



September 07, 2022

NAME: Gary L. Gassman

NEW JOB TITLE: Chicago-based co-vice chair, global insurance, Cozen O'Connor P.C.

PREVIOUS POSITION: Chicago-based co-chair, professional liability practice, global insurance, Cozen O'Connor P.C. (retained position)

INDUSTRY OUTLOOK: I believe the insurance industry will experience growth going forward. We entered 2022 in a hard market, but the market has changed this year and flattened. A lot of new capacity entered the market in the last couple of years. Economic and social inflation continue to affect claims volume and pricing somewhat. The pandemic still remains an issue, but as litigation ramps up, companies start operating at pre-pandemic levels again, and we see growth in various industries that was dormant for a couple of years, and the need for insurance will rise. It will be interesting to gauge the impact of the newly signed Inflation Reduction Act on the legal and insurance industries. Economic relief should spur growth in new and developing areas and markets and the need for expanding insurance products. Those areas will generate claims resulting in the need for the assistance of outside coverage counsel. And so the cycle continues.

GOALS FOR NEW POSITION: As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I want to continue to be an outspoken advocate for living personal truth and help to expand leadership opportunities for lawyers from marginalized and diverse communities at both Cozen O'Connor and in the American Bar Association Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section (TIPS). I am fortunate to be at a law firm and part of a bar organization that are extremely supportive of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and my passion in that space. In TIPS, DE&I has always been and continues to be at the organization's core. I will continue the goals of expanding the diversity of our membership and leadership and giving back to our members and communities. In both roles, I hope to ensure that the firm and TIPS are safe places for people to speak their own truths and be heard, and to help younger lawyers and other professionals navigate law firm and bar association politics issues while being authentic and true to themselves.

CHALLENGES FACING THE INDUSTRY: As a coverage lawyer, I counsel insurance clients about coverage, litigation, claim exposure and resolution, and litigate coverage issues when needed. In the insurance market, there is a lot of capacity and competition. Major challenges include changing market conditions, economic and social inflation, ESG (environmental, social and governance) issues, litigation costs, pandemic-related issues, cyber-related claims and crimes, rising employment-related claims, to name a few. In both insurance companies and law firms, we face competition for talent at all levels and a hybrid or remote working environment, making recruitment and employee activity monitoring, and data and computer security, more difficult. We also face challenges in the DE&I space. While statistics have improved over the years, law firms and insurance companies still have strides to make at every level, particularly in upper management.

FIRST EXPERIENCE IN THE INDUSTRY JOB MARKET: Early in my career, I was a full-time insurance defense litigator at a small law firm. I was in court every day in Cook County or the collar counties, and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. I regularly wore a suit and tried cases to verdict. At some point in late 1997, an insurance client asked us to provide a couple of coverage opinions under errors & omissions policies

issued to local municipalities. I took on the task and loved it. We started to get more of the same requests, and I was hooked. I soon started job hunting as an insurance coverage lawyer and never looked back.

ADVICE: Listen and learn, and really study insurance policy language. Find a great mentor, ally and champion. Lead with kindness and compassion. Work hard and focus on quality, which should be the benchmark against which all lawyers are judged, regardless of personal characteristics or demographics.

OUTSIDE THE INDUSTRY, A DREAM JOB: I'm a dog lover and always thought being a veterinarian would be rewarding. Running a senior dog rescue program is an idea close to my heart. I had musical theater aspirations years ago, so that remains an interest if I ever stop practicing law.

COLLEGE MAJOR: Sociology. I had a couple great early classes and professors, and that was it. It has served me well in personal interactions, knowing my audience, accepting differences in perspective, and appreciating the struggles and hurdles faced by people with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

LOOKING FORWARD TO: In my new role at Cozen O'Connor, I look forward to connecting and collaborating firm-wide with more lawyers and assisting with mentoring and recruitment efforts. As chair of ABA TIPS, I look forward to a complete bar year of in-person meetings and programs. Being in-person gives us a real opportunity to strategize and develop goals and action plans for the organization and provides more accessibility to people in the cities we visit. I cannot wait to reconnect with TIPS and ABA Young Lawyers Division members in person, and to move forward with our various membership, DE&I and public service initiatives. In both roles, I hope I can continue to make a difference in the lives of the people I encounter, and further elevate and champion people from marginalized communities to ensure that we all reap the benefits of broader and more diverse perspectives at the firm and the bar.

FAVORITE MEAL: My favorite meal is anything I share with my other half, Joe. I'm a good cook, so if we are home, I cook at least five nights each week. When we go out, I love to order chicken parmesan and a nice salad. For dessert, mint chocolate chip ice cream and anything with coconut.

BOOK: There are too many to mention and I love all types – biographies, historical, fiction, self-help. I particularly enjoy biographies of entertainment celebrities who did amazing things most people don't realize, like actress Hedy Lamarr, who helped pioneer signal-hopping technology that ultimately formed the basis for Wi-Fi, GPS and Bluetooth communication systems. "The Hours" is one of my favorite works of fiction. And for history and law, an excellent book most people likely have not read is "Contempt of Court: The Turn Of-The-Century Lynching That Launched 100 Years of Federalism." It profoundly moved me.

HOBBIES: Spending time with our three dogs and watching movies. I always have a book started – finishing is an issue. I try to exercise at least five times per week.

TV SHOW: Of all time ... can I say all the "Law & Order" shows and the original "CSI"? "Euphoria" is riveting. We loved a Netflix show that was canceled after the second season and five seasons were written – "The OA." Right now, we're enjoying "Westworld."

ON A SATURDAY AFTERNOON: Nothing and anything, other than timesheets.