

**FIRM NEWS**

We are pleased to announce that effective June 1, the attorneys of the well-known New Orleans firm of **Gelpi Sullivan and Carroll** have joined our firm. They bring with them a wide range of talents and experience in the maritime, commercial and insurance fields. Over their careers they have had substantial involvement in major national and international matters, including such landmark cases as *Miles v. Apex*, the M/V BRIGHT-FIELD allision in New Orleans and the DB-29 sinking off the coast of China. They are counsel to such prestigious clients as Tidewater, SEACOR and Seabulk.

Joining the firm as partners are **Norman C. Sullivan, Jr., James K. Carroll, G. Beauregard Gelpi, Stephanie D. Skinner** and **Richard A. Fraser, III**.

This new addition will ensure that the firm remains one of the most significant law firms in the maritime and offshore energy fields.

**NEW ORLEANS**

Congratulations to **Edward F. LeBreton, III** on his election to the Board of Directors of the **Maritime Law Association of the United States**, at the spring meeting.

Mr. LeBreton also served as an expert panelist discussing Terrorism and Other Recent Developments in Marine Insurance at the Admiralty Law Institute at Tulane University in March.



Left, George Fowler, Chairman of the Institute, right, José Rizo Castellon, Vice President of Nicaragua.

**LATIN AMERICAN LAW  
INSTITUTE**

Tulane Law School has formally approved the Latin American Law Institute as a permanent institute at Tulane. The Institute will take place at Tulane every other year, with the next program in September 2004. The Institute's Executive Board reelected FRC's George J. Fowler, III as chairman of the Latin American Law Institute.

The Latin American Law Institute focuses on legal and business issues involving the United States and Latin America, with an emphasis on building stronger relationships

between the two regions. Many lawyers and business leaders from Latin America attended the debut of the Latin American Law Institute in June 2002, including Vice President José Rizo Castellon of Nicaragua.

There exists great enthusiasm for the 2004 Conference. Prevailing issues pertaining to the oil and gas industry in the Western Hemisphere will be addressed. The Institute will also focus on sustainable development and the challenges faced by Latin America with the threat of terrorism.

**Robert R. Johnston** and **Daniel Lichtl** received a favorable ruling in a procedurally unusual case that was appealed to the Louisiana Supreme Court, after which the same suit was refiled in federal court and appealed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. *Kaloo, et al. v. TT Boat Corp.*, No. 02-30446 (5th Cir. 2002). The original Jones Act claim was filed in Louisiana state court (in 1997), where defendants lost on a summary judgment ruling at the trial level. On a writ application, the Louisiana Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal reversed and rendered judgment for defendants. The Louisiana Supreme Court denied plaintiffs' writ application. Plaintiffs subsequently filed a suit with identical claims in federal court in the Eastern District of Louisiana. Defendants won a motion for summary judgment, reasserting its prior defenses and *res judicata*. Plaintiffs again appealed, but to no avail. The Fifth Circuit ruled that plaintiffs' claims were barred by *res judicata*.

**Robert R. Johnston** and **Daniel Lichtl** were successful in a jury trial in the 24th Judicial District Court for the Parish of Jefferson, State of Louisiana. *Crescent Ship Service, Inc. v. Green Marine and Industrial Equipment Company, Inc., et al.*, Docket No. 468-003. The suit involved the sale of 13 oily water separators for vessels operating on the Mississippi River. The separators purchased by our client did not produce an outflow of 15 parts per million or less of oil as required by state and federal laws. Suit was filed against the seller and manufacturer of the oily water separators pursuant to La. Civ. Code, art. 2520 *et seq.* indicating that the separators contained a redhibitory defect which rendered the product useless to our client. The jury agreed, finding that the units were defective, and awarded our client the purchase price, maintenance, installation, removal and preservation costs of the oily water separators, as well as oily water removal costs due to the separators' redhibitory defect. Additionally, we were able to

recover 90% of its attorney's fees and costs incurred in the litigation of this matter, as well as judicial interest from the time the suit was filed, which nearly doubled the claim.

**Owen F. Duffy** recently won a favorable arbitration decision. In the Matter of the Arbitration between An An Shipping Co., Ltd. and E, D & F Man Sugar Limited, he represented the Owner of the M/V AN AN who was seeking to recover an award of damages for detention arising from delays in discharging E, D & F Man's cargo at Baltimore. Normally, damages for detention are difficult to recover because the precedent from the English Courts and a number of arbitrators in the U.S. have held that a demurrage clause in a charter party is a liquidated damages clause, and a vessel Owner cannot recover damages at large. In the An An Arbitration, although there was a demurrage clause in the charter party, the Arbitrator awarded the Owner of the M/V AN AN damages for detention for each day that the M/V AN AN waited for the crane at the receiving terminal in Baltimore to be repaired at the rate which the vessel could have earned on the spot market. The value of the ship on the spot market was considerably more than the rate of demurrage in the charter party.

**Michael W. McCoy** and **Brian J. Tagtmeier** successfully represented an insurer in a potential dispute with an insured, a foster home facility, that placed a one year old child with a family and the child later died while in their care. A criminal trial against the foster father resulted in his acquittal. A civil suit was then filed against the foster care facility, the owners of same, and the foster parents. Demand was made for the \$3,000,000.00 in policy limits with threatened publicity. The court agreed with the defendants' argument that a sub-limit of only \$100,000.00 applied; and the case ultimately settled for that amount. A high profile multi-million dollar exposure and bad publicity were avoided.

### NEW YORK

**Michael G. Chalos** and **Eugene J. O'Connor** each delivered a speech at a conference hosted by McGill University School of Law in Montreal in early April relating to the criminalization of maritime accidents and the arrest and detention of vessel masters.

**Michael G. Chalos** also spoke on U.S. Security Regulations before the Monaco (Monte Carlo) Propeller Club in late April.

**George M. Chalos** delivered a speech at the Pireaus Marine Club in Greece on U.S. Vessel Detentions and Criminal Liabilities.

### HOUSTON

**Michael W. McCoy** spoke on the topic of The Insurance Company and The Defense Firm Relationship at a conference sponsored by the University of Houston Law Foundation in February.

**Timothy W. Strickland** sat on a panel as a hull expert at the Houston Mariner's Club's Annual CTL Seminar on June 19, 2003.

### MIAMI

**Gary E. Davidson**, a Partner in the Miami office of FRC and a Professor of International Law at Nova Southeastern University, spoke on *forum non conveniens* at an April 25, 2003 seminar on international litigation. The program was sponsored by, among others, the New York and Florida Bar Associations.



**G. Beauregard Gelpi** has been named Chair of the Maritime Law Association's River and Ocean Towing Committee, effective May of 2003.

**Luis Enrique Cuervo** has been named an adjunct professor of Tulane Law School. He teaches the course in International Oil & Gas Law at Tulane Law School. The course reviews developments in the oil and gas industry and includes analysis of international laws and contracts.

**George J. Fowler, III** has been selected for membership in Committee of 100 for Economic Development (Louisiana).

Mr. Fowler presented a speech on "The Criminal Prosecution of Fidel Castro for His Crimes Against Humanity" at the Inter-American Bar Association Conference in New Orleans.

Mr. Fowler also delivered a speech in the Masters Program for Maritime Administration at the University of La Coruña, Spain, concerning civil and criminal marine pollution laws and the issues presented by the M/V PRESTIGE oil spill.

Mr. Fowler appeared in a program on piracy on MSNBC ("Modern Day Pirates"). He previously served as a United States delegate to the 2001 Comité Maritime International Conference which addressed acts of piracy and maritime violence.

Congratulations to **Mary C. Hubbard** on her selection as one of three candidates for Treasurer of SEALI, at the fall meeting.

**Jon W. Wise** received an award from the New Orleans Pro Bono Project for distinguished service in providing legal assistance.

## U.S. VESSEL DETENTION AND CRIMINAL LIABILITIES FOR OWNERS, OPERATORS, MANAGERS, CORPORATE OFFICERS & CREW

BY GEORGE M. CHALOS, ESQ.

Since the tragic events of September 11th, pursuant to a directive of the Office of Homeland Security, the U.S. Coast Guard has undertaken a comprehensive program of boarding foreign flag-state vessels calling U.S. ports. As a result of the new heightened security measures, there has been a significant increase in the scrutiny in which vessels, and their records/logs, are being inspected. Such scrutiny, rightly or wrongly, has led to a rash of vessel and/or crew detentions, as well as criminal allegations and charges, including felonies, against vessel Owners, Operators, Managers, Officers and Crew.

Additionally, we have learned that the U.S. Coast Guard has recently established various task forces, including "the Oily Water Separation Systems Task Force" (OWSSTF), to examine a wide range of issues related to oily water separation equipment and its use on vessels in U.S. waters. Coast Guard personnel and other law enforcement personnel are scrutinizing the use and functionality of oily water separation systems more carefully than ever before, in U.S. and International authorities have made it clear that they have, and will continue to, seek jail sentences for Master and Chief Engineers of ships committing pollution offenses. Many times, even if no pollution incident has occurred, the Coast Guard and U.S. prosecutors will commence a Grand Jury investigation

seeking to prosecute suspected illegal activities (i.e. possible Marpol violations, presentation of false records and/or obstruction of justice charges).

It is now well known that the U.S. authorities have successfully prosecuted various cruise operators, as well as commercial vessel operators, captains, and chief engineers of illegal by-passing of the oily water separation system and/or the presentation of an Oil Record Book containing "false entries." Prosecutors have also successfully prosecuted vessel owners and operators for "obstructing justice." It is the goal of this paper to introduce key individuals in the maritime industry to "need to know" information to be prepared to address this serious and alarming situation for vessels calling U.S. ports. Additionally, we offer the most basic, yet essential, advice a lawyer can give: *shipboard and shore-side personnel should seek the advice of counsel as soon as practical, and must always be truthful and forthright in their dealings with the U.S. authorities.* Of course, it is extremely advisable that if the U.S. authorities undertake any onboard investigation, which goes beyond the scope of the ordinary port state control inspection, counsel should be engaged to protect the rights of the owners, managers, officers and crew. *An ounce of prevention goes much further than a pound of cure.*

## THE INSURANCE COMPANY AND DEFENSE FIRM RELATIONSHIP: CONTROL OF COUNSEL, COOPERATION, ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES, ETC.

BY MICHAEL W. MCCOY, ESQ.

The relationship between a liability insurer, its insured, and defense counsel hired by the insurer has been generally described as triangular in nature. Policyholders buy liability insurance to protect themselves against any future claim of tortious or otherwise wrongful conduct caused by them which may result in a judgment or settlement

against the policyholder. A more important and perhaps more wide reaching benefit from the purchase of this policy is the insurance company's contractual agreement to defend its insured against any such covered claims. The insured's contractual duty to defend relieves

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## NEW ORLEANS

**Norman C. Sullivan, Jr.** graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1967, at which time he also was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Army. He received his J.D. degree from the University of Santa Clara in 1970, and thereafter was admitted to the practice of law in the State of California. Mr. Sullivan served active duty with the United States Army, including a tour of duty in the Republic of Vietnam. Upon discharge from the military in 1973, he was admitted to practice law in Louisiana and entered private practice.

Mr. Sullivan is engaged in a comprehensive litigation practice. His primary area of expertise is maritime litigation, with particular emphasis on products liability, contract and insurance law, as well as construction disputes. Mr. Sullivan is admitted to practice before all Louisiana state and federal courts, all California state courts, the United States District Court for the Northern District of California and the United States Supreme Court. He is a member of the New Orleans, California, Louisiana and American Bar Associations, as well as the Maritime Law Association, the International Association of Defense Counsel, the Association of Average Adjusters of the United States and the Southeastern Admiralty Law Institute (Chairman 1998).

**James K. Carroll** attended Villanova University from which he graduated in 1967 with a B.A. degree in Social Sciences, and Tulane Law School, from which he graduated in 1974. While at Tulane, Mr. Carroll was a member of the Tulane Law Review and was elected to the position of Articles Editor for the year 1973-74.

Upon graduation from Villanova University, Mr. Carroll was commissioned a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps and, from 1968 to 1969, served as a platoon commander and company commander in the Republic of Vietnam. Mr. Carroll completed his four year active military service on independent duty in New Haven, Connecticut, where he reached the rank of captain before leaving the Marine Corps in April, 1971.

Mr. Carroll has been engaged primarily in litigation defense practice since 1974, with an emphasis in the maritime and offshore oil areas. He is admitted to practice before all Louisiana state and federal courts, as well as the United States Courts of Appeal for the Fifth and Eleventh Circuits and the United States District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi. He is also a member of the State Bar of Colorado. He is a member of the New Orleans, Louisiana and American Bar Associations. He has served as Senior Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Admiralty and Maritime Law Committee of the Tort and Insurance Practice Section of the American Bar Association, and presently serves as the Financial Officer of the Section. He is a member of the Federation of Insurance and Corporate Counsel and serves as the Chair of the Maritime Section of that organization.

In addition, Mr. Carroll is active in the Maritime Law Association of the United States, serving on a number of its committees. Mr. Carroll is also a member of the Mariners Clubs for the Ports of New Orleans and Houston.

**G. Beauregard Gelpi** attended the University of Virginia, from which he graduated in 1984 with a B.A. degree in History. Mr. Gelpi then attended Tulane Law School, receiving his J.D. degree in 1987.

Mr. Gelpi's practice centers primarily in the field of casualty litigation with emphasis on maritime personal injury, collision, cargo and worker's compensation litigation. He is admitted to practice before all Louisiana state and federal courts, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and the United States Supreme Court.

Mr. Gelpi is a member of the Maritime Law Association, the American, Federal and Louisiana Bar Associations and the New Orleans Mariners Club.

**Stephanie D. Skinner** attended Louisiana State University and received a B.A. & B.S. degree in English in 1988. She also received her J.D. degree from the Paul M. Hebert Law Center, Louisiana State University, in 1991.

Following graduation from law school, Ms. Skinner entered private practice focusing on maritime personal injury litigation.

Ms. Skinner is admitted to practice before all Louisiana state courts and the United States District Court for the Eastern, Western and Middle District of Louisiana, as well as the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Ms. Skinner is a member of the Federal Bar Association.

**Richard A. Fraser, III** attended Tulane University (B.A., 1972) and Tulane University School of Law (J.D., 1978). Upon graduation from college, he was commissioned as an Ensign in the United States Navy Reserve.

Mr. Fraser served on active duty in the Navy from 1972 through 1975 aboard a destroyer, U.S.S. Dupont (DD-941), where he was Navigator and Electronics Officer. During his service, Mr. Fraser qualified as a Surface Warfare Officer, Officer of the Deck (Fleet and Independent Steaming), and Command Duty Officer, and earned the Vietnam Service Medal. He resigned from the Naval Reserve as a Lieutenant in 1978.

Mr. Fraser has been engaged in a litigation defense practice since 1978, concentrating primarily in the maritime and offshore oil areas, and has recently become associated with the firm. He is admitted to practice before all Louisiana state and federal courts, as well as the United States Courts of Appeal for the Fifth and Eleventh Circuits, and the United States Supreme Court. Mr. Fraser is a member of the American, Louisiana and New Orleans Bar Associations, Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel, and the Southeastern Admiralty Law Institute.

**Stephen D. Morel** joins as an associate. Mr. Morel attended Louisiana State University (B.A., 1999; J.D., 2002), and was the recipient of the CALI Excellence Award for Constitutional Law. Mr. Morel previously served in the United States Army, where he received certification as a Russian linguist. He is licensed to practice law before all state and federal courts in Louisiana, and is a member of the Federal, Louisiana and New Orleans Bar Associations, the Young Lawyers' Section of the Federal and New Orleans Bar Associations, and the admiralty division of the New Orleans Bar Association.

**Andrew L. Ridenour** joins as an associate specializing in areas of admiralty and marine insurance litigation. He attended University of the South (Sewanee)(B.A., 1999), Tulane University (M.A., 2001) and Tulane Law School (J.D., *cum laude*, 2002) where he was on the Editorial Board of the Tulane Journal of International and Comparative Law. He is licensed in Virginia and Louisiana.

#### NEW YORK

**LeRoy S. Corsa (Roy)** joins FRC of counsel. Mr. Corsa graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and then entered the U.S. Navy leaving as a Lt(jg) to join the Merchant Marine as a third mate. He then raised his license and sailed as second mate for Grace Lines to South America. Mr. Corsa attended New York University School of Law. Upon graduation, he joined Haight Gardner Poor & Havens where he stayed until he left as a general partner to form Walker & Corsa. Throughout his distinguished career, Mr. Corsa has handled maritime cases involving cargo damage suits, collisions, personal injury and charter party disputes, primarily on the defense side.

**Clea Byron Efthimiadis** joins as an associate. She attended the University of Texas at Austin (B.A.) and St. Mary's University of Law (J.D.). After graduating from law school, she was commissioned as an Officer in United States Navy and served with the Judge Advocate General's Corps in Japan and New York. Upon leaving the Navy, Ms Efthimiadis joined the General Counsel staff of the Panama Canal Commission, a U.S. Government agency in the Republic of Panama. She later left the Commission to affiliate with U.S. Army South in Panama. Ms Efthimiadis has an exten-

sive and diverse U.S. Government background covering a span of 16 years of legal experience in a wide range of many disciplines in the law including but not limited to areas such as Criminal Law, Administrative Law, Labor Law, International Law, Maritime Law, Environmental Law, and White Collar Crime. Ms. Efthimiadis is licensed in Texas, New York and Florida. She is fluent in Greek and Spanish.

#### HOUSTON

**Brian J. Tagtmeier** joins FRC as a partner with a wide range of experience in civil litigation matters, including professional liability, construction law, employment discrimination, personal injury, maritime and insurance coverage. Mr. Tagtmeier has authored several papers on construction law matters, including perfecting lien rights, claims under the Residential Construction Liability Act and insurance coverage for mold claims. He attended Rice University (B.A., *cum laude*, 1989) and the University of Texas School of Law (J.D., 1992), where he was a member of four interscholastic mock trial teams and elected a member of the Order of Barristers.

**Deborah T. Busby** joins as an associate with a background in maritime, energy and general civil litigation, which includes personal injury defense, cargo damage claims, construction defect disputes, premises liability actions and insurance coverage disputes. Her practice also includes some transactional and general corporate experience. Ms. Busby attended Texas A&M University (B.B.A., 1981); South Texas College of Law (J.D., 1992); and University of Texas Petroleum Extension Service, Offshore Operations 2002. Ms. Busby is currently an officer of the Houston Mariners Club, and is Vice President of the Texas Chapter of WISTA USA (Women's International Shipping and Trading Association). She is also a member of the Houston and American Bar Associations and the State Bar of Texas. Publications include *Garris Calms the Course for Maritime Wrongful Death Cases*, Texas Lawyer, July 9, 2001, at 19.

**Doanh "Zone" T. Nguyen** joins FRC as an associate. His current practice includes employment, commercial, personal injury, insurance defense and insurance coverage matters. Mr. Nguyen attended University of Houston (B.A., *cum laude*, 1991) and University of Texas (J.D., 1993). He served as Manuscript Editor of *The American Journal of Criminal Law*. Mr. Nguyen is also a JAG Officer in the United States Army Reserves and an adjunct professor at San Jacinto College. Language: Vietnamese.

#### MIAMI

**Michael J. Reppas II** joins as an associate specializing in admiralty and maritime litigation. He attended Ohio State University (B.A., 1991), St. Thomas School of Law in Miami (J.D., 1997) and University of Miami School of Law (LL.M., 1998). Mr. Reppas served as a law clerk with the Third District Court of Appeals in Miami and was a member of Law Review. He is licensed in Florida and the District of Columbia. Languages: Greek and conversational Spanish.

**Patrick M. Talbot** joins as an associate. Mr. Talbot's practice involves litigation in the areas of international, admiralty, aviation and insurance. He graduated from Georgetown University School of Foreign Service (B.S., *cum laude*, 1985) and Regent University School of Law, Virginia (J.D., with honors, 1993). At Regent, Mr. Talbot served as a team captain of the school's Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition Team. Language: Spanish.

**Carlos O. Fernandez** joins as an associate. Mr. Fernandez attended Georgetown University (B.A., 1989) and the University of Miami (J.D., 1995). His practice areas include commercial litigation, medical negligence, nursing home negligence, admiralty and maritime, and general insurance defense. Mr. Fernandez is a member of the Florida Bar, the Cuban-American Bar Association, the Dade County Bar Association, Florida Defense Lawyers Association, and the Defense Research Institute. From 1999 to 2001, he served on the Board of Directors for the Cuban-American Bar Association and the Dade County Bar Association. Mr. Fernandez is actively involved with the United Way of Miami-Dade County and the Knights of Columbus. Language: Spanish.





## CARNIVAL CONQUEST RETURNS TO NEW ORLEANS

Carnival Cruise Lines chose New Orleans as home port for the M/S CARNIVAL CONQUEST, one of the world's largest cruise ships, a decision local economists estimate will pump millions of dollars into the local economy.

Despite the great economic impact that the vessel will have on the local economy, Carnival encountered a navigational obstacle in the form of a low hanging power line owned by Entergy. Permit language clearly required Entergy to raise its line upon each passage of the M/S CARNIVAL CONQUEST. Entergy refused to raise the line as required by the permit.

Carnival retained Fowler Rodriguez & Chalos to study the regulatory issues involved and to address the issue. After numerous meetings and hearings in the Louisiana State Senate, the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the Louisiana Public Service Commission, Entergy agreed that they would remove the aerial power lines and replace them with lines tunneled underneath the Mississippi River. Entergy also agreed to raise the lines in time for the next high water stage.

On July 13, 2003, the M/S CARNIVAL CONQUEST returned to New Orleans to the delight of the people of New Orleans.

## THE INSURANCE COMPANY & DEFENSE FIRM RELATIONSHIP...

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the insured of the burden of finding and paying for an attorney, and the insurance company potentially receives a benefit because it can control the defense of its insured, whereby its potential exposure may be reduced or eliminated.

Traditionally, this arrangement created a tripartite attorney-client relationship, in which both insurer and insured are clients of the defense counsel. Although the tripartite relationship is based on the insurance policy, the relationship may be governed by fiduciary and common law duties owed by both the attorney and the insurer. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the insured, insurer, and defense counsel work well together and the tripartite relationship draws to a normal conclusion upon completion of the insured's defense.

However, when a coverage question exists or other matter on which the interests of the insurer and the policyholder differ, problems can arise. However, the rules of professional conduct and case law of most jurisdictions allow for a relatively harmonious resolution to these conflicts. Many of these problems must simply be resolved on a case-by-case basis.

The tripartite attorney-client relationship forces insurance defense counsel to not only be mindful of ethical duties, obligations, and responsibilities, but also to be aware of the potential problems that can be created through such a relationship. Many times, plaintiff's counsel is able to employ strategies which can attempt to exploit the difficulties of the tripartite relationship. In those situations, it is obviously vital that the liability insurer, its insured, and defense counsel work closely together in order not to hand the plaintiff's counsel an advantage. While the defense counsel is ultimately the benchmark for making sure that compliance with ethical duties, obligations, and responsibilities take place, it is the three parts of the tripartite relationship, working together, that ultimately control and allow for a smooth relationship, and one that can continue to work for all concerned.

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