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# FOCUS

## President's Message

**Zandra Pulis, Deputy General Counsel CPS Energy**

Congratulations on stepping up – way up! After introducing the new vision and direction of San Antonio's Community Justice Program (CJP) in the last newsletter, ACC members responded in tremendous fashion. On May 3, the CJP Interim Board of Directors held its inaugural meeting and began laying the groundwork with the Board of Directors of the San Antonio Bar Association (SABA) to spin-off the CJP into an independent non-profit organization led by the members of this Interim Board. The Interim Board is primarily composed of corporate in-house counsel, 9 in all and many of them ACC members<sup>1</sup>, who will be charged with managing and growing the CJP into an entity similar to pro bono organizations in Austin, Dallas, Houston and other major cities. As many of you know, the CJP has, since its inception, been managed by the SABA Board, and it was the SABA Board that recognized the need for the CJP to have a board entirely devoted to the CJP's mission and remains committed to continuing its support and association with the CJP. The CJP Board will be solely focused on growing the breadth and scope of the programs that the CJP delivers to San Antonio and surrounding communities and will work closely with local partners, including the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, Texas Rural Legal Aid and Haven for Hope, to support community programs that are already addressing numerous community needs.

And speaking of stepping up, I was so impressed with the turnout and everyone's efforts at making the golf tournament a wonderful event. Although I've been a member of ACC for 20+ years, I had never before attended the golf event! What? I know, right! I had no idea what I was missing.



The weather was perfect – blue skies, sunshine and a touch of coolness that made the direct sunlight rather pleasant. The afternoon began with an engaging CLE program from Todd Burchett of BKD, on fraud. I was impressed that, despite a potentially perfect round of golf being just moments away, attendees listened intently and asked great questions. After the lunch program, it was just a matter of time before about 20 golf carts scattered throughout the beautiful Quarry Golf Course and golf balls started flying! Our chapter photographer, Dan Lopez, and I jumped into our own cart and toured the course, personally thanking the tournament sponsors that were out on the course and photographing participants. It was a wonderful time that caused me to seriously rethink my chosen hobbies. Maybe taking up golf is just the new diversion/distraction I need(?) in my life....spending gorgeous days tooling

around lush courses, chatting with old and new friends, aiming for that impossibly small cup...oh yeah, and raising money for some seriously good causes, like Returning Heroes Home (RHH), this year's tournament beneficiary, a local non-profit that works to

support wounded, ill and injured warriors and their families. That's the best part, isn't it? As of my writing, it appears that the tournament is on track to have raised almost double the amount last year's did. That means that wounded warriors undergoing treatment in San Antonio will benefit from all those mulligans and "gimmes". Many thanks to Steve Fogle, RHH's representative, for spending his afternoon with us at the Quarry. It is worth noting that since the tournament's inception in 2013, it has raised over \$41,000 for great causes! Just one more way ACC South Central Texas gives back.

And while you are patting yourself on the back for all the good that ACC does, another thing to remember- as a result of the successful 2018 Ethics Follies production, *Shyster Act*, a \$20,000 check will be presented to the Community Justice Program at May's luncheon! How can attending a hilarious, "home-grown"

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<sup>1</sup>In-house counsel members of the Interim Board are: Lennon G. "Len" Briley, Jr., AT&T; Alex M. Miller, Valero; Chris Rulon, NuStar Energy L.P.; Danielle Gipson Reyes, USAA; Mary Brennan Stich, Rackspace; Serina Ayn Rivela, University Health System; Kay Lynn Grimes, Lone Star Bakery; Sheila Anne Griger, Southwest Research Institute; and Jessica Johnson Lerma, Grunt Style, LLC.

# How to Elevate Your In-house Practice by Taking a Page from the CFO Playbook

By Neil Peretz, Contract Wrangler, Inc.

Companies need lawyers closer to their day-to-day business operations to handle the new, complicated, and increasingly global legal landscape. The proliferation of new regulations, combined with the need for businesses to move faster than ever before, present major opportunities for in-house attorneys. But before demand a spot on the executive committee, it's time for an attitude check.

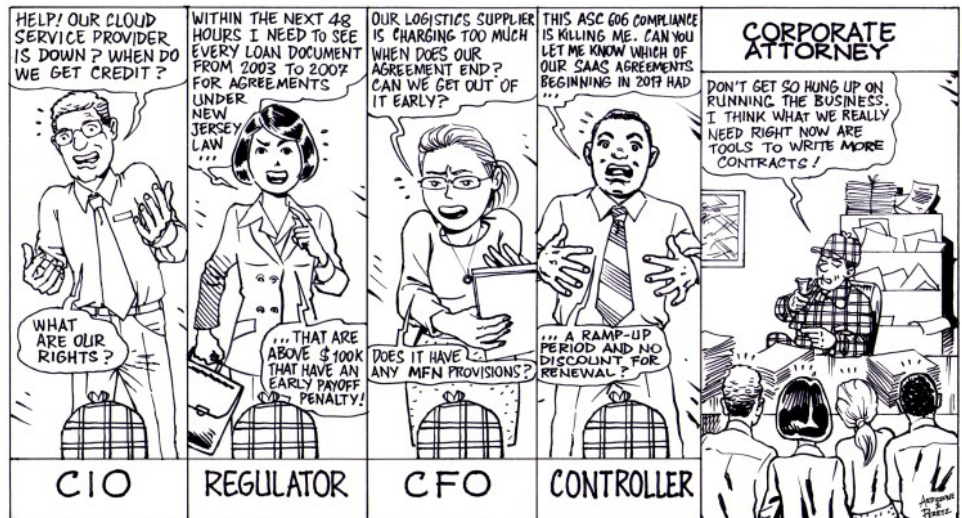
In order to truly succeed in-house, you need to become an involved business partner, rather than a detached advisor. It's no longer your job to be a detached professional advisor whose work is judged on the sheer number of hours worked or "points scored" by finding flaws and dangers around every bend.

These days, the most successful, indispensable in-house attorneys are those who become a member of the company's core senior leadership team. To do that, attorneys would be wise to learn lessons from the chief financial officer (CFO) world, where a similar transition occurred over the last decade. Previously, the CFO was considered a "scorekeeper" who would tally results and perhaps push others for budget forecasts. Today, the successful CFO has transitioned from keeping score to becoming a day-to-day partner with the CEO in growing the business.

How did the CFOs make this transition? And are there lessons for lawyers who want to follow in their footsteps from the role of specialist counselor to core decisionmaker?

## Embrace digital transformation

A 2018 study by Accenture involving over 700 senior finance leaders revealed that a key contribution of top CFOs was to lead many of their organization's digital transformation efforts. The result affected the entire company, not just the financial or accounting department. The entire C-suite had new data and insights to guide the business, which led to better corporate decision-making and growth. Rather than



Art by F. P. Ardizzone. fpaolardizzone@gmail.com

focusing on tools targeted solely at making their own life easier, the CFOs set out to make the entire senior team smarter.

## Find new value

Over 80 percent of the successful CFOs surveyed focused on how to go beyond their traditional purview of cost-cutting to finding new value or revenue streams for the business. At Adobe, for example, the CFO was integral to the decision to launch a cloud-based subscription service that has propelled the company's growth. In addition to helping the company's financial performance, this strategy also helped make other team members — ranging from legal ops to product to sales and marketing — into revenue-enhancing heroes. It's not a surprise that these other senior executives suddenly wanted more CFO involvement in key business decisions.

## Share information widely

More than two-thirds (67 percent) of successful finance leaders worked to train non-finance executives how to take aspects of financial planning, budgeting, and forecasting into their own hands, according to the Accenture study. Rather than hoard information as a source of power, the top finance executives built their power base by essentially deputizing employees in other departments to add a

financial perspective and fiscal discipline to their own work.

So, what can in-house attorneys looking for personal and professional growth learn from the tremendous strides made by CFOs?

1. Lawyers have a tremendous opportunity to enable the company's digital transformation because almost all of their company's core business relationships pass through their hands. The next time you work on a business agreement for a colleague, start asking how that business relationship will be operationalized after the contract is signed. Are there key systems that need to be installed to monitor performance or record goals? As a lawyer, you are at the forefront of identifying key business processes that can be brought from separate paper archives into the digital shared world.
2. Lawyers often overlook the opportunity to leverage technology investments by the company to make themselves more accessible and efficient. For example, in the software industry, large engineering teams utilize systems like Trello and Jira to assign and track tasks, and cloud-based applications like Google Docs to enable team- and project-based collaboration. Your company may already have a license to use tools like these, along

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with expert users just down the hall from you. Examine your ability to utilize this technology for your law department. A task could be assigned to a lawyer through a system like Jira or Trello and be fed into a prioritization queue that each lawyer could manage, easing collaboration and communication with those outside the legal department. Similarly, using a shared Google doc across multiple departments is a low-cost way to gather feedback or seek approvals where there are many internal stakeholders in an agreement under negotiation.

3. Remember that the law does not just create roadblocks and restrictions: It can also create new opportunities for competitive advantage for your company. If you can find the most cost-effective or efficient method to comply with a new rule, you can gain a tremendous lead on your competitors. Your job as a business partner is to think about how something could be done in a compliant manner by digging into the history, spirit, and nuance of rules, a task for which you are uniquely qualified.

4. Learn what would make your colleagues successful in their jobs, rather than focusing solely on your department's accomplishments. Find out what your internal clients need most to excel in their own areas. Learn about which information will enable them to make better decisions on a day-to-day basis, rather than just serving as their scrivener at the outset of a new business relationship, or their advisor after a mishap has already occurred. You helped them form those external business relationships, negotiating and drafting agreements with everyone from software providers to landlords to investment bankers. Find a way to help everyone remember the key metrics for executing on those agreements, which is much more rewarding than developing *ex post facto* arguments based on bad facts.
5. Remember that corporate law and corporate contracts are not a temple, and you are not a high priest. Contracts exist to serve businesspeople and their departments. Use your legal interpretation skills to help colleagues turn con-

tracts into day-to-day goals and tasks that they can carry out. Deputize each relevant department to ensure that the value from contracts is maximized.

None of these steps requires you to sacrifice your legal judgment. Rather, these provide an opportunity to use your legal skills from the catbird seat at the heart of business negotiations, which will make your colleagues appreciate your value to the business much more than they already do today, and accommodate in real time.

**Author:** Neil Peretz, general counsel of Contract Wrangler, which brings business agreements to life through attorney-trained artificial intelligence. Peretz has been general counsel of multiple financial services companies and also served as a DOJ Trial Attorney and co-founder of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Office of Enforcement. His law degrees are from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Law and from Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, in Belgium, where he was a Fulbright Scholar.

## ACC News

### 2019 ACC Annual Meeting: Where In-house Counsel Connect

Mark your calendars for October 27-30 in Phoenix, AZ for the 2019 world's largest event on in-house counsel. Earn up to a year's worth of CLEs, get the essential knowledge and insights you need to navigate today's increasingly complex business environment, and make meaningful connections with your in-house peers from around the globe. No other event delivers such a wealth of education and networking opportunities for corporate counsel all in one place at one time. Group discounts are available. Check out the full program schedule at [am.acc.com](http://am.acc.com).

### Law Department Leadership: Strategic Decision Making for In-house Counsel

Making effective decisions is arguably your most critical responsibility as a

professional manager. In uncertain and changing business situations, you need a practical framework to make effective decisions quickly. Attend the Law Department Leadership program (23 September, Toronto, ON) to gain influence and advance your career by learning how to make better business decisions. Register today at [acc.com/LDL](http://acc.com/LDL).

### Global General Counsel Summit: London Calling

Are you driving the discussion on corporate sustainability? Positive financial performance, regulatory pressure, material risk, and shareholder expectations are some of the reasons why you should be. Join the critical conversation on "Driving Corporate Sustainability—the Expanding Role of the GC" with your fellow CLOs from around the world, May 22-24, in London, UK. [Register today.](#)

### Are you prepared to comply with new state privacy laws?

Rapidly growing data privacy regulations from California to New York make you accountable for all third-party service providers that access, process, or store your company's personal data. Visit [acc.com/VRS](http://acc.com/VRS) for more information.

### New to In-house? Are you prepared?

The ACC Corporate Counsel University® (June 26-28, Minneapolis, MN), combines practical fundamentals with career building opportunities, which will help you excel in your in-house role. Come to this unrivaled event to gain valuable insights from experienced in-house counsel, earn CLE/CPD credits (including ethics credits) and build relationships and expand your network of peers. Register at [acc.com/ccu](http://acc.com/ccu).

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# 2019 ACC Board of Directors



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**PAST PRESIDENTS:**

Wes Sharples (2017) Monica Trollinger (2016) Kathy Yates (2015) Rich Reynolds (2014) Mike Gibbs (2013) Dan Lopez (2012) Kelli Cubeta (2011), Ingrid Etienne (2010), Kay L. Grimes (2009), Diane Hirsch (2008), Reagan S. McCoy (2007), Lee Cusenbary (2006), Michael B. Clark (2005), Mary Brennan Stich (2004), Linda Drozd (2003), Todd Silberman (2002), Becky Rainey (2001), Richard Reed (2000), Carol Morrow (1999), Jerry King (1998), Stan McCormick (1997), Bruce Clements (1996), Merrie Cavanaugh (1995)

## ACColades

Have you received a promotion lately? Changed jobs? Do you know of someone who is new to in-house or who deserves a little recognition for a job well done? Please email us at [southcentraltx@accglobal.com](mailto:southcentraltx@accglobal.com) with your "ACColades" tips.

Congratulations to **Stephanie Hall** of Valero on her promotion to Vice President-Litigation!

## ACC Running Club- "Team Accelerate" News

The ACC Running Club is in the process of planning some great runs for this year. If you would like to be included on the running club's email list and receive notices of events, please contact one of our Team ACCelerate club chairs, Javier Aranda at [javier.aranda@usaa.com](mailto:javier.aranda@usaa.com) or Adam Aldrete at [aalldrete@cpsenergy.com](mailto:aalldrete@cpsenergy.com).



## Don't Miss!

Our 2019 monthly luncheons will take place at **The Quarry Golf Course!**



444 East Basse Road, San Antonio, 78209

The cost to attend the luncheons is \$15.00 for members and \$25.00 for non-member guests. (In-house counsel and sponsoring firm only, please.) Check out our [Chapter web page](#) for our current calendar of events and registration information.

No other professional organization in San Antonio offers better CLE programs at a more affordable price that is specifically geared to meeting the needs and issues of in-house counsel.

## 2019 ACC Luncheon Dates

**June 12**

June Luncheon  
Sustainable Compliance with  
Privacy & Data Security Regulations,  
sponsored by Jordan Lawrence

**July 10**

July Luncheon

**August 14**

August Luncheon  
Supreme Court Update, Sponsored  
by Kilpatrick Townsend

**September 11**

September Luncheon

**October 9**

October Luncheon  
Labor & Employment Topic,  
sponsored by Ogletree Deakins

**November 13**

November Luncheon

**December 11**

December Luncheon

*For more information, or to register for any of these events, contact Amber Clark at [southcentraltx@accglobal.com](mailto:southcentraltx@accglobal.com)*

## More Upcoming Events:



BECAUSE

*happy hour*

IS THE BEST HOUR

**AUGUST 20, 2019**

**SOUTHERLEIGH FINE FOOD & BREWING**

136 E. Grayson St. #120, San Antonio, TX 78215

**5 - 7PM**

**RSVP: [RSVP@legility.com](mailto:RSVP@legility.com)**

Spouses/Significant Others Welcome

SPONSORED BY:

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**ACC** Association of  
Corporate Counsel  
— SOUTH/CENTRAL TEXAS —

**ACC Ladies, you are invited to join us at our next ACC  
Women's Interest & Networking Group event:**

# **LET GO OF THE JUNK** *and shake your trunk!*

**NEW DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2019**  
**5:30 -7:30PM**

**Offices of Begum Pelaez-Prada**  
**Finesilver Building**  
**816 Camaron, Suite 2.20,**  
**San Antonio, Texas 78212**

Join us for a relaxed night of fun hosted by the ladies from [Begum Pelaez-Prada](#). We will start with snacks and libations and then listen to a brief motivational speech about letting loose and getting out of our comfort zone. Following the presentation, there be an optional, informal dance lesson on the patio. Feel free to bring some comfy clothes to change into or stay in your work attire for this low-key lesson!

David LaHood will be our motivational speaker and dance instructor. She is known for her ability to inspire and motivate people and for getting them to shake their groove thing! She teaches Zumba at Lifetime Fitness and several other gyms in San Antonio. She has also done large fundraising events for CRIT USA and other organizations.

Come learn how free your mind from any junk caused by unnecessary pressures and insecurities (and how to shake the junk in your trunk!).

***Sponsored by:***



**ACC**  
**WIN (Women's**  
**Interest &**  
**Networking)**  
**Group**

**LET GO OF THE JUNK**  
***and shake your trunk!***

**June 20, 2019**  
**5:30pm-7:30pm**

***RSVP:***

[sasha@bp-plaw.com](mailto:sasha@bp-plaw.com)



# ILLEGALLY

OCTOBER 23 AT 3  
OCTOBER 24 AT 7

# BLONDE

CHARLINE MCCOMBS EMPIRE THEATRE  
TICKETS ON SALE IN JUNE AT  
ETHICSFOLLIES.COM

"OH MY GOD YOU GUYS!  
SAVE THE DATE!"



## Past Events

### February Luncheon

with Cubeta Law Group



### February Luncheon

Brenna Nava receiving service award around from President Zandra Pulis



### February Oil and Gas Group Event

with AZA Law

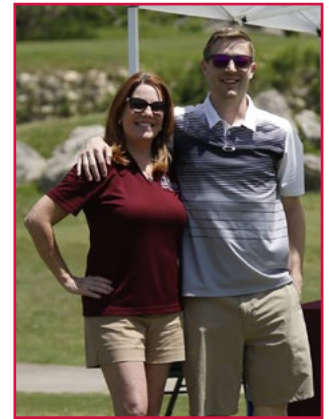


### Sunday Funday





# ACC Golf Tournament





## Family Night with the Missions



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elaborate theatrical production and earning ethics credit yield such incredible benefits for our community? It seems our chapter has found the “secret sauce” for doing just that! In fact, since the inaugural Ethics Follies in 2009, ACC has contributed almost \$230,000 to the CJP!

As summer draws near, I encourage you to seek out ways to keep helping our community. Find ways to volunteer, alone or with your families or co-workers. Last year, we sorted food at the San Antonio Food Bank. Be on the lookout for a similar opportunity to participate with

your entire family in a service project later this summer. Hope to see you there and thank you for all that you do to make San Antonio an incredible place to live and work!

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### Drive Success with Business Education for In-house Counsel

To become a trusted advisor for business executives, it's imperative for in-house counsel to understand the business operations of your company. Attend business education courses offered by ACC and the Boston University Questrom School of Business to learn critical business disciplines and earn valuable CLE credits:

- Mini MBA for In-house Counsel, June 3-5, September 9-11, and November 4-6

- Finance and Accounting for In-house Counsel, September 23-25
- Project Management for in-house Law Department, November 13-14

Learn more and register at [acc.com/BU](http://acc.com/BU).

### Connect Your Circles... Expand Your Reach!

When your in-house peers join ACC, you create opportunities to engage with colleagues, expand your professional network, and share ideas and expertise. Now through 30 September, you are

automatically entered into a us \$100 monthly drawing when you recruit a new member. As an added bonus, your new recruit is automatically entered into a separate drawing, too! Learn more at [acc.com/MemberConnect](http://acc.com/MemberConnect).

## Chapter Leadership

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**ACC** Association of  
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## Welcome New Members!

### Micha Hall-Russell

Whataburger  
Restaurants, LLC

### Jesus Torres

Whataburger  
Restaurants, LLC

### Kayla Tanner

Zachry Group

### Jill Vogel

Life Healthcare Partners

## Is Your ACC Member Profile Up-To-Date?

You may edit/update your contact or personal information, etc. by logging into [www.acc.com](http://www.acc.com) and selecting "My ACC." Then click on "My Contact or My Personal Info." Scroll to the bottom of your profile and click on "Edit My Info." It's that easy!

## Job Openings?

Is your company looking to fill an in-house position? Do you know about a current in-house job opening? If so, please let us know so that we can advertise the position to our membership.

Send an email to our Chapter Executive Director at [southcentraltx@accglobal.com](mailto:southcentraltx@accglobal.com).

Lewis Energy is seeking to fill an  
[in-house attorney position](#)

Southwest Research Institute has a job opening  
for [Specialist- Sr. Specialist- Contracts](#)

## Let Us Know...



- What CLE presentation topics interest you?
- How can we help you make the most out of your ACC membership?
- Would you like to serve on a committee?
- Are we meeting your needs?
- Do you know someone interested in joining?
- Do you have some Corporate Counsel related news you'd like to share?

- Do you know someone who would be interested in becoming a speaker and/or sponsor?
- Would you like to join or lead one of our shared interest groups (running, theatre, dinner, etc.)?

Email your comments to [southcentraltx@accglobal.com](mailto:southcentraltx@accglobal.com).

## ACC South/Central Texas!

Chapter Web Page: [www.acc.com/chapters/sanant/](http://www.acc.com/chapters/sanant/)

Ethics Follies Web Page: [www.ethicsfollies.com](http://www.ethicsfollies.com)

Look for us on Facebook and  
[https://twitter.com/#!/ACC\\_SCTX](https://twitter.com/#!/ACC_SCTX)

