



# **Gov. Pritzker Announces Nine Appointments to Labor Board, Upper Illinois River Valley Authority**

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter  
November 26 2019 7:40 PM

SPRINGFIELD - Melissa Hernandez will serve on the Upper Illinois River Valley Development Authority.\* For over 13 years, Hernandez has served as President of the Northern Kane County Chamber of Commerce, after beginning her career as a bookkeeper and office administrator. She has taken several roles to serve her community, including President-Elect and Charter member of Rotary of Carpentersville, Development Chair of the Dundee Township Boys and Girls Club, board member of Consumer Credit Counseling of Northern Illinois and the McNamee Family Foundation, as well as a mentor for the Incubator Program at Dundee Crown High School. Hernandez earned her Bachelor of Science from Kaplan University after attending McHenry County College.

David Sam will serve on the Upper Illinois River Valley Development Authority.\* Sam currently serves as President of Elgin Community College. Previously, he was President of North Harris College in Houston, Texas, and Dean of the Community and Technical College at the University of Akron, Ohio. In addition, he served as Vice President for Faculty and Instruction at Harrisburg Area Community College and as acting Vice President for Academic Affairs at Mott Community College. Sam has held teaching positions at the College of DuPage and Harold Washington College. He earned his Bachelor of Arts from Illinois State University, Master of Arts and Doctorate from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, Juris Doctor from the University of Akron Law School, and an LL.M. at the University of Dundee in the United Kingdom.

Susan Van Weelden will serve on the Upper Illinois River Valley Development Authority.\* Weelden currently serves as a Township Trustee in Elgin after 30 years of service in the education sector. Previously, she served as Dean of Economic

Development and Continuing Education at Elgin Community College, Executive Dean for Community Services at McHenry County College, and Director of Economic Development at Sauk Valley Community College. In addition, Weelden worked as a teacher at St. Mary's School in Dixon and as a substitute teacher for DeKalb Public Schools. She earned her Bachelor of Science and Master of Science from Northern Illinois University.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION COMMISSION

Joseph Amarilio will serve as an Arbitrator on the Workers' Compensation Commission.

\* Amarilio currently works as a partner at Elfenbaum, Evers, Amarilio and Zielinska, representing injured workers and their families. In addition, he has worked as an attorney at Amarilio and Weinstein, Jack Ring and Associates, McKenna, Storer, Rowe, White and Farrug, as well as his own namesake firm. Amarilio also spent time at the Cook County Mandatory Arbitration Program as the Chair Qualified Arbitrator. He is a member of Workers' Injury Law and Advocacy Group, Workers' Compensation Lawyers Association and the Illinois Trial Lawyers' Association. Amarilio earned his Bachelor of Arts from Northwestern University and his Juris Doctor from John Marshall Law School.

Deborah Baker will serve as an Arbitrator on the Workers' Compensation Commission.

\* Baker currently serves as Assistant Deputy Chief Legal Counsel and Ethics Officer for the Illinois Department of Corrections. Previously, she worked at UpRight Law as Litigation and Compliance Counsel, and Goldberg, Weisman and Cairo as an associate attorney. In addition, Baker has served as Assistant Attorney General at the Office of the Illinois Attorney General from 2016 to 2017 and worked for the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission as an administrative appeals staff attorney. She is a member of the Black Woman Lawyers Association, Salt and Light Coalition, Cabrini Green Legal Aid Board of Directors, Chicago Bar Association and Loyola University Chicago School of Law Diversity Council. Baker earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of New Mexico, Master of Arts from Loyola University Chicago, and Juris Doctor from Loyola University.

Adam Hinrichs will serve as an Arbitrator on the Workers' Compensation Commission.

\* Hinrichs spent eight years practicing law and now manages a multi-unit vacation rental property and volunteers at the Genesco Community Center. He most recently served as an equity partner at Elfenbaum, Evers and Amarilio from 2007 to 2014, where he handled every aspect of case management, including appeals and arbitrations with the Workers' Compensation Commission. He previously worked as a contract attorney for Legal People. Hinrichs was a member of the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association and

Workers Compensation Lawyers Association from 2008 to 2014. Hinrichs earned his Bachelor of Arts in economics and management from Beloit College and his Juris Doctor from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Law.

Elaine Llerena will serve as an Arbitrator on the Workers' Compensation Commission.\* Llerena currently works as a staff attorney for Seyfarth Shaw LLP. Previously, she worked as a staff attorney for the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission, associate for Beaulieu Law Offices, law clerk for the City of Chicago and research assistant for the John Marshall Law School. Llerena earned her Bachelor of Science from Florida State University and her Juris Doctor from John Marshall Law School.

William McLaughlin will serve as an Arbitrator on the Workers' Compensation Commission.\* McLaughlin currently works as an attorney for his namesake firm McLaughlin Law Group. Previously, he worked as a staff attorney at the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation, an Assistant State's Attorney at the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and an associate at Delano Law Offices. In addition, McLaughlin is a member of the Southwest, Chicago, Illinois State, South Suburban and Northern District of Illinois Bar Associations. He earned his Bachelor of Arts from St. Xavier College and his Juris Doctor from the University of Nebraska College of Law.

Dennis O'Brien will serve as an Arbitrator on the Workers' Compensation Commission.\* O'Brien currently works as Vice President and Secretary of Livingston, Mueller, O'Brien and Davlin. Previously, he worked as an Assistant State's Attorney for the Felony Division of Lake County, Assistant State's Attorney for Sangamon County, and a reporter for the Capitol Information Bureau. McLaughlin is a member of the Illinois State Bar Association, Sangamon County Bar Association, Leading Lawyers Network, Illinois Industrial Commission Downstate Committee, Lincoln-Douglas American Inn Court and the Board of Trustees for the Springfield Municipal Opera. He earned his Bachelor of Arts from Dominican University and his Juris Doctor from Loyola University Chicago.