015
- American Bar Association, Forum on the Construction Industry
 - Division 7 Steering Committee, 2006-2009
 - Division 7 Liaison to the Publications Committee
- Charleston County Bar Association
 - Member, Executive Committee, 2005-2006

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

My goal is to help shape the future of DRI. The COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult, but it has caused law firms and clients alike to re-think the practice of law. Where we work, how we practice, and the ways we communicate are changing, and legal organizations will have to adapt. DRI seems to be embracing and preparing for that future, and I believe it will be ready to lead and grow with its members.

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

Jury trials are scarce, big corporations are generally unsympathetic, and the rise of social media has increased pressure on potential defendants in civil litigation. I perceive that defense lawyers are perhaps falling behind the plaintiff bar when it comes to working together. The members of the plaintiff bar seem to do a good job collaborating with one another, sharing evidence and tips to gain advantages in litigation, and leveraging resources against defendants. Defense

lawyers should continue to find ways to collaborate. For big law firms, many of the older partners are leaving the practice and younger lawyers are being asked to fill those shoes in an increasingly stressful, competitive environment. New associates may have less interest in following the traditional path to partnership, so defense firms may have to re-think law firm structure and organization.

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

DRI is the lead national defense organization and it's open to everyone. It should continue to focus on helping defense lawyers be skilled, prepared, knowledgeable, client focused, and service oriented.