



2024 Life in the Balance – Deep South Capital Defense Conference  
 March 5-8, 2024  
 Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino  
 Biloxi, Mississippi



**CONFERENCE AGENDA**

<b>Tuesday, March 5, 2024</b>	
6:00pm-8:00pm <i>Petit Bois</i>	Faculty/ Leadership Dinner
8:00pm-9:00pm <i>Pre-Function Area</i>	Early Conference Registration Check-In

<b>Wednesday, March 6, 2024</b>	
<b>Time</b>	<b>Session Title</b>
7:00am-8:45am <i>Pre-Function Area</i>	Conference Registration
7:00am – 8:15am <i>Grand Ballroom A,B,C</i>	Breakfast Buffet
8:15am-8:30am <i>Grand Ballroom D,E,F</i>	Welcome
8:30am- 9:30am (1hr)	<b>Session One: (ETHICS)</b> <b>Ethical Capital Representation – Why a Guidelines Compliant Approach is Required</b> <a href="#">Emily Olson-Gault</a> , Director and Chief Counsel <i>ABA Death Penalty Representation Project</i>
9:30am – 9:35am	<a href="#">Evaluations</a>
9:35am – 10:35am (1hr)	<b>Session Two:</b> <b>Mitigation is Everywhere: How to Uncover Life-saving Evidence</b> <a href="#">Elizabeth Vartkessian</a> , Ph.D., Executive Director <i>ARC, Inc. (Advancing Real Change)</i>
10:35 – 10:50am	<a href="#">Evaluations</a>
10:50am - 12:05pm (1.25hr)	<b>Session Three:</b> <b>Finding the Client’s Story Through Trauma Informed Interviewing –</b> <a href="#">Megan Leschak</a> , LMSW, <i>Federal Public Defender, Central District of California</i> & <a href="#">Denise M. Smith</a> , LCSW-C <i>Smith Consulting Group, LLC</i>
12:05pm	<a href="#">Evaluations</a>
12:05pm – 1:15pm <i>Grand Ballroom A,B,C</i>	<b>Lunch</b> (included)
1:15PM – 2:45PM (1.50hr)	<b>Session Four:</b> <b>In Unity We Defend: The Role of Teamwork in Capital Trials (Panel Discussion)</b> <a href="#">Sam Dworkin</a> , Mitigation Specialist



2024 Life in the Balance – Deep South Capital Defense Conference  
 March 5-8, 2024  
 Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino  
 Biloxi, Mississippi



**CONFERENCE AGENDA**

<b>Grand Ballroom D,E,F</b>	<p><i>Dworkin Investigations, LLC</i>  <a href="#">Katherine M. Mayer</a>, M.A., CCDI  <i>Mayer Consulting, LLC</i>  <a href="#">Kelsey Rushing</a>, Capital Defender  <i>MS Office of State Public Defender</i>  <a href="#">Lela Hubbard</a>, LMSW - Moderator</p>
2:45pm – 2:50pm	<a href="#">Evaluations</a>
2:50pm-3:50pm (1.00hr)	<p><b>Session Five:</b>  <b>Beyond the Gavel: Nurturing Resilience in Capital Defense Practitioners</b>  <a href="#">Sandi Dawson</a>, Asst. Fed. Defender  <i>Federal Defenders for the Middle District of Alabama</i></p>
3:50pm – 4:00pm	<a href="#">Evaluations</a> and Break
4:00pm – 5:00pm (1.00hr)	<p><b>Session Six:</b>  <b>Capital Defense Chess: Winning Moves in Motion Practice</b>  <a href="#">Danalynn Recer</a>, Director  <i>GRACE (Gulf Region Advocacy Center)</i></p>
5:00pm – 5:05pm	<a href="#">Evaluations</a> and Announcements
5:15pm-7:15pm <b>H2O</b>	Welcome Reception

Thursday, March 7, 2024		
Time	Session Title	
7:00am – 9:00am <b>Grand Ballroom A,B,C</b>	Breakfast Buffet	
9:00am – 9:15am <b>Grand Ballroom D,E,F</b>	<p><b>NASAMS and the Value of Membership</b>            Lyndsay Lewis, Executive Committee            NASAMS</p>	
9:15am-10:15am (1.25hr)	<p><b>Session Seven:</b>  <b>From Facts to Narrative: The Power of Storytelling in Capital Cases</b>  <a href="#">Tonya Maxwell</a>, Mitigation Specialist</p>	
10:15am - 10:30am	<a href="#">Evaluations</a> and Break	
10:30am – 11:30am (1hr) <b>Grand Ballroom D,E,F</b>	<p><b>Session Eight:</b>  <b>Navigating Atkins Claims</b>  <a href="#">Kelsey Rushing</a>, Capital Defender  <a href="#">Monica Lee</a>, LMSW  <i>MS Office of State Public Defender</i></p>	<p>Mitigation Specialists Breakout:  <b>Humanizing Justice: Exploring Remorse and Empathy in Capital Litigation</b>  <a href="#">Eva Buchwald</a>, LCSW  <b>Cat Island Ballroom</b>  <a href="#">Evaluation</a></p>
11:30am-11:45am	<a href="#">Evaluations</a> and Break	
11:45am-1:00pm	Lunch	

### CONFERENCE AGENDA

<b>Grand Ballroom A,B,C</b>		
1:00pm – 2:25pm (1.25hr) <b>Grand Ballroom D,E,F</b>	<b>Session Nine:</b> <b>Using Experts Strategically to Advance Your Defense</b> <a href="#">Kimberly C. Stevens</a> , Senior Attorney <i>Capital Resource Counsel Project</i>	
2:25pm-2:30pm	<a href="#">Evaluations</a>	
2:30 – 3:45pm (1.25hr)	<b>Session Ten:</b> <b>Partnering With Clients on Case Resolution</b> <a href="#">Shannon Keyes – Woodward</a> , LCSW <i>SKW Consulting, LLC</i> and <a href="#">Kristina Leslie</a> , Capital Resource Counsel <i>Capital Resource Counsel Project</i>	
3:45pm – 4:00pm	<a href="#">Evaluations</a> and Break	
4:00pm – 5:00pm (1hr) <b>Grand Ballroom D,E,F</b>	<b>Session Eleven:</b> <b>From Peremptory Challenges to Equal Justice: Discussing the History of Racial Bias in Jury Selection</b> <a href="#">Tucker Carrington</a> , Assoc. Dean for Clinical Programs, Professor of Law & Director <i>George C. Cochran Innocence Project</i>	Mitigation Specialists Breakout: <b>Cultural Compassion: The Vital Role of Mitigation Specialists in Embracing Family and Cultural Dynamics of the Client</b> <a href="#">Cecilia “Cessie” Alfonso</a> , LCSW, ACSW, CSW Founder & President <i>Alfonso Consultants, Inc.</i>  <b>Cat Island Ballroom</b>  <a href="#">Evaluations</a>
5:00pm	<a href="#">Evaluations</a> and Announcements	

Friday, March 8, 2024	
Time	Session Title
7:00am – 8:30am <b>Grand Ballroom A,B,C</b>	Breakfast Buffet
8:30am – 10:15am (1.75hr) <b>Grand Ballroom D,E,FE</b>	<b>Session Twelve:</b> <b>Selecting a Life: A Discussion about Jury Selection in Capital Cases</b> <a href="#">Ed Ungvasky</a> <i>Ungvasky Law, PLLC</i>
10:15am- 10:20am	<a href="#">Evaluations</a>
10:20am – 11:50am (1.50hr)	<b>Session Thirteen:</b> <b>In the Legal Trenches: Lessons from Parkland’s Defense Team</b> <a href="#">Casey Secor</a> , Founder & Senior Staff Attorney



2024 Life in the Balance – Deep South Capital Defense Conference  
March 5-8, 2024  
Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino  
Biloxi, Mississippi



**CONFERENCE AGENDA**

	<a href="#">Kate O'Shea</a> , Mitigation Specialist, <i>Suzerain Capital Defense</i>
11:50am	<a href="#">Evaluations</a> and Closing Announcements