

# 2024



**SCWLA**  
SOUTH CAROLINA WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

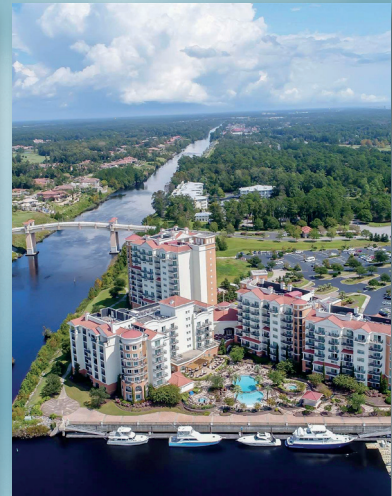
# Conference

# Blazing Trails, Making Waves

**The Marina Inn at Grande Dunes**

Myrtle Beach, SC

October 4-6, 2024



Keynote Speaker:  
**Erin Brockovich**

# Greetings to my fellow lady lawyers!

As your President of South Carolina Women Lawyers' Association ("SCWLA") for the year of 2024, I would like to enthusiastically extend an invitation for you to attend our "Blazing Trails, Making Waves" Annual Conference to be held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina during October 4-6, 2024. The conference will be held at The Marina Inn at Grande Dunes and is one that you do not want to miss!



Our focus at the 2024 conference will be on honoring those women who have acted as trailblazers to our legal community while also recognizing those female lawyers that are making huge waves for generations to come. Keeping the theme in mind, we will have two past recipients of the Jean Galloway Bissell Award, Victoria Eslinger of Maynard Nexsen and retired Chief Justice Jean Hoefler Toal as our honorable speakers. These women are all prime examples of the definition of trailblazers as they have paved the path for other female lawyers and leaders throughout the

State of South Carolina.

I am also super excited to remind you that this year's keynote speaker will be Erin Brockovich. Erin is the real life inspiration for Erin Brockovich, the movie, as well as a New York Times best-selling author. Erin is an environmental activist and consumer advocate and I personally cannot wait to meet her and hear her speak!

Don't miss Saturday evening: our Awards Ceremony where we will recognize and honor female leaders and present the respected Jean Galloway Bissell Award to another pioneer in the legal field and along with the Emerging Leader Award to an up-and-coming wave-maker! Following the Awards Ceremony, the South Carolina Sister Senators, consisting of the only five women in the South Carolina Senate, will be sitting for a panel discussion – this is a must attend agenda item!

In planning this year's conference, we wanted to be considerate of your time and aimed to ensure that you get the most out of attending the conference. There are various CLE opportunities for you to attend throughout the weekend (as you will see in our well-planned agenda). You will also have chances to network with fellow women in the legal field. For those that like to stay active, you will have a choice to join in on morning yoga or a group run with other conference attendees. And, we did not forget to add personal time to the agenda for you to spend as you please!

I cannot encourage you enough to attend the 2024 SCWLA's Annual Conference which will also mark the 30th Anniversary for SCWLA. This will no doubt be a weekend full of empowerment and opportunity! I hope to see all of you lovely ladies there!

Bhumi Patel

SCWLA President

# SCWLA 2024 Conference

October 4 – 6, 2024 Tentative Agenda

## Friday, October 4, 2024

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 12:00pm          | <b>Registration</b>  |
| 1:00pm – 1:45pm  | <b>Welcome from President &amp; General Membership Meeting</b><br>Bhumi Patel, SCWLA President   |
| 1:45pm – 2:00pm  | <b>Break</b>   |
| 2:00pm – 3:00pm  | <b>Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose: Women and the Law*</b><br>Victoria Eslinger   |
| 3:00pm – 4:00pm  | <b>Meet and Mingle Across the State</b><br><i>Networking Event Sponsored by Gordon Rees Scully Masukhani</i><br>Kerry Jardine<br>Stephanie Wood                                  |
| 4:00pm – 5:00pm  | <b>Path to the Judiciary: Process and Ethics**</b><br>Emma Dean  |
| 5:00pm – 6:00pm  | <b>Path to the Judiciary: Experience and Perspectives*</b><br>The Honorable Letitia H. Verdin<br>The Honorable Jocelyn Newman<br>Moderator: Allyce Bailey, SCWLA President Elect |
| 6:00pm           | <b>Individual, Group, Family Activities</b>  |
| 8:30pm – 10:00pm | <b>Bites and Bubbles with Erin Brockovich (Ticketed Event)</b><br>Bhumi Patel<br>Leah Montgomery   |

## Saturday, October 5, 2024

6:00am	<b>Yoga</b> Bhumi Patel
6:00am	<b>Group Run</b> Stephanie Wood
7:30am – 8:30am	<b>Continental Breakfast</b>
8:00am	<b>Registration</b>
8:30am – 9:30am	<b>You're On Your Own, Kid: Taylor Swift's Lessons for Women Lawyers (Julie's Version)*</b> Julie Moore
9:30am – 9:45am	<b>Break</b>
9:45am – 10:45am	<b>How to Negotiate Like a White Guy*</b> Brittney Quinn, PowHER
10:45am – 11:45am	<b>Break</b>
11:15am – 1:45pm	<b>Keynote Luncheon and Q&amp;A with Erin Brockovich</b>
1:45pm – 2:00pm	<b>Break</b>
2:00pm – 3:00pm	<b>Breakout Sessions</b> <b>A) What Women Bring to Mediation: A Unique Perspective from Women Mediators Across the State*</b> The Honorable Kristi Harrington (Retired) Amanda K. Dudgeon Allison Sullivan Anne Ross Culbreth Mary D. Lafave Moderator: Annie Andrews

**B) Leader, Gatekeeper, Statesman, Counselor: Defining the Role of In House Counsel\***

Amanda Bailey, University Counsel, Coastal Carolina University  
Melinda Davis Lux, Executive Vice President, General Counsel, and  
Corporate Secretary; United Community Banks, Inc.  
Jennifer Rubin, Vice President and State Manager, Chicago Title  
Insurance Company  
Moderator: Kristen Nichols

**3:00pm – 5:00pm**

**Free Time**

**5:00pm – 5:30pm**

**The Honorable Jean Hoefer Toal**

Chief Justice Retired

**5:30pm**

**Cocktail Reception**

**6:15pm**

**Awards Ceremony Sponsored by Burr & Forman**

**7:30pm**

**Conversation with South Carolina Sister Senators**

Senator Penry Gustafson (R), District 27 (Chesterfield, Kershaw,  
Lancaster)

Senator Margie Bright Matthews (D), District 45 (Allendale, Beaufort,  
Charleston, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper)

Senator Mia S. McLeod (I), District 22 (Kershaw, Richland)

Senator Katrina F. Shealy (R), District 23 (Lexington)

Moderator: Representative Elizabeth “Spencer” Wetmore (D),  
District 115 (Charleston)

## Sunday, October 6, 2024

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>8:00am</b>            | <b>Continental Breakfast</b>  |
| <b>9:00am – 10:00am</b>  | <b>You Cannot Pour from an Empty Cup: Preventing Burnout and Compassion Fatigue**</b><br>Jean Popowski  |
| <b>10:00am – 10:15am</b> | <b>Break</b>  |
| <b>10:15am – 11:15am</b> | <b>Harness the Power of Prosocial Behavior to Enhance Communication and Ethical Practice**</b><br>Dr. Susan Bon, Provost and Executive Vice President,<br>Pittsburgh State University<br>Dr. Shelley Dempsey, Assistant Provost for Graduation and Retention,<br>University of South Carolina |
| <b>11:15am – 11:30am</b> | <b>Closing Remarks</b>  |

**\*CLE Credit Pending Approval**

**\*\*SAMH or Ethics Credit Pending Approval**

# Hotel information

The Marina Inn, 8121 Amalfi Place, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Group reservations for the meeting can only be made for registered conference attendees. Guaranteed reservations must be accompanied by a major credit card. The Marina Inn will not hold any reservations unless secured by a major credit card. One night's deposit will be required at the time the reservation is made. The room rate at the Marina Inn for run of the house rooms is \$159.00/night plus tax, plus 15%/night resort fee. Once your registration and payment is received you will be emailed the hotel information.



**The SCWLA room block has a limited number of rooms and to ensure everyone can reserve a room at this time you may only reserve 1 room per registered attendee. If you need a second room SCWLA will let you know closer to the meeting if a second room is available.**

All deposits are refundable up to 7 days prior to arrival. Availability of rooms at the group rate is subject to the SCWLA room block and for reservations made on or before, Tuesday, September 3, 2024 the cutoff date. Reservations requests received after the room block has been fully reserved or after the release of unused rooms on September 3, 2024 will be accepted based on a space and rate availability basis.

## **CANCELLATION POLICY**

A refund, less \$75.00 processing fee, will be given to cancellation requests received in writing by September 16, 2024. No refunds will be given after September 16, 2024.

# Things to know

## • SOCIAL GUESTS

Anyone who plans to attend the educational portion or the social functions of the meeting MUST be a registered attendee and name badges will be required. If you have any questions please contact SCWLA (803) 252-5646 or ahiers@pmpamc.com.

## • HANDOUTS

Handout material will not be printed. All registered attendees will receive an email prior to the conference with a link to download the handout material. You will need to print any handouts prior to coming to the meeting. There will be no printed copies available at the meeting.

## Activity information

### **Bites and Bubbles with Erin Brockovich**

**Friday, October 4th**

8:30pm (Additional Fee – not included in registration)

Join us on the Grand Lawn to wind down after the first day of the conference and enjoy some sweet and savory bites and cocktails of your choice while getting to meet Erin Brockovich on a more personal level.

### **Wake Up Run – Complimentary**

**Saturday, October 5th**

6:00am

Join fellow attendees for a relaxing run.

### **Yoga – Complimentary**

**Saturday, October 5th**

6:00am

Join fellow attendees for a morning of yoga.





## **Keynote Luncheon with Erin Brockovich**

**Saturday, October 5th**

11:15pm

Join us for an inspiring speech from trailblazer Erin Brockovich followed by Q&A with Ms. Brockovich and lunch.

## **Looking for Something to do or Somewhere to eat?**

Visit the Myrtle Beach Convention and Visitor's Bureau Website or the hotel's website. Either site will have all the information you will need.

<https://www.visitmyrtlebeach.com>

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<https://marinainnatgrandedunes.com>



# Erin Brockovich

## Keynote Speaker



Say the name Erin Brockovich and you think, strong, tough and stubborn. Erin is all that and definitely more. She is a modern-day “David” who loves a good brawl with today’s “Goliaths”. She thrives on being the voice for those who don’t know how to yell. She is a rebel. She is a fighter. She is a mother. She is a woman. She is you and me.

It’s been over 15 years since Julia Roberts starred in the Oscar-winning tour de force, Erin Brockovich. The film turned an unknown legal researcher into a 20th century icon by showcasing how her dogged persistence was the impelling force behind the largest medical settlement lawsuit in history. Since then, Erin hasn’t been resting on her laurels...she continues to fight hard and win big!

This gutsy broad doesn’t apologize for who she is. She has always loved going head to head with the big boys and was never intimidated by their bravado. She learned how to come out on top from her tight-knit mid-western family in Lawrence, Kansas. Erin was the youngest child of an industrial engineer father and journalist mother. Her parents always believed that she could do anything she set her mind to if she learned to focus her amazing energy.

After a few years roaming around at various colleges, Erin decided that she wanted to be a California girl. She first landed a job as a management trainee for K-Mart, but when that didn’t make her swagger, she decided to study electrical engineering. But that wasn’t enough for the Kansas beauty. On a fluke, she entered the Miss Pacific Coast beauty pageant, and, not surprisingly, won the title. When she realized that beauty pageants weren’t her thing, Erin, her husband, and her two children settled in Reno, Nevada. After divorcing, the single mother became a secretary at a brokerage firm where she met and married her second husband. But that marriage was short lived, and the now mother of three was solo again. Up until this point, Erin was the average divorced single mother trying to make a living, until she crossed paths with lawyer, Ed Masry, and this meeting changed the course of both of their lives.

After being seriously injured in a traffic accident in Reno, Erin moved back to California’s San Fernando Valley and hired Masry & Vittoe to represent her. They won a small settlement, but she still needed work, so she got a job at the law firm as a file clerk. It was while organizing papers on a pro bono real estate case that Erin first found medical records that would explode into the largest direct action lawsuit in US history.

Erin's exhaustive investigation uncovered that Pacific Gas & Electric had been poisoning the small town of Hinkley's Water for over 30 years. It was because of Erin's unwavering tenacity that PG&E had now been exposed for leaking toxic Chromium 6 into the ground water. This poison affected the health of the population of Hinkley. In 1996, as a result of the largest direct action lawsuit of its kind, spearheaded by Erin and Ed Masry, the utility giant was forced to pay out the largest toxic tort injury settlement in US history: \$333 million in damages to more than 600 Hinkley residents.

The story and eventual film made "Erin Brockovich" a household name. Over time, Erin realized that she could use her notoriety to spread positive messages of personal empowerment and to encourage others to stand up and make a difference.

Erin Brockovich has conquered all forms of media. Her first TV project was ABC's 2001 Special, Challenge America With Erin Brockovich, where she helped motivate and organize the rebuilding of a dilapidated park in downtown Manhattan. This show is best described as "Extreme Make-Over Home Edition on steroids". For three seasons, Erin hosted the Lifetime series, Final Justice With Erin Brockovich. The show celebrated everyday women who triumphed when faced with overwhelming adversity.

Erin then dominated the world of publishing with her New York Times Business Bestseller, Take It From Me: Life's A Struggle, But You Can Win. She has also written two fiction novels, Rock Bottom and Hot Water. Her latest release, Superman's Not Coming: Our National Water Crisis and What We the People Can Do About It, drew wide media attention before its publication.

Because of her fighting spirit, Erin has become the champion of countless women and men. She is this generation's "Dear Abby", and in fact receives thousands of "Dear Erin" letters and emails each year from people who are begging for help and support in their own personal struggles. Erin proudly answers every one of them.

As President of Brockovich Research & Consulting, she is currently involved in numerous environmental projects worldwide. She has requests for her help in ground water contamination complaints in every state of the US, Australia, and other international hot spots. She is currently working on cases in California, Texas, Florida, Michigan, Illinois, and Missouri. Erin is one of the most requested speakers on the international lecture circuit and travels the world for personal appearances. She is a true American hero whose icon status and "stick-to-it-iveness" only fuels her determination to expose injustice and lend her voice to those who do not have one.

# SCWLA Conference Committee

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