

GAINING MOMENTUM

ASCIO

**65TH ANNUAL SEMINAR
MAY 7-8, 2026
JW MARRIOTT • L.A. LIVE**

Keynote Speaker Apolo Ohno
8-time Olympic medalist in
short-track speed skating



REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Advance registration for the Annual Seminar is required, and onsite registrations are highly discouraged. Click [here](#) to register.

The registration fee covers attendance to the Annual Seminar on Thursday and Friday, attendance to Thursday's Casino Night, and the Keynote Luncheon on Friday featuring Keynote Speaker Apolo Ohno. Thursday's "Becoming Allies - Supporting Women" luncheon has limited seating and is limited to the first 130 attendees who reserve tickets to the luncheon.

REGISTRATION FEES

<input type="checkbox"/> ASCDC Members	\$550	<input type="checkbox"/> Claims Personnel	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Member Attorneys	\$650	<input type="checkbox"/> Paralegal	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Young Lawyer Member*	\$400	<input type="checkbox"/> Luncheon Companion Ticket	\$150
		<input type="checkbox"/> Reception Companion Ticket	\$150

* In practice up to five years

COMPANION TICKETS

Please note that attendance to the Keynote Luncheon and Casino Night is included as an attendee. A companion ticket can be purchased for an individual who will not be attending the rest of the conference

LATE REGISTRATION FEE

Please note that a \$50 late registration fee will be added to all onsite registrations on May 7 and 8, 2026.

REFUND POLICY

Due to our commitment to the hotel, any meeting registration cancellation and request for refund must be in writing and submitted to the ASCDC office no later than April 14, 2026. A \$100 surcharge will be assessed to all cancellations received on or before April 14, 2026. No refunds will be made for cancellations made after April 14, 2026.

PHOTO/VIDEO DISCLAIMER

By registering for and attending this conference, you agree that your image may be taken during the conference and used at any time, without further notification, for printed materials, websites, social media, and other marketing purposes.

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THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026

TIME	TRACK A Anatomy of a Trial	TRACK B Hot Topics	TRACK C New Lawyers
8:30 am – 9:45 am	Year in Review		
9:45 am – 10:00 am	Break		
10:00 am – 11:00 am	Mini Opening and Jury Selection	Objection ... AI? The New Reality of Litigation Technology	Medical Liens: Approaches, Strategies, and Developments
11:00 am – 11:15 am	Break		
11:15 am – 12:15 pm	Opening Statements	Issues Facing the Court Right Now	Three's a Crowd: Ethical Obligations and Practical Pitfalls in the Tripartite Relationship
12:15 pm – 1:30 pm	Becoming Allies – Supporting Women Luncheon		
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	Party and Witness Examinations and Exhibits (Direct/Cross)	Beyond the Ask: Rebutting Plaintiff Damages with Evidence and Strategy	Crash Course in Winning Auto Cases: Evidence, Experts, and Early Moves
2:30 pm – 2:45 pm	Break		
2:45 pm – 3:45 pm	Plaintiff & Defendant Expert Witness Examinations and Exhibits (Direct/Cross)	It's a Slippery Slope! Pitfalls and Successes for your Premise Case – Plaintiff, Defense, and Bench POV!	Courtroom Etiquette 101: Mastering Your Presence, Poise, and Presentation with Procedure and Protocol
3:45 pm – 4:00 pm	Break		
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Closing Arguments	Defending Product Liability Design Defect Claims: What to Expect with the Consumer Expectation Test	Rising Stars: Ask Us Anything
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Casino Night and Reception		

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026

TIME	TRACK A Long Track	TRACK B Hot Topics
7:15 am – 8:15 am	Finding Balance: Mindful Strategies for Managing Stress, Cultivating Resilience, and Achieving Peak Performance in our Busy Lives	
8:15 am – 8:30 am	Break	
8:30 am – 9:30 am	The Injury Illusion: Causation, Damages, and What California Juries Are Really Asked to Decide	Combatting Improper Arguments at Trial: Golden Rule, Reptiles, and Everything in Between
9:30 am – 9:45 am	Break	
9:45 am – 10:45 am	Lessons Learned from Trial Losses	Employment Arbitration 2026: From Agreements to Awards
10:45 am – 11:00 am	Break	
11:00 am – 11:20 am	Legislative Update	
11:20 am – 12:00 pm	State of the Court Update	
12:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Annual Luncheon with Keynote Speaker Apolo Ohno	

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Apolo Ohno, 8-Time Olympic Medalist

Apolo Anton Ohno claimed his first major speed skating title at the U.S. Championships at the age of 14 – after just six months of training. Over the next decade and a half, he transformed from a young prodigy to the most decorated U.S. Winter Olympian in history – a title he still holds – earning eight Olympic medals in short-track speed skating across the 2002, 2006, and 2010 Winter Games.

After the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games, Apolo leveraged his first-hand understanding of sport psychology and his own encounters with triumphs and setbacks to cultivate a resilient and mission-driven approach to life. He transformed himself into a bestselling author, recognized by *The New York Times*, and traveled the world to apply his athletic achievements to business. As a captivating speaker, Apolo has empowered countless business leaders to embrace a high-performance mindset and thrive amidst the prevailing uncertainty of the modern world. He is passionate about helping others not only achieve but exceed what they believe to be possible in both life and in business.



THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026

7:00 am - 7:30 pm **Registration Open** Diamond Foyer

7:00 am - 8:00 am **Continental Breakfast** Diamond Foyer

7:00 am - 4:00 pm **Exhibits Open** Diamond Foyer

8:30 am - 9:45 am **Plenary Session - Year in Review** Diamond 4
(MCLE 1.25 General Credit) Join us as we break down 2025's most important decisions for the defense bar. Get ready to strap on your skates for the next lap around the rink!

- David Hackett - Greines, Martin, Stein & Richland
- Stevan Love - Greines, Martin, Stein & Richland

9:45 am - 10:00 am **Break** Diamond Foyer

ANATOMY OF A TRIAL TRACK

10:00 am - 11:00 am **Mini Opening and Jury Selection** Diamond 4

(MCLE 1.0 General Credit) The plaintiff in this case is seeking damages that resulted from a fall down a stairway. The plaintiff had visited a friend's rented house, and when he was leaving the plaintiff slipped and fell, falling approximately ten stairs, which resulted in a Lisfranc fracture in his left foot, which was corrected in an emergency surgery. While at the hospital, the plaintiff gave the cause of his injury as falling down the stairs, but he told his employer that the injury was the result of surfing. The plaintiff is searching for damages for his medical care and lost earnings. The Defendant is the owner of the property where the Plaintiff fell. The case includes testimony from experts, witnesses, medical records, handrail stipulations, and photographs of the stairwell.

- Daniel Kramer - Kramer Trial Lawyers
- Chris Faenza - Yoka | Smith
- Hon. Mary Ann Murphy - Los Angeles Superior Court
- Hon. Carmen Luege - Orange County Superior Court
- Juan Delgado (Moderator) - Behar Gibbs Savage Paulson LLP
- Jennifer Russell (Moderator) - Mendez & Sanchez APC



THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026

HOT TOPIC TRACK

10:00 am - 11:00 am **Objection ... AI?** Diamond 3

The New Reality of Litigation Technology

(MCLE 1.0 Ethics Credit) Join us as we explore how AI is transforming litigation from case strategy to courtroom procedure. Hear practical insights from a plaintiff attorney, defense attorney, and a Superior Court Judge on risks, ethics, and opportunities lawyers must understand to stay relevant in the rapidly evolving legal landscape.

- Lourdes DeArmas - Omega Law Group
- Dean Rocco - Wilson Elser
- Hon. Andre De La Cruz - Orange County Superior Court
- Celeena Pompeo (Moderator) - Wilson Elser

NEW LAWYER TRACK

10:00 am - 11:00 am **Medical Liens: Approaches, Strategies, and New Developments** Diamond 1-2

(MCLE 1.0 General Credit) This panel will focus on strategies for addressing medical liens through discovery (including depositions, subpoenas, and written discovery), new developments in medical factoring, evaluating the "reasonable value" of medical expenses, and strategies for mediation and trial.

- Dr. Henry Lubow, MD - Injury Review, Inc.
- Hon. Patricia Schnegg, (Ret.) - Judicate West
- Steve Pasarow - Knapp, Petersen & Clarke
- Tyler Ross (Moderator) - Grant, Genovese & Baratta, LLP

11:00 am - 11:15 am **Break** Diamond Foyer

ANATOMY OF A TRIAL TRACK

11:15 am - 12:15 pm **Opening Statements** Diamond 4

(MCLE 1.0 General Credit)

- Thomas Johnston - Johnston & Hutchinson LLP
- Erin Hallissy - Schonbuch Hallissy LLP
- Hon. Mary Ann Murphy - Los Angeles Superior Court
- Hon. Carmen Luege - Orange County Superior Court
- Juan Delgado (Moderator) - Behar Gibbs Savage Paulson LLP
- Jennifer Russell (Moderator) - Mendez & Sanchez APC

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THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026

HOT TOPIC TRACK

11:15 am - 12:15 pm **Issues Facing the Court Right Now** Diamond 3
(MCLE 1.0 General Credit) This session will include judges from various Southern California courts discussing issues that the courts are currently facing and how they are addressing these issues, such as IDC programs, rulings, and more.

- Hon. Ricardo Ocampo - Los Angeles Superior Court, Assistant Presiding Judge
- Hon. Sheila Hanson - Orange County Superior Court, Presiding Judge
- Hon. Francisco Navarro - Riverside County Superior Court
- Hon. James F. Rigali - Santa Barbara County Superior Court
- Jennifer Leeper (Moderator) - James T. Shott & Associates

NEW LAWYER TRACK

11:15 am - 12:15 pm **Three's a Crowd: Ethical Obligations and Practical Pitfalls in the Tripartite Relationship** Diamond 1-2
(MCLE 1.0 Ethics Credit) Who does defense counsel actually represent - the insured, the insurer, or both? This panel tackles one of insurance defense's most nuanced challenges: the tripartite relationship. We'll dig into the tension between carrier reporting obligations and attorney-client privilege, explore where loyalties lie when interests diverge, and spotlight the pitfalls that trip up even experienced practitioners. If you've ever wondered how to keep all three parties happy without compromising your ethical duties, this panel is for you.

- Amy Chambers - Rosing Pott & Strohbahn LLP
- Annie Thompson - Lawyers Mutual Insurance Company
- Marshall Cole (Moderator) - Nemecek & Cole

12:15 pm - 1:30 pm **Becoming Allies - Supporting Women Luncheon or Lunch on own** Diamond 6-8

ANATOMY OF A TRIAL TRACK

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm **Party and Witness Examinations and Exhibits (Direct/Cross)** Diamond 4
(MCLE 1.0 General Credit)

- Gene Sullivan - Sullivan & Sullivan Law
- Jennifer Leeper - James T. Shott & Associates
- Hon. Huey Cotton - Los Angeles Superior Court
- Juan Delgado (Moderator) - Behar Gibbs Savage Paulson LLP
- Jennifer Russell (Moderator) - Mendez & Sanchez APC

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THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026

HOT TOPIC TRACK

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm **Beyond the Ask: Rebutting Plaintiff Damages with Evidence and Strategy** Diamond 3
(MCLE 1.0 General Credit) This panel explores practical strategies for challenging plaintiff damages at trial. Speakers from the bench and both sides of the bar will discuss effective ways to test claims, develop supporting evidence, use tools like sub rosa, and persuasively address the reasonableness of the amounts sought before a jury.

- Hon. Wendy Wilcox - Los Angeles Superior Court
- Michael Schonbuch - Schonbuch Hallissy LLP
- Minh Nguyen - Nguyen Lawyers, ALC
- Christa Ramey - ACTS Law LLP
- Delmar Thomas - Yukevich | Cavanaugh
- Mary Fersch (Moderator) - Schonbuch Hallissy LLP

NEW LAWYER TRACK

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm **Crash Course in Winning Auto Cases: Evidence, Experts, and Early Moves** Diamond 1-2
(MCLE 1.0 General Credit) This dynamic, one-hour panel brings together a defense attorney, plaintiff attorney, and accident reconstruction expert to provide a practical, real-world roadmap for handling automobile accident cases from day one. The discussion will focus on the critical early steps that can shape case value and outcome, including scene investigation, evidence preservation, and identifying key liability issues before they are lost.

- William Woodland - Behar Gibbs Savage Paulson LLP
- Sevy Fisher - The Simon Law Group
- Christian Fernandez, E.I.T. - Mecanica Scientific Services
- Michael Faenza (Moderator) - Morgenstern Law Group, APLC

2:30 pm - 2:45 pm **Break** Diamond Foyer

ANATOMY OF A TRIAL TRACK

2:45 pm - 3:45 pm **Plaintiff and Defendant Expert Witness Examinations and Exhibits (Direct/Cross)** Diamond 4
(MCLE 1.0 General Credit)

- Eric Traut - Traut Injury Law
- Heather Cote - Cullins and Grandy LLP
- Hon. Huey Cotton - Los Angeles Superior Court
- Hon. Elizabeth Bradley - Los Angeles Superior Court
- Juan Delgado (Moderator) - Behar Gibbs Savage Paulson LLP
- Jennifer Russell (Moderator) - Mendez & Sanchez APC

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026

HOT TOPIC TRACK

2:45 pm - 3:45 pm **It's a Slippery Slope! Pitfalls and Successes for your Premise Case - Plaintiff, Defense, and Bench POV!** Diamond 3

(MCLE 1.0 General Credit) The pitfalls of premises cases from work up to trial from the plaintiff, defense, and bench POV.

- Jennifer Naples - Wesierski & Zurek LLP
- Jason Sanchez - The Simon Law Group
- Hon. Alan Honeycutt - Los Angeles Superior Court
- Arpineh Yeremian (Moderator) - Wesierski & Zurek LLP

NEW LAWYER TRACK

2:45 pm - 3:45 pm **Courtroom Etiquette 101: Mastering Your Presence, Poise, and Presentation with Procedure and Protocol** Diamond 1-2

(MCLE 1.0 General Credit) This panel will be moderated and conducted by a sitting judge, a veteran judicial assistant, and a veteran courtroom assistant to talk about best practices for an attorney who appears in court. Remote appearances have certain nuances. In-person appearances have dos and don'ts as well. This panel will be for attorneys who regularly appear in court for case management, law and motion, and trials who want to improve their performance and presence in front of the judge and the jury. The primary two phases will be 1) pre-trial and 2) trial. We will allow considerable time for Q&A from the audience.

- Sandra Brown - Courtroom Assistant, Los Angeles Superior Court
- Hon. Rupert Byrdsong - Los Angeles Superior Court
- Adrienne Robledo - Judicial Assistant, Los Angeles Superior Court
- Lisa Collinson (Moderator) - Collinson Greco

3:45 pm - 4:00 pm **Break** Diamond Foyer

ANATOMY OF A TRIAL TRACK

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm **Closing Arguments** Diamond 4

- (MCLE 1.0 General Credit)**
- BJ Abron - Abron Law APC
 - Chris Patton - Patton Trial Group
 - Hon. Huey Cotton - Los Angeles Superior Court
 - Hon. Elizabeth Bradley - Los Angeles Superior Court
 - Juan Delgado (Moderator) - Behar Gibbs Savage Paulson LLP
 - Jennifer Russell (Moderator) - Mendez & Sanchez APC

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THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026

HOT TOPIC TRACK

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm **Defending Product Liability Design Defect Claims: What to Expect with the Consumer Expectation Test** Diamond 3

(MCLE 1.0 General Credit) The panel will discuss the applicability of the consumer expectations test to a design defect products liability case. When the consumer expectations test is applied at trial in lieu of risk utility, the nature of the evidence that will be admissible at trial may require a last-minute shift in your case presentation. The panel will discuss how applicability of the consumer expectations test limits the evidence the defense can present and strategies for effectively defending a product defect case when your evidence is limited under consumer expectations.

- Hon. Ruth Ann Kwan - Los Angeles Superior Court
- Boris Treyzon - ACTS Law LLP
- Todd Cavanaugh - Yukevich | Cavanaugh
- Cristina Ciminelli (Moderator) - Yukevich | Cavanaugh

NEW LAWYER TRACK

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm **Rising Stars: Ask Us Anything** Diamond 1-2

(MCLE 1.0 General Credit) Curious how the best young defense attorneys in the game rose to the top? Want tips and tricks on how to maximize your experience as a new attorney at your firm? If you have burning questions that you don't want to ask your firm partners, come join us for a casual conversation with this year's ASCDC Rising Stars!

- Alexis Morgenstern - Morgenstern Law Group, APLC
- Melissa Whalen - Horovitz & Levy LLP
- Andrew Figueras - Yoka | Smith
- Arpineh Yeremian (Moderator) - Wesierski & Zurek LLP

5:00 pm - 7:30 pm **Casino Night and Reception** Diamond 5-10

MCLE CREDIT

This ASCDC Annual Seminar has been approved for Minimum Continuing Legal Education credit by the State Bar of California in the amount of 10.0 hours.

The Association of Southern California Defense Counsel certifies that this activity conforms to the standards for approved education activities prescribed by the rules and regulations of the State Bar of California governing minimum continuing legal education.

Please make sure to include your State Bar I.D. number on the registration form to receive your MCLE credits. Additionally, please make sure you sign the attendance sheet located in the Diamond Foyer and retain the Certificate of Attendance for your records.

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026

7:00 am - 12:00 pm **Registration Open** Diamond Foyer

7:00 am - 8:30 am **Continental Breakfast** Diamond Foyer

7:00 am - 11:00 am **Exhibits Open** Diamond Foyer

7:15 am - 8:15 am **Finding Balance: Mindful Strategies for Managing Stress, Cultivating Resilience, and Achieving Peak Performance in our Busy Lives** Diamond 3

(MCLE 1.0 Wellness Competence Credit) Dr. Mona Saint, MD, MPH trained at UC San Diego and Tulane University School of Medicine and is board certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Integrative Medicine, and Obesity Medicine. She focuses on health, wellness, and peak performance for high-performing professionals. Drawing on her experience as the former Director of Emotional Wellbeing at the Chopra Center and Clinical Instructor at the UC San Diego School of Medicine, she helps individuals strengthen stress management, resilience, and sustaining balance in both their professional and personal lives to avoid burnout.

- Dr. Mona Saint, MD, MPH - VitalityMD
- Celeena Pompeo (Moderator) - Wilson Elser

8:15 am - 8:30 am **Break** Diamond Foyer

LONG TRACK

8:30 am - 9:30 am **The Injury Illusion: Causation, Damages, and What California Juries Are Really Asked to Decide** Diamond 4

(MCLE 1.0 General Credit) Come learn tips and tricks from three board-certified, trial-tested medical experts who will give insight blending practical medicine with litigation strategy useful at deposition, trial, and in case evaluation within the framework of CACI. Our panelists will discuss challenging causation, mechanisms of injury, and necessity of treatment. Learn how to present medical evidence and give tools to the jury that show causation must be proven – not assumed; damages must be reasonable – not emotional and liability does not equal limitless responsibility.

- Linda Li, MD, FACS - Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
- Kevin Becker, MD, MBA, DABA - Anesthesiology
- William Brien, MD - Medical Administration, Orthopedics
- Patricia Daehnke (Moderator) - DRR Law Group

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FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026

HOT TOPIC TRACK

8:30 am - 9:30 am **Combatting Improper Arguments at Trial: Golden Rule, Reptiles, and Everything in Between** Diamond 3

(MCLE 1.0 General Credit) Come hear perspectives from experienced defense counsel and the judiciary as we set the stage to use pre-trial motions and objections at trial to combat improper plaintiff arguments.

- Bron D'Angelo - Burger Meyer & D'Angelo, LLP
- Andrew Owen - Panish Shea Ravipudi LLP
- Ted Xanders - Greines, Martin, Stein & Richland
- Hon. Lauren Lofton - Los Angeles Superior Court
- Anthony Kohrs (Moderator) - Kohrs & Fiske

9:30 am - 9:45 am **Break** Diamond Foyer

LONG TRACK

9:45 am - 10:45 am **Lessons Learned from Trial Losses** Diamond 4

(MCLE 1.0 General Credit) Even the most seasoned trial attorneys face setbacks. This candid panel brings together both plaintiff and defense counsel to dissect real trial losses and extract the lessons that matter. Panelists will share what went wrong, what they would do differently, and how those experiences have shaped their approach to case strategy, discovery, expert preparation, and trial presentation. Attendees will gain valuable insight from both sides of the aisle – offering practical critiques, strategic adjustments, and forward-looking recommendations designed to improve outcomes in future cases.

- Daniel DeSantis - Morgan & Morgan
- Ninos Saroukhanioff - Morgenstern Law Group, APLC
- Steve Fleischman - Horovitz & Levy LLP
- Hon. Jacqueline Connor (Ret.) - ADR Services, Inc.
- Alexis Morgenstern (Moderator) - Morgenstern Law Group, APLC



FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026

HOT TOPIC TRACK

9:45 am - 10:45 am **Employment Arbitration 2026:
From Agreements to Awards** Diamond 3

(MCLE 1.0 General Credit) This dynamic one-hour panel offers a comprehensive, practice-oriented look at employment arbitration, guiding attendees through each stage of the process—from selecting an arbitrator to navigating discovery, hearings, and post-award challenges. The discussion will highlight real-world considerations, strategic decisions, and potential pitfalls that arise when resolving employment disputes outside the courtroom, presented from the perspectives of a plaintiff's attorney, defense attorney, and experienced arbitrator.

- Dan Holzman - Caskey, Holzman & Barari
- William Stein - Fisher Phillips
- Hon. Elizabeth Feffer (Ret.) - ADR Services, Inc.
- Eric Schwetmann (Moderator) - Ballard Rosenberg Golper & Savitt, LLP

10:45 am - 11:00 am **Break** Diamond Foyer

11:00 am - 11:20 am **Legislative Update** Diamond 4
(MCLE 0.25 General Credit) Mike Belote and Cliff Costa will provide an update on legislative and political developments in California and Sacramento. This presentation will highlight recently introduced legislation, including its purposes, context, and effect, to help defense lawyers understand the potential impacts on their practices.

- Mike Belote, Esq. - California Advocates, Inc. / California Defense Counsel
- Cliff Costa, Esq. - California Advocates, Inc. / California Defense Counsel

11:20 am - 12:00 pm **State of the Court Update** Diamond 4
(MCLE 0.5 General Credit) Join Hon. Ricardo Ocampo and Hon. Karen Stevenson for the State of the Court Address and hear an update on the Southern California court systems.

- Hon. Ricardo Ocampo - Los Angeles Superior Court
- Hon. Karen Stevenson - Central District of California

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm **Annual Luncheon
with Keynote Speaker Apolo Ohno** Diamond 5-10

2:00 pm **Annual Seminar Ends - Thank You for Attending!**

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