



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 before 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 attached DRI Board of Directors and Officer Competencies.

Position sought:

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Second Vice President*

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Secretary- Treasurer

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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 Dessi N. Day

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How long have you been a member of DRI?

21 _____ years

Areas of practice: Employment Law; Product liability, Business Lit, Long-term Care

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

Pierson Ferdinand, LLP, June 2024 to Present, Partner
Greene & Roberts, LLP, June 2017 to June 2024, Partner
Wilson Turner Kosmo, LLP, 2003 to 2017, Senior Counsel
Lucas Mullany Boyer & Haverkamp, 1999 to 2003, Associate

I began my career as a business litigator, product liability lawyer and long-term care defense practitioner. I developed interest in employment law and dedicated the majority of my 25 years of practicing law to representing large corporations and medium, and small size employers in complex class action disputes, representative actions and a wide variety of employment law matters.

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.

National Director, DRI Board of Directors, 2022 to Present
Chair of DRI Membership Committee, 2024-2025
DRI Board Liaison to DEI, 2024 to Present
Vice Chair of DRI Membership Committee, 2023-2024
DRI Board Liaison to Cyber Security and Data Privacy, 2022-2023
Chair of Marketing for DRI Annual Meeting, 2023-2024
DRI Vice Chair of Marketing Annual Meeting, 2022-2024

See Addendum for additional information.

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

FDCC, Chair of Employment Law Section, 2024 to Present
FDCC, Admissions Committee Member, 2024 to Present
FDCC, Recruitment Committee Member, 2024 to Present
FDCC, Sponsorship Committee Member, 2024 to Present
IADC, DEI Committee Member, 2024 to Present
IADC, Employment Law Committee Member, 2024 to Present
Past Co-Chair of Litigation Section of San Diego State Bar Association

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?

Continue to engage in servant leadership and shape the future of an organization I love. DRI positions have never been about titles for me, but for an opportunity to serve, collaborate, and lead. DRI has shaped my professional and personal growth over the past 22 years. Giving back to this community is a privilege I find incredibly rewarding. I have been passionate about growing our community from day one, and continue to be committed to it as an active ambassador for DRI.

See Addendum for additional information. 

What suggestions would you make to move the organization forward?

Focus on developing innovative approaches to continuing legal education to serve different segments of DRI membership, including members who desire in-person programming, and those who prefer remote and on-line offerings.

See Addendum for additional information.

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

Leading the DRI Employment Law Community during the pandemic as a newly appointed chair was a challenge. I welcomed the opportunity to develop creative ways to keep our community engaged and expand the collaboration with other communities including multiple SLCs, and affinity groups within DRI. Adapting and navigating change with grace and mindfulness was transformational. As a community, we emerged stronger and more connected than ever. See Addendum for more.



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

Member growth and engagement. Competing for members' time and involvement will continue to present challenges. Nimble approaches to improving engagement will be a must. Finding people where they are and engaging with them in their preferred mode of connection is key to overall success of the organization.

Balancing the high cost of putting on quality programming at premier locations against shrinking member budgets for attending events.

See Addendum for additional information.



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 am a first generation immigrant to the United States. I have now lived in this country longer than in the country I was born. It has taken hard work, adaptability, and perseverance to conquer the challenges of building a successful and fulfilling career without generational support of parents and relatives in this country.

As a result of my unique experience as an immigrant, I have grown to truly appreciate and value the importance of inclusiveness, and diversity of backgrounds and opinions. I know firsthand how important it is to build a culture of true belonging. DRI has been the place and space where I have felt welcomed and seen as a diverse lawyer. Over the years, I have connected with the DRI Affinity communities by attending the events of Young Lawyers, WITL and DEI, and serving as a Board liaison to the DEI Community. I am passionate about spreading inclusive leadership throughout all segments of the organization.

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

I have been part of the DRI community since I was a third-year lawyer. It has helped me grow my knowledge bank, skill set and referral base. I have developed strong bonds with the DRI sisters (IADC, FDCC, and ADTA), and am looking forward to working closely with State and Local Organizations, including as a member of San Diego Defense Lawyers, Southern California Defense Lawyers Association and other state and local organizations. I look forward to continuing to serve DRI and help the organization thrive and navigate future challenges.

Dessi N. Day - Declaration of Candidacy for DRI Secretary-Treasurer and Second Vice President (2025)

Addendum

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.

- Internal Investigations Presentation at DRI Employment Law Seminar, 2023
- Employment Law Trends and Update Co-Presenter at the DRI Law Practice Management Annual Seminar in 2023
- The Wyoming Defense Lawyers Association Annual Meeting, Co-Presenter on Employment Law Trends Including Remote Work, 2023
- Presenter, Employment Law Trends and Updates, FDCC Winter Meeting, 2023
- Authored Labor Law Updates, FDCC and DRI Publications 2023/24
- Chair of DRI Employment and Labor Law Committee, 2020-2022
- Vice Chair of DRI Employment and Labor Law Committee, 2018-2020
- DRI Employment Law Seminar Chair and Vice Chair, 2014-2016
- DRI Employment Law Steering Committee Member, 2005 to present
- DRI Seminar Planning Committee Member, 2006 to present
- DRI Young Lawyers Steering Committee Member and liaison to Employment Law, 2004/2005
- During the pandemic I was instrumental in planning the first DRI Employment and Labor Law Boot Camp, February 2022
- Founded and hosted DRI Employment and Labor Law monthly gatherings on first Saturdays of each month, "Run, Walk, Bike, Sip Coffee, and Visit with Us" 2020-2022
- Authored leadership notes for DRI ELL Job Description, 2020-2022
- Authored Article: "California Ups the Ante on Independent Contractor Arrangements," 2020 Job Description
- Presented at the DRI Employment and Labor Law seminar on FMLA/leaves of absence and authored presentation materials, 2011
- Assisted with planning and hosting numerous DRI joint committee events between DRI ELL, DEI, Commercial Litigation, Aviation, and other committees 2020-2023
- I had an opportunity to lead at the local bar level as a senior associate, leading the Litigation Section of the San Diego County State bar. I was instrumental in developing programming on substantive topics and inviting local judges to present on these topics. It was a great opportunity to develop relationships at the local bar and create a strong network of lawyers I have collaborated with over the years.
- In 2022, I was recognized as Top 50 Women Leaders in San Diego and Outstanding Mothers

- Recognized as Super Lawyer in Employment Litigation Defense in San Diego

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?

The skills, competencies, and abilities I bring to the table are:

- commitment to inclusive and collaborative leadership,
- strong organizational skills,
- marketing and branding experience through authentic and engaging social media presence,
- strong listening skills
- ability to effectively and efficiently communicate with leaders and members
- team-oriented approach to leadership affording others opportunities to advance,
- problem-solving and management skills,
- comfort with sharing vulnerability and allowing others the opportunity to do the same,
- responsiveness,
- appreciation for differing viewpoints and ability to accept and respect the differing opinions of others,
- authenticity, and the joy of building strong connections.

What suggestions would you make to move the organization forward?

Membership

- Expanding the membership offerings for industry and affiliate members
- Developing opportunities to collaborate with other professional organizations through programming, philanthropic and networking events to engage existing and recruit new members.
- Growing corporate membership through the expansion of same to government lawyers and sharing the value of DRI members of the legal profession who work for local and state agencies and government organizations.
- Exploring levels of membership tailored to member engagement.
- Partnering with law schools to promote the DRI brand, and to learn more about the future generation of lawyers and their habits and preferences so we can tailor events and programming to meet them.

Programming and Other Initiatives

- Collaborating with solution providers on providing benefits to DRI members in the AI space.

- Finding opportunities to collaborate with sister organizations on programming and joint membership offerings.
- Increasing visibility and collaboration with vendors. Creating easy ways for members to locate and engage solution providers who support DRI through advanced app offerings.
- Solution provider sponsored regional and local meet-up events to increase membership.
- DRI for Life innovative offerings to promote member engagement and wellbeing, including programming series offering meditation and mindfulness workshops.
- DRI Leadership Academy to provide advanced training to members of the DRI community who may be interested in developing their leadership skills and management skills, which is particularly important as firms are struggling to maintain talent.
- DRI Debate Corner – opportunities for members to meet and discuss cutting edge issues impacting our practice
- NFJE access to members on a lottery basis to allow members to attend the programming and be exposed to the great work done by NFJE
- Center update on Monday mornings with a few key developments and links to important white papers, briefs, and other research by the Center
- Why DRI – a Podcast hosted by DRI with a brief meet and greet of a DRI member who can share their experience with those who are unfamiliar with the value of DRI
- Work closely with DRI staff to improve the member experience at seminar events and promote open exchange of ideas.
- Board and Executive Committee team-building events to improve the exchange of ideas among leaders.
- Your Input Matters – a monthly update by executive team to membership with an update on concrete feedback received and steps taken to address it.

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

I immigrated to the United States at age 23 on my own. Building a life in a new country that I can look back on and be proud of has been profoundly transformational. It has shaped me in many ways to be strong, resilient, caring, loving, and accepting of others.

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

- Finding ways to best serve and engage with the majority of our members who do not attend in-person events.
- Improved communication tools with members including easy to navigate app-based resources.

- Leading on issues that are key to industries and businesses represented by our members.
- Expanding our footprint without compromising quality, values, and priorities of our membership.
- Member wellness and philanthropic engagement to promote belonging and a deep sense of purpose. Partnering with organizations like Blessings in a Backpack to create opportunities to contribute to meaningful causes through volunteer work that is focused on supporting those who need it.
- Promoting the rule of law and finding opportunities to support state and local initiatives that do so.
- Incorporating government lawyers into our membership and expanding corporate member initiatives.
- Resolving generational differences among members of the profession. Talent retention is a challenge for firms. Finding ways to leverage DRI resources to assist members with navigating these challenges through discussion forums and events which provide practical advice and guidance on talent retention and building a strong workplace culture.
- Maintaining firm profitability in the era of alternative fee/flat fee arrangements continues to be a challenge, along with many lawyers exiting the practice for lack of work life balance.