

DRUG, DEVICE AND BIOTECHNOLOGY

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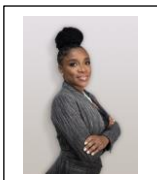
The Drug, Device and Biotechnology Committee Vice Chairs continue sharing their profiles as committee members work towards wider engagement and opportunities within the IADC community.

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” Henry Ford.

Let's get to Know More About Members of the Drug, Device and Biotechnology Committee

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

The Drug, Device and Biotechnology Committee serves as an educational and networking resource for in-house counsel employed by pharmaceutical, medical device and biotech manufacturers and the outside counsel who serve those companies. The Committee is active in sponsoring major CLE programs at the Annual and Midyear Meetings as well as internal committee programs. The Committee also publishes a monthly newsletter that addresses recent developments and normally contributes two or more articles to the *Defense Counsel Journal* annually. Learn more about the Committee at www.iadclaw.org. To contribute a newsletter article, contact:



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**MARY CATHERINE WAY,
VICE CHAIR ANNUAL MEETING CLE**

Who is Mary Catherine?

Mary Catherine is a trial lawyer at DLA Piper LLP. Mary Catherine focuses her practice on pharmaceutical and medical device litigation and other complex, multi-jurisdictional product liability and mass tort suits involving personal injury. She has entered her appearance in numerous out-of-state matters and has significant courtroom experience representing clients at all stages of litigation. She has experience advising, preparing, and defending clients in a variety of proceedings, including matters before State's Attorneys General, and has a great deal of hands-on experience working with current and former employees of major corporations to prepare them for deposition and trial testimony. In addition, Mary Catherine also has experience defending clients against tort claims involving environmental contamination.

Mary Catherine has actively participated in a variety of pro bono initiatives throughout her career. She has assisted the Innocence Project in civil rights actions impacting prisoners on death row in Arkansas and has assisted with a judiciary investigation in conjunction with the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights Under Law. She is actively participating in the National Veterans Legal Services Program discharge upgrade initiative, advocating for veterans seeking a military discharge upgrade or correction.

What are some of Mary Catherine's insights about her journey as a litigator?

Q. What do you know now that you wish you had known at the beginning of your legal career?

A. Stand up desks.

Q. What opportunity has had the most significant positive impact on your career?

A. Being a part of bellwether work-up and trial teams created unique opportunities for growth and camaraderie and have made a tremendous impact on my career.

Q. What is one piece of advice you received during your career that changed the way you practice?

A. Do it carelessly if perfectionism is holding you back – getting it done is better than getting it perfect.

**DANIEL HIGGINBOTHAM,
VICE CHAIR DEFENSE COUNSEL JOURNAL**

Who is Daniel?

Daniel Higginbotham is a trial attorney at Thomas Combs & Spann PLLC in Charleston, West Virginia. He has spent more than a decade defending pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers and has tried cases to jury in state and federal courts across the country. A member of IADC since 2018, Daniel serves as a vice-chair on the Drug, Device & Biotechnology and Engagement & Retention Committees and is also involved in the Product Liability Committee.

What are some of Daniel's insights about his journey as a litigator?

Q. What do you know now that you wish you had known at the beginning of your legal career?

A. I don't know everything and that's ok! Young lawyers all too often feel like they should have the answer to any and every question, on the spot. I know now—and wish I knew many years ago—that it's ok to tell a client or judge that I don't know the answer to a question and will do everything I can to figure out the answer as soon as I can. In many situations, that honest answer will build your credibility.

Q. What opportunity has had the most significant positive impact on your legal career?

A. When I was a young lawyer, a client who believed in me more than I believed in myself gave me an opportunity to work on several trials, first as a behind-the-scenes associate, then as appellate counsel, and then as trial counsel. I had doubts about my readiness for every one of those roles, but she insisted I could handle it. Without her mentorship and confidence, who knows where I would be in my career today.

Q. What is one piece of advice you received during your career that changed the way you practice?

A. When clerking, I learned that you can disagree with someone without being disagreeable. All too often it's considered a weakness to be pleasant toward your opponents. I believe the opposite – that the ability to maintain your emotions and professionalism when an opponent is being difficult is a tremendous asset in the practice of law.

**SHERYLLE FRANCIS,
VICE CHAIR NEWSLETTER**

Who is Sherylle?

Sherylle Francis is the founder of Sherylle Francis, P.A. She is a seasoned trial lawyer with over 20 years' experience defending major corporations in product, commercial and unfair trade practice litigation in state and federal courts nationwide. Sherylle has tried cases in state and federal courts to both jury and bench verdicts. She is also certified by the Florida Supreme Court as a circuit mediator for the State of Florida. Sherylle has spent a significant portion of her career assessing risk for major corporations, negotiating on their behalf and collaborating with their business and legal units to analyze and develop solutions-driven business practices. She has leveraged this experience to provide guidance and leadership to the boards she has had the privilege to serve as both a member and chair.

What are some insights about Sherylle's journey as a litigator?

Q. What do you know now that you wish you had known at the beginning of your legal career?

A. I am my best when I bring all of my authentic self to my practice.

Q. What opportunity has had the most significant positive impact on your legal career?

A. The mentorship and advice of a client who encouraged me to start my own practice.

Q. What is one piece of advice you received during your career that changed the way you practice?

A. Write with clarity and brevity.

What do Mary Catherine, Daniel and Sherylle have in common?

All three have had opportunities to advance and excel in their respective practices and to serve their communities, including the IADC, through the professional engagement and involvement necessary to promote the core values of the organization.

Past Committee Newsletters

Visit the Committee's newsletter archive online at www.iadclaw.org to read other articles published by the Committee. Prior articles include:

DECEMBER 2021

[Allow Me to Reintroduce the Drug, Device and Biotechnology Committee Members](#)

SEPTEMBER 2021

[The Virus Mutated...Have the PREP Act's Protections Against Liability for Countermeasures Followed Suit?](#)

Alissa Portner and Jason Rose

JUNE 2020

[Litigation in the Time of COVID-19: Understanding the Novel Impact on Drug and Device Cases](#)

Robin Shah and Andrew Karp

MAY 2020

[The "Preventing Essential Medical Device Shortages Act of 2020": COVID-19 Side Effect That Could Permanently Harm Medical Device Manufacturers](#)

Heather Heiskell Jones and James E. Simon

OCTOBER 2019

[Cracking the Code: Genetic Evidence and Specific Causation](#)

Ali Spindler and Stephen G.A. Myers

AUGUST 2019

[U.S. Supreme Court in Prescription Pharmaceutical Case Holds Implied Preemption is Legal Issue for Judge, Not Question of Fact for Jury](#)

Joseph J. Stroble and Stanley E. Blackmon

JULY 2019

[An Update on Efforts to Create a Set of Rules for Multidistrict Litigation](#)

Albert G. Bixler and Immon Shafiei

JUNE 2019

[Alert: Deceptive Plaintiff Lawyer Advertising is Harmful to Public Health... and States are Taking Action](#)

Mark Behrens and Ashley Garry

MAY 2019

[The Scoop on the FDA's Updated Approach to the Dietary Supplement Market](#)

Elizabeth L. Taylor and Lindsey M. Saad

APRIL 2019

[Proposed Changes to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 30\(b\)\(6\)](#)

Albert G. Bixler and Immon Shafiei