

# NAVIGATING A NEW ERA IN COLLEGE SPORTS



Hosted by the **Big 12 Conference Law Deans**

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**Wednesday, March 25, 2026**

2:00-5:00 PM Central Time

*via Zoom*

*Approved for 3.0 hours of Texas MCLE credit*

# Agenda

## **2:00 PM | Welcome and Overview**

### **Leonard M. Baynes**

Dean, Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished Chair  
Professor of Law  
University of Houston Law Center

## **2:12-3:20 PM | Panel 1: The University's Perspective**

### **Moderator: Stacy L. Leeds**

Willard H. Pedrick Dean  
Regents and Foundation Professor of Law  
Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law  
Arizona State University  
President-Elect, The University of Tulsa

### **Dona Cornell**

Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs  
General Counsel  
University of Houston

### **Christopher Holmes**

General Counsel  
Chief Legal Officer  
Corporate Secretary  
Baylor University

### **Robert W. Payne**

Deputy General Counsel  
The University of Utah

# Agenda

## 3:20-4:10 PM | **Panel 2: The Athlete's Perspective**

### **Moderator: Lolita Buckner Inniss**

Dean and Provost's Professor of Law  
University of Colorado Law School

### **Brian Michael Cooper**

Of Counsel, Greenberg Traurig  
Adjunct Professor, University of Houston Law Center  
Former President, Houston Roughnecks (XFL)  
Former President & COO, American Flag Football League  
Former President, RGV Vipers

### **Marc Edelman**

Professor of Law  
Zicklin School of Business (Baruch College, CUNY)  
Director of Sports Ethics  
Robert Zicklin Center for Corporate Integrity  
Adjunct Professor, Fordham University School of Law

## 4:10-5:00 PM | **Panel 3: The Academic Perspective on Collegiate Sports and Evolving Economic and Societal Norms**

### **Moderator: Elizabeth Kronk Warner**

Jefferson B. & Rita E. Fordham Presidential Dean  
Professor of Law  
S.J. Quinney College of Law  
The University of Utah

### **Michael McCann**

Associate Dean for Intellectual Life  
Director of the Sports and Entertainment Law Institute  
Professor of Law  
University of New Hampshire  
Franklin Pierce School of Law

### **Maureen Arellano Weston**

Professor of Law  
Director of the Entertainment, Media & Sports  
Dispute Resolution Project  
Pepperdine University  
Caruso School of Law

# BIOGRAPHIES



## **LEONARD M. BAYNES**

*Dean, Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished Chair  
Professor of Law  
University of Houston Law Center*

Leonard M. Baynes, currently the longest serving law dean in Texas, made history in 2014 with his appointment as the first dean of African descent at the University of Houston Law Center.

During his deanship, the UH Law Center's admission credentials have steadily increased — the median LSAT score climbed from 159 to 163 and the median GPA grew from 3.47 to 3.79, with over 20% of the students in the 2025 entering class from first-generation college backgrounds and more than 83% from first-generation law school backgrounds. Under Dean Baynes's leadership, the Law Center completed the \$93 million world-class John M. O'Quinn Law Building in 2022 and expanded pathways to legal education through innovative programs including the 3-3 Program with UH Honors College, the UH Law Express Program, and the award-winning Pre-Law Pipeline Programs, which prepare first-generation, economically challenged students for the competitive law school admissions process.

A prolific scholar, Dean Baynes co-authored the casebook "Telecommunications Law: Convergence and Competition" and has published over 25 law review articles and book chapters. He has received numerous honors, including recognition as one of the nation's 100 most influential lawyers of color, the Paul Robeson Award from his alma mater Columbia Law School, and the Clyde Ferguson Award from the Association of American Law Schools. He is serving a three-year term on the AALS' Executive Committee.

# BIOGRAPHIES



## **BRIAN MICHAEL COOPER**

*Of Counsel, Greenberg Traurig  
Adjunct Professor, University of Houston Law Center  
Former President, Houston Roughnecks (XFL)  
Former President & COO, American Flag Football League  
Former President, RGV Vipers*

Brian Michael Cooper practices in the areas of mergers and acquisitions, private equity, venture capital, sports law, media law, and antitrust. He represents clients across various industries, including sports, media, logistics, health care, transportation, technology, finance, and energy.

Brian's sports experience includes advising on sports team investments, team operations, league operations, player, coach, and executive contracts, athlete endorsements, facility naming rights, sponsorships, apparel licensing, ticketing arrangements, facility leases, content distribution, and media rights. His work extends to professional sports leagues, professional sports teams, investors, corporate sponsors, and collegiate athletics.

Brian has held executive positions in professional sports, including serving as president and chief operating officer of the American Flag Football League, where he oversaw league operations, ticket sales, marketing, media relations, and corporate partnerships. As president of the Houston Roughnecks in the XFL, he managed business operations including ticket sales, corporate partnerships, stadium and practice facility leases, content and media production, marketing, and gameday operations. Brian also served as president of the RGV Vipers in the NBA G League, where he negotiated the first single-affiliation NBA-NBA G-League hybrid agreement with the NBA Houston Rockets.

Previously, Brian worked as director of sports programming at DISH Network, managing relationships with professional sports leagues, college conferences, and regional sports networks. He also served as senior associate athletic director at Rice University, overseeing financial operations and administrative matters for the athletics department.

# BIOGRAPHIES



## **DONA CORNELL**

*Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs*

*General Counsel*

*University of Houston*

Dona Hamilton Cornell became vice chancellor for legal affairs and general counsel for the University of Houston System and vice president for legal affairs and general counsel for the University of Houston in 2002. In these roles, she is responsible for legal services in all areas including contracts and conveyances, employment law, constitutional law, real estate, intellectual property, federal research, tax, gift matters, governance, open government issues and other matters applicable to higher education law including Title IX. She also has served as an adjunct professor at the University of Houston. Prior to her appointment, she served as deputy chief of the General Litigation Division for the Texas Attorney General's office, was a partner in an Austin-based law firm and was also an Assistant Attorney General from 1987-1992.

Cornell earned her undergraduate and law degrees from The University of Texas at Austin. Prior to receiving her law degree, she served as a committee clerk and legislative aide in the Texas Legislature.

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## **MARC EDELMAN**

*Professor of Law*

*Zicklin School of Business (Baruch College, CUNY)*

*Director of Sports Ethics*

*Robert Zicklin Center for Corporate Integrity*

*Adjunct Professor, Fordham University School of Law*

Marc Edelman is a tenured Professor of Law at the Zicklin School of Business, Baruch College, City University of New York, the Director of Sports Ethics at the Robert Zicklin Center for Corporate Integrity, and the longstanding professor of Law & Professional Sports at Fordham Law School.

He has published more than 75 law journal articles, presented research at upwards of 200 academic conferences, and has testified in front of multiple government agencies. A recent Fulbright U.S. Scholar, Professor Edelman is cited by both courts and the media on topics including how the Sherman Act applies to professional sports leagues, how gaming laws apply to fantasy sports contests, and how both labor laws and antitrust laws apply within the college sports industry.

In July 2019, Professor Edelman testified before the California state legislature in favor of the Fair Pay to Play Act – the act that first enabled college athletes to earn money from licensing the rights to their names, images and likenesses. In December 2023, he was retained as an advisor to the states of New York and Ohio in the antitrust litigation *Ohio v. NCAA*, which has led to greater freedom of movement for college athletes.

# BIOGRAPHIES



## **CHRISTOPHER HOLMES**

*General Counsel  
Chief Legal Officer  
Corporate Secretary  
Baylor University*

Christopher W. Holmes became general counsel for Baylor University in 2016 after having served in the Office of General Counsel since 2002. Prior to coming to Baylor, he was general counsel at Dallas Baptist University and practiced law as a trial attorney with Cowles and Thompson, P.C., in Dallas, Texas.

Holmes earned a BA in political science from Baylor in 1988. He earned a law degree, with honors, from the University of Texas at Austin in 1991.

Holmes has served in a number of leadership positions in higher education. He served on the board of directors of the National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA) from 2014 to 2017. He has chaired several committees for NACUA, including the committee on legal education. In 2011, Mr. Holmes received NACUA's First Decade Award, which recognizes members who have provided outstanding service to NACUA and to the practice of higher education law during their first ten years of service in higher education.

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## **LOLITA BUCKNER INNISS**

*Dean and Provost's Professor of Law  
University of Colorado Law School*

Lolita Buckner Inniss is a distinguished academic leader, scholar, and public servant. She currently serves as the 17th dean of the University of Colorado Law School and holds the title of Provost's Professor of Law. She is also an affiliate of the Center for African & African American Studies. As Dean, she has worked to advance access and equity for students, met critical instructional needs through the recruitment of one of the most accomplished and largest cohorts of faculty in the school's history, and overseen one of the largest clinical education gifts ever received by the institution.

Dean Inniss is a widely respected legal scholar with a distinguished national and international reputation. She is an elected member of the American Law Institute, an honor that reflects her standing among the nation's most accomplished legal professionals and scholars. Her prolific body of work includes scores of articles and essays, as well as the acclaimed legal history book *The Princeton Fugitive Slave: The Trials of James Collins Johnson* (Fordham University Press, 2020).

# BIOGRAPHIES



## **STACY L. LEEDS**

*Willard H. Pedrick Dean  
Regents and Foundation Professor of Law  
Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law  
Arizona State University  
President-Elect, The University of Tulsa*

Stacy Leeds is an experienced leader in law, higher education, economic development and conflict resolution. She is the 9th dean of the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University, one of the nation's largest and most innovative law schools.

In addition to serving as dean of two law schools (Arizona State and Arkansas), she was the inaugural Vice Chancellor for Economic Development at the University of Arkansas, where she expanded the university's intellectual property portfolio and substantially increased funding for faculty inventors and startups.

For over 25 years, Dean Leeds has been a professor and administrator at major research universities, including two AAU institutions. She is a top national scholar, public intellectual, and educator on Indigenous Law and Policy topics, with broad teaching experience that includes property law, energy and natural resources, leadership, ethics, business, and economic development courses for undergraduate, graduate, professional and executive education students. She is an elected member of the American Philosophical Society and the American Law Institute and a past recipient of the American Bar Association's Spirit of Excellence Award.

Deeply committed to community and public service at the national and local levels, she is a former Cherokee Nation Supreme Court Justice and serves as an advisor, board member and trustee for a variety of public and private entities. She is a former NCAA student-athlete and a lifelong sports enthusiast.

# BIOGRAPHIES



## **MICHAEL McCANN**

*Associate Dean for Intellectual Life  
Director of the Sports and Entertainment Law Institute  
Professor of Law  
University of New Hampshire  
Franklin Pierce School of Law*

Professor Michael McCann is the Associate Dean for Intellectual Life and Founding Director of the Sports and Entertainment Law Institute at the University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law. McCann also teaches at Harvard Law School as a Visiting Professor of Law. He has also taught a Sports Law Analytics reading group at Yale Law School.

In 2025, McCann won the Association of American Law Schools' Law and Sports Section Award, a prestigious award honoring an individual who has made a substantial and significant contribution to scholarship, teaching and service in the field of sports law. In 2023, McCann delivered the Keynote Address at the Australian and New Zealand Sports Law Association's 32nd Annual Conference in Melbourne, Australia. The conference is one of the largest gatherings of sports attorneys in the world.

McCann has been an innovator in legal education, creating the first law school course on Name, Image and Likeness, producing an IP and antitrust law course at UFC, designing first-of-their-kind online programs, and building the much-publicized "Deflategate" course.

In 2021, McCann testified before the U.S. Senate in a hearing that included NCAA president Mark Emmert and centered on NIL. He is a best-selling author and an accomplished legal scholar. He and former NBA player Ed O'Bannon co-authored "Court Justice: The Inside Story of My Battle Against the NCAA" (Diversion, 2018). McCann is the Editor of "The Oxford Handbook of American Sports Law" (Oxford University Press). The book is assigned in sports law courses.

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## **ROBERT W. PAYNE**

*Deputy General Counsel  
The University of Utah*

Robert W. Payne is the deputy general counsel at the University of Utah. Prior to joining the general counsel's office, Payne practiced commercial litigation for 13 years with Van Cott, Bagley, Cornwall & McCarthy and then Snell & Wilmer LLP. Payne graduated from the University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law in 1989, and clerked for the Honorable Gregory K. Orme on the Utah Court of Appeals.

# BIOGRAPHIES



## **ELIZABETH KRONK WARNER**

*Jefferson B. & Rita E. Fordham Presidential Dean*

*Professor of Law*

*S.J. Quinney College of Law*

*The University of Utah*

Elizabeth Kronk Warner is the Jefferson B. & Rita E. Fordham Presidential Dean and Professor of Law at the S.J. Quinney College of Law at the University of Utah. Dean Kronk Warner is a nationally recognized expert in the intersection of Environmental and Indian law. She has taught courses in Property, Indian, Environmental and Natural Resources Law, and supervised the Tribal Judicial Support Clinic at the University of Kansas School of Law. She also teaches and coaches several moot court competition teams. She has received several teaching excellence awards, co-authored several books on environmental issues and Native Americans, and has over 40 articles and book chapters to her credit.

Dean Kronk Warner, a citizen of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, served as an appellate judge for the Tribe and as a district judge for the Prairie Band Potawatomi Tribe. She actively engages in activities related to legal education and the profession nationally. She currently serves as chair of the AALS Deans Steering Committee, chair of the AALS Membership Review Committee, and co-chaired the 2023 ABA New Deans Workshop. As dean, she also has the privilege of serving as an ex officio member of the Utah Bar Commission. She previously was an active member of the Federal Bar Association, serving on its national Board of Directors. In 2014, she received the Federal Bar Association President's Award for leadership and extraordinary service, commitment, and guidance to the Federal Bar Association and its members. She holds a J.D. from the University of Michigan, a B.S. from Cornell University, and also studied at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

# BIOGRAPHIES



## MAUREEN ARELLANO WESTON

*Professor of Law*

*Director of the Entertainment, Media & Sports*

*Dispute Resolution Project*

*Pepperdine University*

*Caruso School of Law*

Maureen Weston is Professor of Law at Pepperdine University Caruso School of Law and Director of the Entertainment, Media & Sports Dispute Resolution Project.

She received her JD from the University of Colorado, and BA in Economics/Political Science at the University of Denver. Professor Weston teaches courses on arbitration, mediation, negotiation, international dispute resolution, legal ethics, and U.S. and international sports law. She serves as Faculty Advisor to the Sports & Entertainment Law Society and *Dispute Resolution Law Journal*, and as coach for ICC Mediation Advocacy and Sports & Entertainment Law Negotiation competitions. Weston has taught law at the University of Oklahoma, University of Colorado, University of Las Vegas Nevada, Hamline, and in Oxford, England.

Prior to teaching, Weston practiced law with Holme Roberts & Owen and Faegre & Benson in Colorado. She is actively involved in programs furthering opportunities for students to gain experience in negotiation, mediation and arbitration. Her committee service includes the ABA, Law School Division, Arbitration Competition, AALS Sports Law Executive Committee, and former chair of the ABA Dispute Resolution Education Committee and Representation in Mediation Competition. She is a member on the Boards of Directors at the University of Colorado School of Law Alumni Board, the National Sports Law Institute at Marquette School of Law, Malibu Little League, and Editorial Board of LawInSport. A frequent speaker at conferences, Weston is co-author of casebooks on sports law and arbitration and has written numerous articles in the area of Olympic and International Sports Arbitration, disability law, sports law, and dispute resolution.

**Hosted by:**

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