



## Declaration of Candidacy

Candidates for election as Second Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, 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.

Please also see the DRI Board of Director and Officer Competencies, attached.

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	Danielle M. Waltz	
Firm/Company	Dinsmore & Shohl LLP	
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**How long have you been a member of DRI?**      Almost 17 years

**Areas of practice:**    Commercial litigation  
Construction litigation and risk management  
Government Relations

**Please provide your employment history in chronological order beginning with the current position.**

- Dinsmore & Shohl LLP (August 2023-present)
- Jackson Kelly PLLC (2014-August 2023)
- Flaherty Sensabaugh Bonasso PLLC (2006-2014)

**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.**

Leadership Positions (In Chronological order)

- **Construction Law Committee**—In addition to the leadership roles identified below, during my time as Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, the Committee hosted DRI's first virtual seminar and its first Wind Energy Litigation program. Additionally, during the pandemic, the Committee developed the DRI Construction Toolbox Talks, which have continuously been successful and led to collaborations with other committees like Workers' Compensation and Employment. Finally, the Committee has won the Division 2 SLC fundraising challenge for NFJE the last two years and won the 2023 May Membership challenge. When DRI has asked our committee to pilot a new initiative or offer additional programming, each time our committee has risen to the challenge.

- Chair (2021-2023)
- Vice Chair (2019-2021)
- Long Range Planning Committee other steering committee positions (2015-2019)
- Seminar Chair (2014)
- Marketing Chair (2013)
- Social Media Chair (2012)
- Young Lawyer Liaison (2010-2012)
- Third-Party Litigation Funding Task Force, Center for Law and Public Policy, Vice Chair (2023-Present)
- Inaugural Wind Energy Seminar, Co-Chair (May 2023)
- DRI Nominating Committee, At Large Member (2019 Annual Meeting)
- DRI Annual Meeting
  - Task Force, Chair (2019)—this task force was response for making recommendations for the future success of the DRI Annual Meeting
  - Annual Meeting, Chair (2018)
  - Annual Meeting, Vice Chair (2017)
- DRI Cares Committee (2019-2021)

- DRI Membership Committee (2015-2016)

**Committee Memberships:** Construction Law; SLC Membership; Lawyers, Professionalism and Ethics

**Presentations:**<sup>1</sup>

- Moderator, "When the Client Relationship Goes Too Far (Ethics)," Joint Session with Civil Rights and Governmental Tort Liability Seminar, Construction Law Seminar, and Women in the Law Seminar, DRI, Las Vegas, Nevada (January 23-25, 2023)
- Co-presenter, "Deeper Discovery: Hitting all the Project Nook and Crannies to Uncover Best Evidence," 2021 DRI Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts (Oct. 15, 2021)
- Speaker, "It's a Brave New World — Potential New Parties/New Theories with AI," DRI/IDC Rise of The Machines: Artificial Intelligence in Construction Virtual Seminar (Feb. 16, 2021)
- Co-speaker, with Sen. Ryan J. Ferns, "Legislative Trends in the Construction Industry," DRI Construction Law Seminar, Las Vegas, Nevada (Sept. 9-11, 2015)

**Written Materials Authored:**

- Author, Construction Law Committee Honors David Wilson II Through Action, *The Brief Case: DRI Committee News* (March 2022)
- Author, Your 2018 Annual Meeting, Celebrating Diversity, Embracing Technology and Using Leadership to Build a Bridge into the Future, *For the Defense* (July 2018)
- Contributor as part of Center for Law and Public Policy's Third-Party Litigation Funding Task Force, Third-Party Litigation Funding: Civil Justice and the Need for Transparency (2018)
- Co-author, Construction Law 2017 Legislative Update, *In House Defense Quarterly* (2017)
- Author, WV Becomes 26<sup>th</sup> Right to Work State, *The Critical Path* (July 2016)
- Author, DRI Membership—It's Personal, *For the Defense* (July 2016)
- Author, WV Portion of the *DRI Construction Law Desk Reference* (2009)

**List any significant leadership commitment and involvement within the legal field other than DRI, including but not limited to other legal organizations.**

- West Virginia University College of Law Visiting Committee, Chairwoman
- Associated Builders and Contractors of WV, Board of Directors and Government Relations Committee

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the presentations, I also co-authored all corresponding seminar materials.

- International Association of Defense Counsel: Construction Law Committee, previous Vice Chair of Diversity; Civil Justice Reform Committee, Vice Chair of Publications
- West Virginia Chamber of Commerce: Board of Directors; Member of Government Relations and Civil Justice Committees
- Defense Trial Counsel of West Virginia, Registered Lobbyist

**Why do you wish to join the board of directors or become an officer and what skills, abilities and attributes identified in the Board of Director/Officer Competencies can you bring to the role?**

I wish to join the Board of Directors for DRI to help strategically lead an organization that has been so important to me personally and professionally. With my background in both litigation and public policy as well as my leadership roles in legal organizations and other non-profits and demonstrated record of delivery, I am uniquely situated to craft strategy for the future of DRI. While I believe I possess many of the abilities and attributes identified in the Board of Director/Officer competency list, I will address the specific areas below where I would best be able to assist the Board if selected to serve.

I am an **influencer**/connector. I can often look at the big picture and see opportunity and identify the best way to connect that opportunity to influence a solution. Most recently, I was able to use this influence/connection to coordinate a trip to Amazon Web Services headquarters with a delegation of leaders from the state of WV to identify economic opportunities for our state. Similarly, I believe I could leverage my connections nationally to help identify opportunities for DRI and its members.

I have held **leadership** roles in a number of non-profit and professional organizations, including DRI. Through those leadership roles, I have honed **governance** skills and developed a reputation for delivering through **accountability**. My leadership mantra that I share through this service as well as advice I give new young leaders is as follows:

1. Raise your hand.
2. Show up.
3. Do what you say you are going to do.

I consistently promote and carry the flag for all organizations in which I have leadership roles, including DRI. I additionally promote and advocate for my **team** members. An early adopter of social media and regular user both personally and professionally, I have demonstrated commitment to promoting the DRI **brand**, not only to my law firm, but also to my clients and national network. I also have consistently promoted and advocated for DRI members.

I am an **innovative** leader, coming up with adaptive ideas like “Toolbox Talks” as well as collaborating on DRI’s first ever Wind Energy litigation program. The Construction Committee has demonstrated the ability to **collaborate**, by meeting with and providing best practices to multiple committees, including Workers’ Compensation and Lawyers, Professionalism and Ethics. I am a demonstrated team player, who is always willing to put the needs of the organization first.

I value **emotional intelligence**. In chairing the recruiting committee at my law firm, this was one of the main attributes I looked for in candidates. At a recent presentation I attended, one of the topics discussed was emotional intelligence or soft skills. Specifically, the theme of the presentation was that while CEOs expect their employees to be technically proficient, that the

main trait they look for is emotional intelligence. In my leadership roles at DRI, I have focused on making sure any programming contains training or discussion of soft skills.

**What suggestions would you make to move the organization forward?**

DRI can continue to move forward by meeting its members and their clients “where they are at.” More specifically, the practice of law and society is evolving at a more rapid pace than ever and DRI should continue to be flexible to adapt to these changes. Specific examples are identified below:

**Innovative Programming**—Recently, I was fortunate enough to be a part of the planning team for DRI’s first ever Wind Energy Litigation Conference. This is a very cutting-edge area of law, and attendance at this inaugural program demonstrates that DRI members are interested in programming on new and adapting areas of law. While DRI should continue its top notch SLC seminar programming, in person and virtual “state of the art” programming is a must. DRI may have to reimagine how it thinks about committees and consider additional joint programming as dictated of the needs of its members.

**Continued Investment in Center for Public Policy**—As a member of the Third-Party Litigation funding Task Force and also a practitioner in the public policy arena, I believe it’s critical that DRI continue to explore how to grow and enhance the reputation of the “Center.” Our clients are looking for assistance to navigate complex public policy and regulatory hurdles. The Center, DRI and its members are uniquely positioned to guide and provide advice to businesses around the country and the globe.

While the Center has made great strides, it continues to be one of most uniquely situated parts of DRI to position the organization to both raise its profile as well as to motivate public policy discussions on topical issues.

**Describe one transformational/defining experience in your professional life you have been involved with and what you learned from that experience.**

Over the course of several years, beginning in 2015, I worked with several others on “legal reforms” and public policy changes in West Virginia. The most significant of these measures was passing a bill creating an Intermediate Court of Appeals. Prior to the passage of the bill, West Virginia was in a distinct minority around the country in lacking such a court, and accordingly, a body of robust case law to direct practitioners.

Because it took many years and efforts from many organizations, I learned to be patient. Big changes take time, and often it can take years to influence a process and lay the groundwork for such a change. Additionally, I learned that often practitioners have difficulty adapting to change, as a result, can seek to reject it. This lesson is applicable not only to passage of a bill like this, but also to organizations like DRI. With the many changes to the practice of law to the firms who support DRI, there may be necessary changes to the organization that initially will have adverse reactions by members. My experience in working on the intermediate court bill indicates that while it may take a long time to lay the groundwork, that long term efforts and education can result in positive change.

**Describe the greatest challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for DRI over the next five+ years.**

One of the greatest challenges DRI is facing is the growing lack of interest in voluntary organizations (particularly with changes in technology) as well as the pressure of voluntary organizations to demonstrate almost immediate return on investment. While this is one of the greatest challenges, it is also one of DRI's greatest opportunities. DRI can continue to analyze and develop its programming and committee structure to meet the evolving needs of the profession. It can provide its members with tools to be on the cutting edge of technology and well as put them in the best position to assist their clients.

As the law evolves, DRI can continue to position itself as a thought leader and industry influencer, both through the use of the Center as well as through its programming and communication to members. During the next several years, DRI has the opportunity to continue to reimagine the delivery of its services and programming through evolving technology while still maintaining the DRI's core values.

**DRI strives to be governed by a diverse board of directors—in terms of race, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, location, and/or professional level, and other facts that enhance diversity and inclusion --- who can and will help advance DRI's goals through the power of collaboration. In what ways have you demonstrated a commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in your work, and how will your DE&I experience inform your contributions as a Board member?**

I have demonstrated commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through my involvement in non-profits, my leadership within my law firm and also in my involvement through DRI.

As a two-term Board Member of the YWCA Charleston, an organization committed to "eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all," I also served as Chair for several years of its public policy committee and provided pro bono advocacy at the West Virginia legislature. Through this service, I actively advocated for funds for victims of domestic violence as well as for policies that advanced the YWCA's mission.

Additionally, I served as the Co-Chair of the Women for Economic Leadership Development's ["WELD"] inaugural Charleston chapter for several years. This organization planned events in Charleston, WV and the surrounding West Virginia community, with the mission to develop and advance women's leadership to strengthen the economic prosperity of the communities it serves.

As previous chair of recruiting at Jackson Kelly, I led efforts to draw national speakers to the law firm, including three DRI members, to discuss DEI initiatives with our firm and to allow our law firm to learn and grow from these efforts.

Throughout my involvement in DRI, I have demonstrated a commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The 2018 Annual Meeting focused on diversity, technology and leadership. Through the work of the committee I chaired, we led efforts to secure two female, African American main stage speakers. Additionally, I have continually worked to establish the DEI pipeline within the Construction Law committee and make efforts for all our committee members to feel welcome.

**Is there anything else you would like to add that has not already been previously stated?**

I am honored to be considered by the members of this organization, its leadership and by the nominating committee. While I hope to serve on DRI's Board of Directors, I will continue to serve DRI in whatever capacity I am called.