



**How long have you been a member of DRI?**

21 years

**Areas of practice:**

Governmental liability, constitutional claims, tort and wrongful death defense, premises liability, road and street design, general litigation, and appellate advocacy.

**Employment history:**

City of Phoenix Law Department (current)

Berke Law Firm, PLLC

Shughart Thomson & Kilroy, PC

Goodwin Raup, PC

Judicial Clerkship with the Honorable William F. Garbarino, Arizona Court of Appeals

**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.**

I have been a member of the Governmental Liability Committee for the past twenty-one years and was the chair of the Committee from October 2020-October 2022. Prior to that, I was the vice chair of the Committee. I have served in several other leadership positions on the Governmental Liability Committee over the past twelve years, including chair and vice chair of the annual seminar, chair of the partnering with industry committee, chair of the trial skills add-on to the seminar, and online community chair. I have attended this Committee's annual seminar and been a member of the seminar planning committee for most of the past 21 years as well. I was a co-presenter with two former Committee chairs at the Governmental Liability Section 1983 Bootcamp in 2021 on the topic of Fourth and Fourteenth Amendment Claims. I am also the co-author of two sets of presentation materials at this Committee's seminars in 2017 and 2004 and several articles for DRI publications. Finally, I have been asked to speak on the topic of issues surrounding homeless individuals at the Committee's upcoming seminar in January 2024.

I am also active in the Women in the Law Committee and have attended that committee's annual seminar twice in recent years. For the past six months, I have served as a member of the SLC Engagement Committee along with DRI Board Members and other DRI members. As a member of that committee, I assisted in interviewing the leaders of DRI's Substantive Law Committees regarding

engagement issues and then synthesizing that information to be included in a report to the DRI Board and Executive Committee. My participation as a member of that committee has given me interesting insight into not only the common issues facing all DRI SLCs, but also the differences and unique situations of some committees.

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

I have been a member of the Arizona Association of Defense Counsel for most of the past twenty-two years and served on the Governmental Liability Committee as well as given a CLE presentation for that organization. I have also been a member of the Arizona Women Lawyers Association for most of my career. I have served in several different roles in that organization, including as newsletter editor and assisting with the Mother/Lawyer Committee. I have most recently been involved in the Judicial Nominations Committee, assisting member of the organization who have applied to be nominated as Court of Appeals and Superior Court Judges with mock interviews and feedback to assist them in that process. I have also been appointed to serve as a Judge Pro Tem in Maricopa County Superior Court in civil cases and to assist with settlement conferences in civil cases.

**Why do you wish to join the board of directors and what skills, abilities, and attributes identified in the Board of Director Competencies can you bring to this role?**

I wish to join the Board of Directors to give a voice to government attorneys and in-house attorneys on the DRI Board and bring that perspective to decisions made by the Board. I also have the experience of a twenty-year plus attorney who has not followed the traditional path of law firm associate to partner and who worked part-time from home as a lawyer for several years when my children were young.

I believe that I would bring many key skills, abilities, and attributes identified in the Board of Director Competencies to the Board, but discuss three specific qualifications in detail here. First, I have experience both as a leader in DRI and in the firms and government practice where I have worked over the years. My DRI leadership experience is detailed above. In my firms, I volunteered to help with or spearhead initiatives to improve our practice, such as researching and recommending new technology and software. In my current job, I have either volunteered for or been appointed to serve on several different committees to assist the Law Department or the City of Phoenix as a whole, including community service fundraising and putting together a full-day CLE program for

our department. I was also tasked with improving our processes for document subpoenas to improve efficiency and achieve better outcomes. I have also been asked by several other sections (other than the litigation section of which I am a member) to assist with training and review policies and ordinances.

Another attribute I would bring to the Board is my team orientation. Throughout my career and in my volunteer work in the community (including the past 10 years as an elected member of the HOA board of my neighborhood), I have had to work with all types of people to achieve results often with conflicting ideas and styles in play. I believe my ability to work with all of these different personalities to achieve common goals will assist me as a member of the DRI Board.

Finally, I have developed the strategic skill of emotional intelligence through my experience over the past twenty-four years practicing law. I have become more comfortable with conflict and disagreements and come to realize that it is sometimes necessary to have conflict to eventually resolve issues. I approach these situations with positivity and the desire to find win-win or as close to win-win situations as can be achieved. One example of this is that while I was Committee Chair of the Governmental Liability Committee during the pandemic years, many changes to the status quo of the Committee's programs and DRI's operations took place. I was the liaison between DRI leadership and my committee and I was able to resolve several differences that arose by looking for positive solutions that would benefit the majority of members of the committee while still adhering to DRI goals and processes.

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

I suggest that DRI look at different categories of lawyers that are not traditionally recruited to become more involved in DRI as members and in leadership. These include in-house government lawyers, lawyers with non-profit organizations that assist governments, and other non-traditional legal careers. I would also suggest that while DRI has specific formats for seminars and programs that it not be too rigid and it should allow SLCs and their leaders to experiment and tailor the format to fill the needs of each SLC's members.

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

A transformational/defining experience for me in my professional life was the surprising way that some of the most important career development for me happened during the COVID pandemic. I returned to full-time work just a couple of years before 2020, but continued to work remotely from home (as I had been

doing since 2005). Thus, in March of 2020, I was already set up to be productive from home without any glitches and assist my colleagues in doing so. It was easy for me to pivot right into conducting Zoom depositions, remote Court hearings, and file documents with the Court, etc. I was able to take on new work and develop my skills and abilities, even despite the uncertain and changing environment. I also had the opportunity to try two cases in federal court with one of my colleagues in October 2020 and April 2021, while wearing masks and social distancing. At around the same time, I became the Chair of the Governmental Liability Committee and had to adapt and change many plans along with the other members of the steering committee. Finally, all of these experiences caused me to evaluate my career path and look into other opportunities, which led me to my current job. This experience taught me that out of trying times, some of our best learning can take place and can help us focus our career and direction on what matters most.

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

One of the greatest challenges DRI will have in the future is keeping members engaged. Given that there are so many different legal organizations that provide educational opportunities and different levels of participation, DRI will need to find ways to make itself stand out and show what value it can provide its members. This includes retaining current members and recruiting new members. I was able to gain insight into this issue through participation in the SLC Engagement Committee over the past six months and speaking to different committee leaders about the challenges they have faced. An opportunity that DRI has in the next several years is to find ways to be more inclusive of in-house and government lawyers and find ways to involve them within the constraints of their budgets and abilities to participate in outside organizations.

**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?**

As the Vice Chair and Chair of the Governmental Liability Committee, I worked hard to recruit diverse members to our steering committee who could provide different perspectives and new ideas. I have also worked to find diverse speakers with expertise who could speak at our seminars. Our practice area is one that has been slow to become more diverse, but I think the efforts of the last several

committee chairs, including myself, have begun to pay off as our membership in general and our steering committee have become more diverse. Personally, I have had a crash-course in the area of LGBTQ diversity and inclusion over the past four years after my now 20-year-old child came out as transgender. I was able to use my personal experience to help influence the Governmental Liability seminar planning committee to include topics and speakers at our seminars that touch on the important legal and social issues faced by our government clients in their institutions (i.e. prisons and schools) relating to transgender individuals.

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

My membership in DRI has been an important part of my professional development and for a few years during my career when I was only working part-time and had to pay my own DRI membership fee, it was worth it to me to continue my membership. If given the opportunity to serve on the DRI Board of Directors, I would work to keep the value that DRI has been to me as well as improve it for all of its members. I would also use both my professional and personal experiences to give perspective to the Board and I would work hard in any roles and tasks I was given.