



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 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.

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: Mario J. Delano, Esq _____

Firm/Company: Campbell, Foley, Delano & Adams, Esqs _____

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E-mail: mdelano@campbellfoley.com _____

How long have you been a member of DRI? 9 years (most recent membership)

Areas of practice:

Insurance Defense Litigation

Worker's Compensation

Municipal Prosecution

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

Campbell, Foley, Delano & Adams, Esqs (formerly Campbell, Foley, Lee, Murphy and Cernigliaro, Esqs);

1599 Highway 34

Wall Twp., NJ 07719

- Partner – 2001 to present (managing partner since 2007)
- Associate Attorney – 1992 – 2000
- Law Clerk – 1991 – 1992

Peregrine White Co

65 Broadway

NY, NY 10006

- Controller 1987 – 1989

Foreston Development Corporation

Park Ave. South

NY, NY

- Assistant Controller 1986-1987

Amstar Corporation

1251 Ave. of the Americas

NY, NY

- Staff Accountant 1985 - 1986

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.

New Jersey State Representative – 2015-2018

As the state representative for New Jersey, I attended all regional and annual meetings. In 2017, I served on the Planning Committee for the joint meeting of SLDOs from the Atlantic and Northeastern Regions. The meeting was held in New Jersey, where I organized a presentation on "Technology in the Courtroom"

and was able to showcase the tech-forward court facilities/practitioners in the Region. Because of my ongoing leadership in the New Jersey Defense Association, I also was privileged to participate in Regional meetings after my term as State Rep ended. I think that DRI members benefit tremendously from DRI's ongoing support of SLDOs and its commitment to facilitating exchanges between and amongst state and local defense groups. Those who participate develop stronger bonds with each other and with DRI while also advancing their business acumen and understanding the challenges faced by the defense bar and its clients. One reason I would like the opportunity to serve on the Board is to further encourage growth in this aspect of DRI's work.

Law Practice Management Committee

- Publications Committee Chair – 2017-2019
- Vice Chair – 2019-2021
- Chair 2021-2023

My firm's practice areas are typical of those of most DRI members: we represent multiple insurance carriers in the defense of a variety of insured risks. We try a lot of cases, almost all of them in front of juries. Over the years, I have been involved in a number of DRI SLCs, all of which have augmented my litigation skills and have allowed me to interact with my clients and potentially develop new client relationships.

It was the Law Practice Management Committee (LPM), however, that ultimately won my heart. I joined largely because I was unexpectedly thrust into the role of managing partner of my own firm. LPM gave me a home base amongst those who were similarly situated. It turns out that very few lawyers launch a career with an eye toward managing a law firm, and even fewer want to devote significant volunteer time to participating in a committee which allows little time for client development. But LPM highlights another aspect of what is so special about DRI: the defense bar is stronger in all aspects when it collaborates and takes on the challenges of our unique form of practice!

What I have found over my seven years with LPM is that **every** DRI member can and should benefit from the development of business savvy and good management skills. DRI members are leaders in their firms and in the profession!

The Law Practice Management Committee has undergone a significant transition in the last several years, and I am happy to have been a part of it. Prior to 2021 the flagship DRI Managing Partner Conference was not produced by the LPM, but rather was outsourced. It was a fine program, but it was not as tailored to our members as it might have been. Committee leaders, including myself, lobbied to bring the program in-house—we believed that a conference developed and presented by DRI members and consultants in the trenches with

us would have broader appeal and be more meaningful. We wanted to expand the offerings to assist firms in training future firm leaders rather than simply focusing on those currently in management.

When I became Vice Chair of LPM, the Committee leaders made it our top priority to do whatever necessary to garner permission from the DRI Board to allow the Law Practice Management Committee to take over the law firm leader seminar. After several meetings and a lot of support from our friends, we were approved. Unfortunately, the 2020 seminar was canceled due to the pandemic. 2021 marked the first time that we ran the seminar, beginning to end. The programming, developed by LPM leadership after polling members, received rave reviews. We even picked up a few new committee members from the attendees. In 2022, having a proven success behind us, we decided to establish a seminar committee and appoint two co-chairs. This was done in anticipation that the Law Practice Management Committee would continue to run this seminar into the future. The planning for the 2023 seminar is well underway and will be our third in what I hope is a long line. With the aid of DRI leadership, LPM is on its way to becoming one of the most active committees in the organization, which is particularly important as the average defense lawyer/law firm continues to face many challenges!

As part of my involvement in LPM, I authored the following articles:

2018 ***For the Defense: The Pressure and Stress of Law Firm Leadership and Strategies for Coping***

2019 ***It's Your Business: Small Law Firms: Striking a Balance Between Business and Personal Relationships Within the Office***

2020 ***For the Defense: Top Ten Lessons from Lockdown***

As part of my involvement in LPM, I presented the following programs:

2016 ***Annual Meeting: The Challenges Of Managing Multiple Law Firm Locations and Remote Workers***

2019 ***Annual Meeting: Ethics and Law Practice Management: A Primer on Management for Non-Partners***

2020 ***Annual Meeting (held remotely): Protecting Our Professionals: Ethical Tips for Overall Well-Being***

2021 ***Managing Partner and Law Firm Leader Conference: The Nuts and Bolts of Law Firm Economics: What the #\$%! Is Going On Here***

Other DRI Committee Involvement:

Member, Insurance Law Committee (Worker's Compensation SLG vice chair)
Member, Small Law Firm Network
Member, Workers Compensation Committee
Member, Litigation Skills Committee.

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

New Jersey Defense Association – member since 1993, Secretary/Treasurer 2012 – 2013, Vice President 2013 – 2014 and President 2014 – 2015
Monmouth Bar Association – member since 1993, Worker's Compensation Co-Chair 2021 – present
New Jersey State Bar Association - member 2023 to present

In 2017, I was selected by New Jersey Defense Association to receive the Professional Lawyer of The Year Award from the New Jersey Commission On Professionalism In The Law.

Several times over the years I have presented at the New Jersey Defense Association's Trial College Seminar.

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 initially joined DRI as a younger lawyer, but I became inactive shortly thereafter. I was not able to gain traction in the organization for two basic reasons: (1) It was not easy to find a mentor within the organization and (2) my firm, particularly the managing partner, did not support my involvement.

2014 began my second stint as a DRI member, largely because of my involvement in the New Jersey SLDO. By that time, I was a firm partner. When I rejoined, my experience was entirely different. I was welcomed into the organization and found that DRI actively encouraged new members into the fold. This is an experience that I will never forget and want to be sure that every new member has! Presenting the right paths to making membership mutually beneficial is the best way to grow DRI. As important, I was now managing a law firm and was able to see the benefits of membership that my predecessors had not.

As an active DRI member I learned a number of techniques to help me become a better manager and mentor. I've been extremely fortunate to make a number of very close personal contacts within DRI who have helped me understand why

DRI is valuable to the individual and to the defense bar as a whole. In short, I want to volunteer my time to contribute to an organization which has helped shape my career and to continue to pay that benefit forward.

Over the years DRI has helped me develop skills, some I have used in the law and some in my personal life, but all relevant to being an effective leader. This has translated into my work for various civic organizations which operate to better both the legal community and the community at large. In these leadership roles, some of which I fell into when everyone else took the proverbial step back, I bring an easy going style that hopefully makes others comfortable. As my background in accounting shows, however, my “style” belies a commitment to organization and follow-through. I truly embrace every opportunity to help lead an organization and to hand it off in better shape than when I took over. I believe that I can offer this to the DRI Board.

On the civic side, I am most proud of having been the chair of our Township Festival for 20 years, until finally turning it over to others in 2021. Each summer we would see approximately 100,000 attendees over a five-day period. Keeping that many people happy during August heat is not easy! Still, as the numbers show, the event has been a resounding success, a joy to produce, and a boon for my community.

As a board member for the New Jersey Defense Association, I was part of a two-person committee which established partnerships with vendors, most of whom continue to support the organization. With DRI, I have been a member of multiple committees, but have really focused my time and energy on the Law Practice Management Committee. As you can see from the contributions I listed above, I have been very involved and dedicated to this committee for several years. My involvement in these endeavors has been personally rewarding, but I think that I have also enjoyed the opportunity to contribute to their growth and ongoing success. I hope to continue this sort of contribution to the DRI Board.

The most important take-away from my years of working with others in DRI is that surrounding oneself with talented people is the key to success. Some leaders are competitive with others in the group or are concerned that the talent of others will diminish them. I have exactly the opposite approach. I specifically identify the most exceptional people in the group and recruit them to work on important projects. I believe that the best way to lead is to put the best people in positions where they will do a good job and let them do it. An effective leader guides with a gentle hand and does not micromanage.

As someone with a background in accounting, I also would bring that skillset (somewhat unique, perhaps?) to the board. I know numbers and have used that knowledge in maintaining the success of a law firm which has undergone

changes in the way we do business. Does anyone else remember end-of-file billing?

In short, I would like to join the Board to represent members like myself and encourage more participation from those in small-to-medium sized firms who represent multiple carriers and who spend a lot of time in their state's courts.

What suggestions would you make to move the organization forward?

I am not naive enough to believe that a single board member can or should "move the organization forward" with her/his single vision. Moreover, I am not someone who believes in any way in reinventing the wheel. The DRI wheel is well-oiled and working well. Still, a little tweaking once in a while does not hurt.

I think as an organization we have done very well over the last few years listening to the needs of the membership. I would suggest augmenting that effort. More networking events are a welcome innovation, and we should continue with those. Encouraging as many in-person seminars as practical (without hurting the attendance at seminars, overall) is important. While on the one hand, it is helpful to members for seminar timing to follow a pattern, the problem of scheduling overlap does exist. We need to recognize that even the most committed members have limited resources. I would recommend exploring a calendar rotation of the program/seminar calendar, with perhaps more advance notice than is currently given to the average member. I would also recommend offering stand-alone presentations to become part of seminars conducted by SLDOs. This would be a good way to expand membership and get involvement from new people.

Another way we could look to expand membership is to appeal to smaller firms and show the benefits of being a small firm member. Finding the time to manage a small firm, conduct jury trials and have a personal life is a skill that I believe is not only under-rated, but perhaps under-appreciated in the DRI universe. As national political groups have found, it is often the small donors who finance campaigns. Small-to-medium sized firms are an integral part of DRI membership, and a push to show that these firms are especially welcome is, in my view, very important.

DRI needs to be aware of the pressures and concerns of leaders in small-to-medium sized firms. Being available for staff issues, as a sounding board for other attorneys, and as money manager can be a full time job in and of itself. Combine that with handling litigation and clients, being out of the office for several days while in trial and then trying to get home to have dinner with the family sometimes requires a day much longer than 24 hours. When I step out of a DRI meeting to take a call, it is as often about firm management issues as it is about an important litigation strategy. All of us are stressed and busy, but

acknowledging the specific pressures on small-to-medium sized firms is perhaps an important way to welcome those members into our fold. Showing members (and prospective members) we understand them and that we can model some approaches to improving their experience will encourage membership and participation. Showing them that attorneys just like them can be leaders in such a large and accomplished organization will encourage participation (which is the lifeblood of DRI). If we do not encourage membership and participation by these smaller firms, then we lose an opportunity, likely forever. Once a small firm decides DRI is not worth it, that opinion will last for at least one or two management generations. We cannot afford that.

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

Many years ago, when I first began trying cases I had a trial where the plaintiff was a young man who clearly didn't want for much growing up. My client was an older gentleman who was driving an old car and had a limited insurance policy. Fortunately, I was able to work out a stipulation where the plaintiff agreed to cap my client's damages at his policy limits. The first day my client arrived for court, he was dressed fairly casually. I explained to him that we had worked out a deal that there would be no chance of personal liability, and he was extremely grateful. The next day he showed up wearing a suit. The third day he showed up, again in a suit. Summations were completed in the morning, but the Judge dismissed the jury for lunch before they began deliberating. I took my client out to lunch, and as we were chatting I realized that the tag was still on the sleeve of his suit jacket. We went back to court where the jury ultimately found that the plaintiff was 75% liable for the accident (here, that means he gets nothing). My client was thrilled and thanked me profusely for representing him so well. The lesson he taught me was that even though he did not have to worry about paying anything out of his pocket on a judgment, he went out and spent money (that he probably did not have to spare) on a new suit because he wanted the jury to know how important the case was to him. It's not always about the money; it *is* always about respect.

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

Not to sound redundant, but membership is always an issue. I recall it being the focus of the presentation at my first DRI leadership conference in 2014, and it continues to be a focus today. Keeping members engaged is also a challenge. I think most people realize that they can't join the fire department on Monday and expect to be the chief on Tuesday, but that doesn't mean they should not have a position that gives them meaning. All of the SLCs seem to have a healthy number of subcommittees and new members should be encouraged to join them and where appropriate, even offered leadership positions.

Technology has made it easier for us to get together and this is an opportunity for DRI to continue to do occasional meetings by video. I am not at all suggesting that we should move seminars to virtual, but perhaps before each seminar leaders of that committee have a quick half-hour video meeting with first time attendees, so new people will have some familiar faces when they arrive. Firm budgets face the same challenges that the DRI budget faces, and acknowledging this with innovative approaches to engagement is important. If members believe that the only way that they can participate is to spend \$5000 to attend an in-person conference, then membership growth is necessarily limited. Encouraging participation at all levels will make that investment in an in-person meeting easier to dig deep for!

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?

In my practice as an insurance defense attorney, we regularly deal with people from all walks of life. It is important that everyone is treated with respect, empathy and kindness. Rather than talk about my experiences in the legal community, I believe my personal experiences are much more relevant and important to this topic. While I do have a few close friends who are attorneys, most of my friends are not. In fact, many do not have advanced education at all. They are a very diverse group of outstanding individuals of all races, ethnicities, ages, genders, religions and sexual orientations. They have different jobs and education levels. Because we are friends, we discuss personal issues, and it is very interesting to hear each person’s perspective about a particular topic. If nothing else, this taught me to be cognizant of the feelings and opinions of people who have not had the same life experiences as I have. I feel that experience puts me in as good a position as anyone to be a team player with everyone.

In pushing to bring the Managing Partner Program “in-house” and back to the DRI Law Practice Management Committee, LPM did a great deal of self-examination. In that process, we recognized that the Managing Partner Conferences sponsored by DRI when out-sourced primarily attracted a more one-dimensional audience, in other words, the fellows who have traditionally run defense law firms. We saw that this approach, while profitable in that the appeal to those who have the money to attend and fund national speakers helped to maintain the size and prestige of the program, it was not representative of DRI membership nor of the future leaders of law firms. To address these issues, we reached out to the WITL, D&I and YL Committees to work with us, join our planning group and suggest speakers. In collaboration with those groups, we have offered panels of young and diverse lawyers to speak to firm leaders about how to train them to lead and develop business. We have recruited women managing partners to speak from their unique perspective. We brain stormed with YLs and developed a “Future Leader Boot

Camp” that was offered remotely and for **free** so that young lawyers could attend and begin to understand how to develop leadership and management skills.

What we discovered through these LPM initiatives is that there is no limit to the success that can be accomplished when everyone pulls together.

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

I love to help and give back. I have made such wonderful friends and contacts in DRI that I want to give back to this organization as well.