

SPEAKER/PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

Laura Sigaud Hernandez (BA Texas A&M Corpus Christi; JD South Texas College of Law, May, 2002) has been practicing Social Security disability law since 2003 and has spoken before many regional and national audiences of attorneys. She is Board Certified in Social Security Disability Law by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. Laura is a two-time Past President of the Dallas Association of Social Security Attorneys. She is licensed in all four district courts of Texas and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

John Driskill (MBA FWIW, Baylor University; JD, South Texas College of Law, May, 1992; BSBA, Univ. of Missouri). John is currently serving as NOSSCR's Vice-President. He has been representing Social Security Disability claimants since 1993 and is Board-Certified by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. John has made multiple presentations and speeches at the local, regional, and national levels. He is admitted in all four U.S. District Courts of Texas, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court.



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The Honorable Joan Parks Saunders joined the Social Security Administration/Office of Hearings Operations (SSA/OHO) in September 1997 as an Administrative Law Judge in the Dallas North Hearing Office. She was appointed as the Hearing Office Chief Administrative Law Judge of the Dallas North Hearing Office in May 2000. In March 2003, she began her current position as Region VI Regional Chief ALJ. Her previous government experience includes that of Senior Litigation Attorney for the United States Equal Opportunity Commission and as Deputy Office Chief and Senior Attorney for the Legal Division Professional Liability Section of the FDIC, both in Dallas, TX.

Judge Parks Saunders' prior non-Federal work includes that as Managing Attorney for West Texas Legal Services, Managing Attorney for the United Auto Workers, General Motors Legal Services in Oklahoma City; Hearing Officer for the Oil and Gas Division of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission; and Staff Attorney with Legal Aid of Western Oklahoma. Judge Parks Saunders graduated summa cum laude from North Carolina Central University and received her law degree from The Ohio State University.

Nancy J. Altman (10/17 - 09/23) Appointed by the House on September 26, 2017.



Nancy J. Altman has a forty-year background in the areas of Social Security and private pensions. She is President of Social Security Works and Chair of the Strengthen Social Security coalition. She is the author of *The Battle for Social Security: From FDR's Vision to Bush's Gamble* (John Wiley & Sons, 2005), and co-author of *Social Security Works! Why Social Security Isn't Going Broke and How Expanding It Will Help Us All* (The New Press, 2015).

(1983 to 1989) Ms. Altman was on the faculty of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and taught courses on private pensions and Social Security at the Harvard Law School. In 1982, she was Alan Greenspan's assistant in his position as chairman of the bipartisan commission that developed the 1983 Social Security amendments.

(1977 to 1981) Ms. Altman was a legislative assistant to Senator John C. Danforth (R-Mo.) and advised the Senator with respect to Social Security issues.

(1974 to 1977) As a tax lawyer with Covington & Burling, Ms. Altman handled a variety of private pension matters. Ms. Altman chairs the Board of Directors of the Pension Rights Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection of beneficiary rights. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Alliance for Retired Americans Educational Fund and the Economic Opportunity Institute.

In the mid-1980's, Ms. Altman was on the organizing committee and the first Board of Directors of the National Academy of Social Insurance. Ms. Altman has an A.B. from Harvard University and a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Current term of office: October 2017 to September 2023.

Simone Pereira Cain is an Assistant Regional Counsel in the Social Security Administration's Office of the General Counsel (OGC) in the Dallas Regional Office. Mrs. Cain's position with OGC commenced in 2001, and prior to that, she worked as an attorney for the Georgia Legal Services Program. Mrs. Cain began handling representative conduct cases in 2008. In July 2010, Mrs. Cain received a Regional Commissioner's Citation in recognition of her high quality work in investigating allegations of representative misconduct. She is currently the Team Leader for the Dallas Regional Office's Representative Sanctions Team, which consists of one supervisor/coach and nine attorneys that investigate alleged violations of the Rules of Conduct and Standards of Responsibilities for Representatives. This is Mrs. Cain's second time attending the FOSSCR Conference. In 2015, she was part of panel discussion on Representative Conduct.

Angeline Reese is an Assistant Regional Counsel in the Social Security Administration's Office of the General Counsel (OGC) in the Dallas Regional Office. Mrs. Reese's position with OGC commenced in 1998, and prior to that, she worked as an attorney for the Texas Attorney General's Office. She is a member of the Dallas Regional Office's Representative Sanction Team, and is a litigation strategy lead on the Employment and Labor Team.



Stacy Cloyd (B.A. Smith College; MA & JD University of Michigan) has a varied professional career working in a nonprofit legal clinic for Bread for the City at an (unrelated) anti-hunger policy organization called Bread for the World. She has been with NOSSCR since 2014 where she develops legislative agendas, priorities, and implements strategies to get favorable legislation enacted in Congress by working closely with Members of Congress and staffs. Stacy will provide an update on recent changes within the Social Security Administration and discuss any pending actions within the executive and legislative branches. Stacy will also cover any major legislative proposals specifically targeted at claimants' representatives as well as the SSI and SSDI programs themselves. There will be a discussion of the current fiscal year's budget and progress towards a Fiscal Year 2019 spending plan will also be discussed. Stacy will provide updates from SSA's headquarters in Woodlawn, Maryland, including the Agency's progress on reducing the hearings-level backlog, any new initiatives, an overview of any recent proposed or finalized regulations, and details about new upper-level agency staff. Lastly, updates from other agencies (OPM, OBM, Administrative Conference, Social Security Advisory Board. Etc.), think tanks, and advocacy groups will be provided.

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Mike Kelly (BBA University of Texas; JD Texas Tech) has been handling Social Security disability cases for over 20 years and has spoken before many regional and national attorney CLE audiences. He has published cases in the area of disability law within the Fifth Circuit and is Board Certified in Social Security Disability Law by the National Board of Trial Advocacy.

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Bill Fouche (JD Baylor University) has focused on appellate practice primarily in the areas of civil rights and Social Security disability law. He has been practicing in Texas since 1986 and has spoken before many regional audiences about appellate practices and trending legal arguments. Bill is a federal court brief writer extraordinaire and has written many novel arguments and winning briefs in Social Security matters over the course of his career. He has a sharp eye for subtle, imperfect phrasing by ALJs that can be used to obtain a remand.

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Paul Burkhalter (BA Baylor University; JD New York University) began his career working for the Office of General Counsel for the US Department of H.H.S. handling Social Security disability cases. In 1993 he joined Morgan & Weisbrod, L.L.P. where he has focused on representing Social Security claimants and other disabled individuals. He is Board Certified in Social Security disability law by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. Paul has spoken many times to national and regional audiences of attorneys about disability law.

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VOCATIONAL EXPERTS:

Todd Harden –Mr. Harden has a Bachelor’s of Science in News and Public Affairs from Oklahoma State University (1983), Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling from Stephen F. Austin State University (1984), Certificate in Life Care Planning, Capital University (2015), and Graduate Certificate in Forensic Vocational Rehabilitation from the Univ. of Florida (2016). Mr. Harden has extensive experience serving as a Vocational Expert in social security disability hearings for the Social Security Administration, and as a Rehabilitation Counselor to the U.S. Dept. of Labor/Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs. He is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, Licensed Professional Counselor, Board Certified in Professional Counseling (APA), a member of the International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals, and a member of the American Psychotherapy Association. Since July, 2001- present, Mr. Harden has also been the Owner-President-Vocational and Medical Case Manager for “TopHand, Inc.,” and also has a private practice in Life Care Planning. Mr. Harden utilizes the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Occupational Outlook Handbook, and Texas Workforce Commission employment statistics to identify local employment trends and available jobs. He performs transferable skills analysis and identifies appropriate sedentary and light duty jobs. He also coordinates with physicians to obtain work restrictions and then assists clients with investigation of appropriate employment opportunities.

Tom Irons, Ed.D. –Irons has graduate degrees in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling (M.A.) and Doctoral of Education (Ed.D.) in Special Education/Vocational Rehabilitation Administration from Texas Tech University. Irons has extensive experience in both public/private vocational rehabilitation including practitioner, educator, vocational expert and management. He is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and Licensed Professional Counselor (Texas) and a Professional Member of the International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals.

Jennifer Stone –Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling, Univ. of North Texas (1998); Bachelor of Science, Rehabilitation Services, Univ. of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, School of Allied Health Services (1995). As a Vocational Expert, Stone has extensive experience testifying in Social Security Disability hearings. Since 2007, Stone has worked as a Vocational Consultant, assessing and analyzing vocational statuses to create and implement viable rehabilitation plans, conducting on-site job analysis, facilitating return to work programs, administering and interpreting achievement, interest and aptitude testing, providing job placement services, case management services and performing transferable skills analyses and labor market research. She has worked as a Vocational Case Manager for Concentra Integrated Services and as a Vocational Services Coordinator for United Cerebral Palsy. Stone has vast experience assessing and analyzing medical and vocational status to create and implement services and rehabilitation plans as well as provided job placement services, transferable skills analyses, labor market research, and return-to-work negotiations with employers. Stone was also a Groups Counselor for the “STAR Program” – providing group counseling with parents to address family issues focusing on parenting skills and conflict resolution.



Dr. Dean Aslinia is a Licensed Mental Health Expert and University Professor at SMU in the Department of Counseling and Dispute Resolution. Dr. Dean's educational background includes a bachelor's and master's degree in Psychology from the University of Houston, and a second master's and doctoral degree from Texas A&M University-Commerce in Counselor Education and Supervision. Over the past decade he has been engaged in clinical counseling, assessments, professional trainings, and higher education teaching.

Professionally, Dr. Aslinia has authored several books, including the Clinical Handbook of Counseling, a series of empirical articles and presented at an international level. He is the former President of the Texas Association of Marriage and Family Counselors, and currently serves both on the Board of Directors of the Texas Counseling Association, and Life Path Systems. The latter being the Mental Health Authority for Collin County, TX and he was appointed to this board by the County Commissioner's Court. Dr. Dean currently has a private practice in the Highland Park Area of Dallas and provides Psychological Assessments for Social Security Disability Claimants.

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