



MARITIME LAW ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

Marine Insurance & General Average Committee

Speaker Profiles

Joseph G. Grasso

Joe Grasso is a partner in Wiggin and Dana's Litigation Department and co-chair of its Insurance Practice Group. Joe's work includes insurance coverage, defense and subrogation, drafting of policy wordings and monitoring of claims. He has also worked in the general counsel's office of one of the premier syndicates at Lloyd's of London.

Joe has chaired the Standing Committee on Marine Insurance of the Comité Maritime International since 2014. Joe is also the current Chairman of the Association of Average Adjusters of the United States and Canada, and an associate member of the UK Association. He is also a member of the Salvage Forum of the International Union of Marine Insurance.

Joe is a longstanding member of the U.S. Maritime Law Association (past Director and past chair of the Committee on Marine Insurance and General Average). In 2020, he was approved as a NATO civil maritime expert in the field of insurance and will be providing advice and assistance on war risk insurance and related issues to the NATO Transport Group (Ocean Shipping). Joe also sits as counsel to the American Institute of Marine Underwriters and the Inland Marine Underwriters Association.

Katharina Kraatz-Dunkel

Katharina Kraatz-Dunkel represents many of the world's largest insurers in (re)insurance coverage, litigation, and dispute resolution, as well as complex commercial litigation and insurance defense. Her practice extends globally and covers multiple industries. In addition to her practice in the U.S., she is an English solicitor, and fully qualified German lawyer. Katharina is a native German speaker.

Katharina began her career in the London insurance market, advising insurers and reinsurers in coverage, liability defense, and subrogation matters, as well as international arbitrations and mediations originating in common law and civil law jurisdictions, often involving cross-border elements.

Prior to joining Zelle, LLP, Katharina was a law clerk for the Honorable William G. Young at the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

Capt. John Lowe

Captain John Lowe is the current President of the Society of Accredited Marine Surveyors (“SAMS”) and has served in leadership roles for the organization for over a decade. SAMS provides training and accreditation for professional marine surveyors who have accumulated experience in the profession and have proven the technical skills necessary to earn SAMS accreditation.

In addition to his role as President of SAMS, Captain Lowe is the principal marine surveyor of Lowe’s Marine Survey. He routinely performs pre-purchase, appraisal, insurance, damage assessments, and financial surveys on yachts, recreational craft, and small commercial vessels. Captain Lowe surveys approximately 175 vessels annually. He has also acted as a project manager for new vessel construction and re-fit projects. Naturally, Captain Lowe is an Accredited Marine Surveyor by SAMS, he is also a graduate of the Chapman’s School of Seamanship, and holds a 100-Ton USCG Master’s License.

Jonathan S. Spencer

Jonathan S. Spencer is an average adjuster and the principal of The Spencer Company, a marine claims consultancy in New York, USA. He holds an M.A. in Modern Languages (Spanish and French) from Oxford University, England. He has lived in New York since 1978 and was employed by a leading, international average adjusting company then by a marine insurer before starting the current business in 1998. He is a Full Member, by examination, of the Association of Average Adjusters of the United States and Canada, and a past chair and current member of its Board of Directors; a Member, and past President, of the Association Mondiale de Dispatcheurs (International Association of Average Adjusters); an Adjunct Member and past director of the Maritime Law Association of the United States and a past chair of its standing committee on Marine Insurance and General Average; a member of the standing committees on General Average and on Marine Insurance of the Comité Maritime International (CMI); a member of the Hull Technical Committee of the Asociación Latinoamericana de Suscriptores Marítimos (ALSUM); and an adjunct member of the Admiralty Committee of the City Bar Association of New York. He was a member of the US delegation at the CMI Sydney conference where the 1994 York Antwerp Rules for the Adjustment of General Average were adopted; an observer on behalf of the Association of Average Adjusters of the United States at the CMI Vancouver conference adopting the 2004 York Antwerp Rules and US representative on the CMI International Working Group preparing for the adoption at the CMI conference in New York of the 2016 York Antwerp Rules. In the course of his daily business, Jonathan specializes in the insurance aspects of marine casualty management, resolves property and liability claims on all classes of vessels, cargoes and offshore installations and acts as an expert witness in matters related to general average and marine insurance claim settling practice.