

Montana Arbitrators Association
46th Annual
Arbitration & Labor Relations Conference
Presenters Bios

JEAN E. FAURE
Attorney
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Jean E. Faure represents public and private employers in all labor and employment-related issues throughout Montana. She litigates wrongful termination, discrimination, wage and hour, trade secret, non-compete, and FMLA claims. She also is actively engaged in traditional labor law, representing employers in unionizing campaigns, unfair labor practices, grievance arbitration and contract negotiations.

Since 2009, Jean has been selected to the Mountain States Super Lawyers® in labor and employment law and employment defense litigation and now is placed in the Mountain States Top 100 Super Lawyers. Best Lawyers in America has named Jean the Employment Lawyer of the Year in Great Falls, Montana consistently since 2017. Jean is a member of Association of Defense Trial Attorneys and the Federation of Defense and Corporate Counsel, both of which are limited invitation organizations for trial attorneys who devote their professional time to defending businesses, insurance companies, insureds, associations or governmental entities in civil litigation. In 2024, Jean was elected to membership in the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) and served on the Montana Chapter Executive Committee.

SANDRA MENDEL FURMAN, Esq.
Dispute Resolution Attorney, Neutral, Arbitrator, and
Court Approved Mediator

Sandra's practice is Practice limited to Dispute Resolution and she conducts hearings: virtually and in-person nationwide. She is a Member of the National Academy of Arbitrators; FMCS, AAA, AMS, NMB and LRC labor arbitration panels; multiple public and private sector labor permanent panels; SERB Fact finder and Conciliator; COLERA Executive Board; FINRA Arbitrator.

Sandra served in a plethora of hearings officer, mediator, and arbitration roles, hearings, and panels including: Hearing Officer for the State of Ohio job audit appeals; OCSEA Local 11, AFSCME, AFL-CIO- State of Ohio grievance mediation panel contract hearing officer, Ohio Department of Agriculture Chapter 119 appeals; expedited-NTA arbitration panel OCSEA-State of Ohio; OSTA-State of Ohio arbitration panel; OEA-State of Ohio mediation panel; SEIU-Ohio arbitration and mediation panels; Mediator, US Postal Service REDRESS program; Arbitrator-USPS expedited and regular arbitration panels; EEOC external mediator; SERB fact finder/conciliator panel; FINRA arbitrator; BBB mediator and arbitrator; Adjunct Professor, Capital University Law School, Labor and General Arbitration; Columbus State Community College Consultant to President; CBA Ethics and Arbitration Committees; practiced before all

Ohio courts; Chapter 119 administrative hearings; NLRB hearings; Staff attorney- OEA; private practice; in house counsel, Ohio Council 8, AFSCME, AFL-CIO.

WENDY JACKSON
Dispute Resolution Section Chief
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Wendy has served the state of Montana in several roles over the years including Workers' Compensation Claims Examiner, Workers' Compensation Mediator, Labor Mediator and, currently, as the Section Chief for the Department of Labor and Industry, Dispute Resolution Section (DRS). Wendy is passionate about the mediation and conflict resolution work the DRS provides to Montana's Public Sector Employers, Employees, and Labor Organizations. She is honored to work in a field that provides such valuable services to the citizens of Montana.

JEFFREY W. JACOBS
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Jeff has been a practicing attorney in Minnesota since 1980 and has been a full-time labor arbitrator since 1995. He was inducted into the National Academy of Arbitrators in 2005. Prior to that he practiced extensively representing union and management clients in both the private and public sectors. Jeff is on the Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Oregon, Montana, U.S. Virgin Islands and Washington state lists and several FMCS regional panels. He is also on numerous permanent panels in the public and private sectors, including, USPS/NALC, IRS/NTEU, NMB railroad matters, Endeavor Airlines and CWA. He has numerous published decisions in BNA arbitration reporters along with hundreds of cases on public sector lists around the country.

Jeff is a frequent lecturer at arbitration seminars around the country doing both live and webinar presentations for the AAA, Labor Arbitration Institute, Montana BOPA, Minnesota Continuing Legal Education, Minnesota BMS and FMCS seminars. He has authored numerous articles in the area of labor arbitration.

ELIZABETH A. KALEVA, ESQ
Kaleva Law Office
School Law & Labor Law Specialist
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Elizabeth A. Kaleva is from Missoula, Montana, where she graduated from Loyola Sacred Heart High School in 1987. She received a bachelor's degree in history from Boston College in 1991. Bea graduated from the University of Montana School of Law in 1995 and, after graduation, clerked for a judge for a year before joining the Montana School Boards Association as a staff attorney. She rose to the General Counsel position and remained with the MTSBA until 2004, when she returned to Missoula in private practice. Bea serves as counsel for school districts in all areas of employment and school law. Specific practice areas include contract negotiations, employee misconduct and discipline, student misconduct and discipline, special education and federal programs, and Board of Trustees practice and procedure. She provides litigation defense to school districts and their employees in federal and state courts, arbitrations, and administrative agencies relating to all aspects of school district operations. Bea is admitted to practice before all Montana courts, the United States District Courts, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. She is a member of the American Bar Association, the National Council of School Attorneys, the Montana Council of School Attorneys, a former Board member of the National Council of School Attorneys and is the President of the School Law Section of the Montana State Bar. She has been selected by her peers for inclusion in the Best Lawyers in America since 2014 for the areas of education law and employment law and was named the Best Employment Law Lawyer for the Missoula area in 2015, 2019, 2023, and 2025. In 2021, Elizabeth was honored with the AV Preeminent® Rating by Martindale-Hubbell®. This rating is the highest possible rating in both legal ability and ethical standards.

HOWELL L. LANKFORD
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Howell Lankford is a member of the National Academy of Arbitrators and a Fellow of the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers. Has been a Governor, Chair of the NW Chapter, and a member of the ethics committee of the NAA. He is also part of the editorial staff of the upcoming new addition of *How Arbitration Works*. He has been a labor management arbitrator for over 40 years after five years as an ALJ for the Oregon Employment Relations Board. He presents advocacy workshops throughout the year, for labor or management or both, at no cost beyond his expenses; and he is a faculty member of the FMCS Becoming a Labor Arbitrator program.

JOE MCKENNEY
Entrepreneur | U.S. Navy Veteran | Community Leader

Joe McKenney is a U.S. Navy veteran, award winning entrepreneur, and longtime community volunteer whose career has focused on creating opportunities, solving real world problems, and taking responsibility for outcomes.

Joe graduated from Billings West High School and showed an entrepreneurial mindset early by starting small businesses as a kid. Long before entrepreneurship was a buzzword, he learned by doing, taking risks, making mistakes, learning quickly, and adapting. Those experiences taught him accountability, work ethic, and the reality that when you create something, you are responsible for both success and failure.

After high school, Joe served four years in the United States Navy as a flight deck troubleshooter aboard aircraft carriers. The flight deck is one of the most dangerous work environments in the world, surrounded by jet engines, spinning propellers, heavy equipment, and live ordnance. Accidents were common and fatalities were a known risk of the job. The experience required constant focus, discipline, trust in teammates, and fast decision making under pressure. Those years shaped Joe's leadership philosophy: preparation matters, details matter, and people matter.

Following his military service, Joe became a serial entrepreneur. He started, owned, and operated multiple businesses, creating jobs and contributing to local economies. One of his companies earned national recognition as an Inc. 500 award winner, placing it among the fastest growing private companies in the United States. That success came from discipline, adaptability, and a willingness to take calculated risks.

Alongside entrepreneurship, Joe has served in elected office on a volunteer basis. He served four terms in the Montana House of Representatives and later on the Great Falls City Commission while continuing to work in the private sector. For Joe, public service means applying real world experience to help communities grow and succeed, not being a career politician.

Joe believes strong communities are built by people willing to take risks, create jobs, and invest in others. Entrepreneurs and small business owners are the lifeblood of community success, bringing grit, determination, and innovation to local economies. Whether in business, military service, or public service, Joe's focus remains the same: solve problems, support job creators, and help communities build lasting momentum for the future.

YUVAL MILLER, ESQ
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Yuval Miller maintains a nationwide practice as an arbitrator and mediator of labor and employment disputes, including public- and private-sector permanent panels throughout the Western United States. An esteemed speaker and moderator on labor issues, he serves on the Faculty of the Labor Arbitration Institute (LAI), Tulane Law School's Berlin ADR Program, and Burstein-Prihar Arbitration Training (BPAT), and is Editor in Chief of the treatise Aitchison et al., INTEREST ARBITRATION (3d ed., LRIS Books, 2022).

Prior to becoming a full-time neutral, Arbitrator Miller earned his JD at Yale Law School, served as a Fulbright Scholar, taught courses at the Budapest University of Public

Administration, and received his BA with Highest Distinction from the University of California, Berkeley. After clerking for the Honorable Dolores K. Sloviter of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, he represented management (Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP) and unions (McCracken, Stemerman & Holsberry, LLP) for over a decade.

BOB OBERSTEIN
Arbitrator, Mediator, Investigator, Educator
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Bob Oberstein has over 58 years of Labor Relations experience on both sides of the table in both the private and public sectors. Bob has also been the recipient of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service Director's Award for lifetime achievement in promoting positive Labor Management Relations.

Additionally, Bob was the Director of the Labor Management Relations Certificate and BA programs at Ottawa University, Phoenix where he also served as Ombuds for all student, faculty and staff complaints which often involved conducting investigations and where he also developed and taught Apology and Forgiveness in Society. Bob continues to assist parties with their use of apology and forgiveness in all manner of disputes and particularly in his mediation practice.

Bob has several published articles to his credit in addition to his arbitration awards and has also been recognized in Who's Who Among America's Teachers. Additionally, Bob served on several boards, commissions, and panels where he participated in resolving or adjudicating all manner of workplace issues in a variety of industries.

In all these capacities as well as being both mediator and arbitrator Bob often reviewed investigations to determine if they had been properly performed and had merit. As an investigator he has qualified as an MD-110 investigator for Title VII and other discrimination related charges as well as being a member and lifetime certificate holder of the Association of Workplace Investigators.

Bob has also served as a negotiation and mediation competition volunteer coach for Seattle University's School of Law as well as internationally where his teams have consistently taken top honors/recognition. Moreover, Bob earned a Master of Jurisprudence in Labor and Employment Law from Tulane University's School of Law. Bob continues to serve the labor management community as well as other groups as an Arbitrator, Mediator, Facilitator, Investigator, Trainer and Educator. Further details about Bob's unique qualifications can be found on his LinkedIn profile at [Linkedin.com/in/boberstein](https://www.linkedin.com/in/boberstein) [[linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com/in/boberstein)].

JASON SLEAD
Communications Director
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Jason Slead is the Communications Director for the Department of Revenue (DOR). He has worked for the department for 20 years, with 14 years of experience in the HR Department. Jason is also the DOR's resident recruiter and trainer. He is an excellent communicator and has a knack for using humor to build positive relationships with everyone he meets. He's always up for a good laugh and can usually be found with a cup of coffee in one hand and a guitar in the other. His passion for music and his family keeps him going, and his loyalty to his furry friends keeps him grounded.

DAVID SUETHOLZ
General Counsel for International Brotherhood of Teamsters
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David O'Brien Suetholz was named General Counsel for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters in January 2024. He has been a Union side attorney in Kentucky for over twenty years and is a founding member of Herzfeld, Suetholz, Gastel Leniski and Wall PLLC (HSGLaw).

Dave has a proven commitment to protecting workers' rights and represented a majority of labor Unions in Kentucky at the time of his appointment. He previously served as the General Counsel of the Kentucky Labor Cabinet at the behest of the Kentucky labor movement from 2009-2011, enforcing Kentucky's OSH, Wage and Hour, and Prevailing Wage laws. He has had notable legal victories at the National Labor Relations Board and both the Kentucky Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court. His U.S. Supreme Court victory in *Thompson v. North American Stainless LP* expanded Title VII protections against retaliation for workers nationwide.

He holds a degree in history and theology from Villanova University and a J.D. from Notre Dame Law School. Following his legal education, he spent nine months in Cochabamba, Bolivia, learning Spanish and assisting immigrant workers. He is able to serve the International Brotherhood of Teamsters due to the support of his wife, Ellen, and his daughters, Phoebe and Fiona.

MATTHEW B. THIEL
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Matt Thiel was born and raised in Montana and practices law in Missoula. Matt started his career in the labor arena in 1987 as a field representative with the Montana Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. He left that position to attend the University of Montana School of Law, where he was Editor-in-Chief of the Montana Law Review, graduating with Honors in 1993. His law practice focusses on labor law, representing several Montana and

Washington based unions. His practice also includes personal injury and general litigation. He is listed in The Best Lawyers in America for Labor and Employment Law. Matt was elected to the Montana State Bar Board of Trustees in 2008 and President of the Montana State Bar for 2015-2016. Matt currently serves as the American Bar Association Delegate for Montana, and he is an American Bar Foundation Patron Fellow and is President of the Western States Bar Conference for 2025.

LISA W. TIMMONS

Attorney, Arbitrator, Fact-Finder, Hearings Officer, Mediator

Lisa W. Timmons, Esq. is a full-time neutral with extensive experience in labor, employment, and commercial disputes. She serves as an arbitrator, mediator, hearing officer, and fact-finder across the public and private sectors. Since 1998, she has led the Mediation Tribunal Association, providing alternative dispute resolution services to Michigan's state and federal courts. Timmons sits on arbitration and mediation panels for the American Arbitration Association, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, FINRA, the Labor Relations Connection, New Era ADR, and multiple state and regional labor boards.

Timmons is the immediate past chair of the ADR Section of the State Bar of Michigan. She co-chairs the Mediation Committee of the ABA Section of Dispute Resolution and serves as neutral co-chair of the State and Local Government Bargaining Employees Committee of the ABA Section of Labor and Employment Law. She earned her J.D., cum laude, from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law and a Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution from Wayne State University. A former adjunct professor, she writes and speaks regularly on alternative dispute resolution topics.

JASMINE TAYLOR

Human Rights Investigator/Case Manager

Jasmine Taylor completed her undergraduate studies at Great Falls's own University of Providence. She then earned her Master of Public Administration from the University of Montana. After a decade of serving the Department of Health and Human Services, she joined the Department of Labor where she currently serves as an Administrative Supervisor/Human Rights Investigator.

PAGE TODD

Arbitrator, Neutral Adjudicator, Mediator, And Trainer

Page A. Todd has over 20 years' experience in labor and employment law and started her own arbitration practice, NW Arbitration Services, in 2024. In 2023 Page completed the FMCS Becoming a Labor Arbitrator 40-hour program. Page also serves on arbitration panels in Alaska, California, and Montana.

Page also serves the State of Washington as a neutral adjudicator, mediator, and trainer with the Washington Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC). She has externed for an Administrative Law Judge at the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and

worked for the U.S. Department of Labor, the Washington Public Employee Association (representing state employees), the University of Washington (representing the UW as a Senior Labor Negotiator), and as Executive Director for the Vancouver Education Association (VEA). In her spare time, you can find Page daydreaming of an alpaca farm or at a local dog park with her pup.

BETTY RANKIN WIDGEON

Arbitrator, Fact-finder, Mediator and Court Appointed Neutral, member National Academy of Arbitrators.

Betty is a former Chief Judge of the 14A District Court in Washtenaw County, MI, and a former Chair of the ADR Section of the State Bar of Michigan. She has served on numerous arbitration panels since starting her arbitration practice, *Widgeon Dispute Resolution*, in 1999. Arbitrator Widgeon's practice is national in scope, and she conducts hearings and facilitations virtually as well as in person. She has served on the Michigan Supreme Court panel of Special Masters/Court Appointed Neutrals since 2017. Arbitrator Widgeon holds a B.A. degree in English and Sociology and an MAEd Degree in Education from Wake Forest University and a J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School. She arbitrates labor, employment, and commercial disputes and mediates for private firms and corporations.