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The American College of Employee Benefits Counsel

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS COUNSEL AND THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA, COLUMBUS SCHOOL OF LAW

are pleased to announce that

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA SCHOOL OF LAW WINS THE NINTH ANNUAL ELLEN A. (NELL) HENNESSY EMPLOYEE BENEFITS MOOT COURT COMPETITION

Named in memory of Nell Hennessy—a fearless advocate for the rights of employee benefit plan participants and retirees—this unique competition promotes and recognizes the finest oral and written advocacy on critical issues in employee benefits appellate litigation.

The ACEBC® and The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, were proud to sponsor and host the ninth annual Ellen A. (Nell) Hennessy Moot Court, held on Friday and Saturday, March 6-7, 2026. Sixteen teams from the following law schools competed:

- Baylor University School of Law
- Brigham Young University Law School
- The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law
- DePaul University College of Law
- Drexel University, Thomas R. Kline School of Law
- The George Washington University Law School
- University of Connecticut School of Law
- University of Nevada Las Vegas William S. Boyd School of Law
- University of Virginia School of Law
- Villanova Charles Widger School of Law
- William & Mary Law School

The teams argued before experienced ERISA practitioners. The final round was judged by: J. Mark Iwry, former Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Treasury; W. Thomas “Tom” Reeder, Jr., former Director for the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation; and the Honorable Phyllis C. Borzi, former Assistant Secretary of the Employee Benefits Security Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor (and longtime friend and colleague of Nell Hennessy).

Teams addressed current topics in employee benefits law through briefs and multiple rounds of oral argument.

After several hard-fought rounds, teams from the University of Virginia and the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law met in the finals. After nearly an hour of argument and intensive questioning by the panel, the University of Virginia School of Law team of Alex Kang and Emily Kopp won the Best Team Award by a nose over the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law team of Sophia Stojanoff and Tia Zghaib.

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The third-place teams included Emma Wallace, Kassy Spears and Charlie Bless from DePaul University College of Law. The fourth-place teams included Hailey Hamilton, Seeun Ahn, and Piper Glass from the University of Connecticut School of Law.

Also celebrated were Baylor University School of Law team of William Tucker and Thomas Martin for the Best Brief award and Alfie Arun from the University of Virginia School of Law for Best Oralist.

The winners receive cash awards. The ACEBC® is also paying for the winning team to attend ACEBC®'s annual dinner, being held this year in San Diego, California.

This year's sponsors included: DLA Piper, Palmeri & Eisenberg, and Calfee.

ACEBC® Fellows Jonathan Rose, a partner at DLA Piper, and Erin Riley, a partner at Keller Rohrback, co-chaired this year's competition.

The American College of Employee Benefits Counsel, Inc. (ACEBC®) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that recognizes attorneys who have made significant contributions to the practice of employee benefits law. Fellows, each with at least 20 years of experience, represent diverse perspectives across employers, unions, benefit plans, plan participants, and government agencies involved in regulating employee benefit programs. The College is dedicated to elevating the standards and advancing public understanding of employee benefits and executive compensation law through educational programs, professional discussions, and initiatives that support the continued development of the field.