

## POWER BROKER: AT LARGE



**Richard Ashe, CPCU**

**Senior Vice President  
Marsh, Syracuse, New York**

**Matching Expertise with Impeccable Service**

Being a subject matter expert proved invaluable to Richard Ashe when a new client approached him with a tricky site contamination problem.

A year after the sale of a property, the buyer informed his client of the discovery of a new contaminant similar to and in greater quantities than the one found prior to the purchase,

demanding payment for clean-up and removal costs. The client submitted the claim to its insurer; however, it was rejected on the grounds of the known condition exclusion.

Successfully arguing that the chemical make-up of the two contaminants was markedly different and creating a site map to show their delineation, as well as pointing to supporting language in the exclusion, he got the insurer to reverse its decision. Since then, it has issued an initial payment of more than \$800,000 with projected additional costs estimated at above \$1 million. In the process, Ashe also saved his client substantial legal costs. "Richard came in and grasped the situation from day one," said the client. "He was instrumental in turning around the decision and getting the claim paid, without which we would have faced a huge financial bill."

Another client, Renée Guignard, risk management director and associate general counsel at MaineGeneral Health, said: "Richard is very responsive and provides invaluable feedback on how to address a situation. His customer service is impeccable, and he sets the bar high."



**Collin Breeney**

**Vice President  
Aon, New York**

**Communication Skills to Get the Job Done**

Communication was key for Collin Breeney when it came to renewing his client's D&O policy in a tough market. At a meeting in advance of its June 1 renewal, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, he explained the challenges facing the D&O marketplace and prepared the hair and beauty retailer for the likely 25-50% increase.

With the client forced to close many of its locations and furlough a large percentage of its workforce because of the pandemic and the market continuing to shift, Breeney sought feedback from the incumbents on the implications for renewal. After receiving the primary quote, far above initial projections, he approached the excess market for further capacity.

Next Breeney rebuilt the excess portion of the program in \$5 million limits to replace the expiring \$10 million ones, using quota shares where possible, engaging the U.S. retail and wholesale market and Bermuda marketplace to secure the required total limit. That included bringing eight new insurers on board, including one which deployed \$10 million in capital on an excess basis. The client said, "Collin was exceptional in navigating the renewal. It was only thanks to his extensive insurer contacts and creative thinking, and, above all, his communication skills that we were able to get it done."

Another client, Misha Freimann, senior manager, risk management, at ICF, said: "Collin provides excellent customer service. He understands our business as a global firm and always explains concepts in easy-to-understand terms."



**Amy Brutto**

**Principal and Client Executive  
Marsh & McLennan Agency, San Diego**

**Resourceful, Forward-Thinking and Conscientious**

The shows and events industry was among the hardest hit by COVID-19. Businesses have lost thousands or even millions of dollars in revenue while many have gone to the wall. But thanks to her foresight, Amy Brutto was able to help one of her large trade show event clients, Emerald, navigate this difficult period.

Taking up her recommendation of inserting a communicable disease endorsement into its event cancellation policy, the client secured coverage of up to \$191 million for 2020 and the same amount again for this year. With more than 140 events scheduled throughout the year and each cancellation deemed a separate incident, Brutto has to handle complex claims on an almost daily basis.

So far, claims submitted have exceeded \$145 million, with \$64 million being recovered. Michael Chen, senior director of business and legal affairs at Emerald, said: "Amy has demonstrated a superior level of skill, professionalism and expertise in servicing all of our insurance needs over the last several years."

He added: "Amy has proven time and again to be a resourceful, forward-thinking and conscientious broker in advising us on all our insurance-related matters. She is quick to provide practical commercial advice in a number of coverage areas and has helped us leverage outside resources to process a significant volume of event cancellation claims due to COVID-19."



**Laurie Champion, CPCU, ARMe**

**Managing Director  
Marsh, Southfield, Mich.**

**A Minister of Defense**

It was a potentially aggravating situation involving a U.S. subsidiary and its foreign parent. But Laurie Champion kept her cool.

"At every point somebody had to drive her insane but you would never know it," said a risk manager for the U.S. subsidiary, a defense contractor that needed an accurate accounting of its insurance costs under a global policy covering about a half-

dozen subsidiaries overall.

U.S. defense contracts require an audit trail of a contractor's costs, including insurance. But the requirement is not always well understood by foreign companies, the risk manager said. That made it harder for the U.S. subsidiary to calculate its share of overall insurance costs.

As a result of Champion's work, the subsidiary discovered its insurance costs were even less than it had estimated, the risk manager said. "Laurie has worked with other defense contractors and she understood and pushed through until we had what she needed," the risk manager said, praising Champion's perseverance and diplomacy. "She was phenomenal."

In addition to defense contractors, Champion has also helped a global auto maker review, consolidate and streamline its risk management operations in North America. The work covered everything from buying insurance to finding the right wording for coverage.



**Lael Chappell**

**Broker Engagement Lead  
Attune, New York**

**A Unique Ability to Lead**

Lael Chappell has almost single-handedly put the African-American Insurance Association's New York Tri-State Chapter on the map. After being elected president, he came in and turned it around, giving it a national platform where previously it had been underrepresented, and he has helped start other chapters.

Dwight Williams, client executive, financial institutions at Gallagher, who worked alongside Chappell on the board, said: "Previously, it didn't have the feel of a New York Chapter, given the level of professionals in its ranks. But Lael took it and catapulted it to national stardom and made it the template for others to follow."

Since joining Attune in 2019, Chappell has been focused on building relationships within the retail and wholesale sector nationwide and took the lead on developing its distribution strategy. Maintaining a cool head at all times, he prides himself on always being available to answer client questions and resolve problems as quickly and efficiently as possible, as well as his attention to detail and ability to foresee potential issues, building relationships based on respect and trust.

Williams, who has known Chappell since he was at Zurich 10 years ago and worked with him as a broker at Willis, added: "Lael does an exemplary job of everything he turns his hand to. But his key qualities are his empathy and ability to put himself in the client's shoes, as well as his persuasive leadership, technical and research skills, not to mention his dedication to the overall customer experience."



**Deborah Charron, CIC**

**Senior Vice President/Regional Health Care Practice Leader  
Marsh & McLennan Agency, Fort Lauderdale**

**Facing Down the Pandemic**

Andrew Weisman has no qualms about recommending Deborah Charron. "I know she's the best," said Weisman, chief executive officer of NuVision Management Inc., Based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, the company owns and operates long- and short-term care adult and pediatric facilities in Florida and New Jersey.

"When you find somebody who works that aggressively and successfully, you stick with them. And that's what we've done," Weisman said.

Charron also was an aggressive advocate last year for clients who were facing challenges in finding masks and other personal protective equipment they needed to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

She worked her connections to find a reputable supplier that won rave reviews from clients and led to lasting relationships.

The pandemic also posed a challenge for insurance renewals, said one client, the finance executive at a company that develops and operates senior-living communities in the Southeast.

But Charron and her team delivered policies at prices and terms that beat what the market was giving others, the executive said.

"I didn't think they'd get as good as they did," said the executive, who had seen some companies with premium increases as high as 168%, as well as higher deductibles and raft of exclusions. "We did great."

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### Cara Cortes

**Senior Vice President  
Marsh, Pittsburgh**

#### **Thinking Outside the Box**

Dealing with complex challenges for multinational clients is second nature for Cara Cortes. Following a material acquisition by one client, she carried out a strategic review of its multinational D&O risk, looking at each country where it did business. Then she presented three solutions and went through the pros and cons of each, engaging with the risk, legal, finance and local teams.

From this, her client was able to select a more streamlined and cost-effective solution than its previous rest of world companion D&O policy that still provided adequate coverage for its exposures, as well as helping it to realize financial and operational synergies.

Another client faced a tough D&O renewal with carriers materially withdrawing limits and rates being hiked astronomically. At this stage, Cortes realized that she needed to quickly think outside the box to come up with a viable alternative solution. Developing a new program structure using multiple primary carriers on a specific portion of the liability, she was able to deliver notable cost savings and keep retention at a level the client was comfortable with.

One client, Michelle McArdle, insurance risk manager at Federated Hermes, said: "Cara's background as an underwriter and her technical expertise and contacts enable her to quickly get to grips with and resolve complex problems. Added to that is her strong work ethic of always going above and beyond for the client, making herself available at all times and responding in a timely and professional manner."



### John Galanis, ARM

**Senior Vice President  
Aon, New York**

#### **The Answer Man**

Shutdowns related to COVID-19 led to claims approaching \$500 million for the New York-based Discovery Inc., according to Michael Egan, the TV channel's vice president of global risk management. John Galanis has played a role in getting Egan coverage. But it's not just Galanis' post-claims work that's making a difference; relying on his deep knowledge of the entertainment

industry, Galanis contributed to the policy language that protects Discovery in the first place, Egan said. "That helped a lot in getting these claims covered," said Egan.

Another client, Chicago-based Daniel J. Edelman Holdings Inc., called on Galanis to create a wrap program for its subsidiaries in Europe, a move designed to save money, said Cheryl Romeo, director of corporate insurance risk management. Even after the program was up and running under the aegis of overseas brokers, Galanis has been a valuable resource, Romeo said. "I don't think there's a question he hasn't been able to answer."

Galanis also has come up with creative solutions for insurance renewals in what is proving to be a challenging market for the entertainment sector

"John is hands down the best broker I have had the pleasure to work with, and I have been working in the insurance industry for 17 years," said a risk consultant at a California-based technology company.

"Not only is he extremely knowledgeable about the entertainment industry, trends and evaluating production risk, but he is frank, honest and trustworthy."



### Phil Hoffmann, ARM

**Managing Director  
Aon, Milwaukee, Wis.**

#### **A Broker Who Cares About the Next Generation**

"He just wants to help see others succeed in the insurance industry." That's how Phil Hoffmann was summed up by his client Christy Kaufman, head of development and compliance at American Family Ventures.

Hoffmann works on many fronts: Primarily as a broker but also on the board of the University of Wisconsin's risk and insurance management department. In his capacity at the university, he is heavily involved in mentoring students, connecting them with subject experts, and helping them network and find job opportunities.

Hoffmann notably helped his client ManpowerGroup to redesign its risk financing program in the face of historic risks, carrying out an actuarial review of losses and resetting retention levels, leveraging U.S. and Lloyd's of London capacity. Kris Allenson, VP, enterprise risk, said: "I was relatively new to risk management, but Phil put me at ease right away. He brought the experts to the table and helped us get across the line."

Joan Schmit, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, who has known Hoffmann for 30 years, said: "No matter what question I ask him, he will always find the answer, even if he doesn't know immediately. He's also willing to help our students in any way he can, regardless of whether that means having to refer them to a competitor if he feels they can give a more useful insight ... Phil really cares about people. He has helped so many students find work when they graduate — he just wants the best for them."



### Tony Katz

**Vice President  
Aon, Chicago**

#### **A Hospitality Risk Guru**

Datra Herzog was nervous when she learned a floodzone overlapped the site where she was planning to build a new \$4 million lodge for her hospitality business, the Inns at St. Albans in St. Albans, Missouri. Even though the overlap was small, the bank lender wanted the 11,000-square-foot lodge to carry flood insurance, Herzog said. Her broker, Tony Katz, jumped in, worked

with the project's architects and engineers, and helped figure out a way to avoid the expense. "That's going to be a huge savings when you're sitting in Missouri in a flood plain," said Herzog, who appreciates Katz's attention to her relatively small business. "He has an amazing level of customer service and an amazing depth of knowledge."

Herzog first began working with Katz under a master insurance plan arranged by a management company. Kemper Sports Management, based in Illinois, mostly manages golf courses but St. Albans joined the fold about four years ago, said Herzog, whose husband is David Herzog, the retired CFO of AIG.

Kemper Sports relies heavily on Katz's expertise. He has helped the company navigate coverage issues related to risks such as cyber security and drones used for photography, said Jim Lawler, Kemper's CFO. And Katz also has designed best-in-class coverage that makes Kemper a desirable management partner for golf courses.

"Tony is really acting as our risk management department," another client said. "I don't even want to say he's an extension. He *is* our risk management department."



### Rebecca LaFazia, CISR

**Assistant Vice President  
Risk Strategies, New York**

#### **In It for the Long Run**

The touring musical "Dear Evan Hansen" was about to begin a one-week run in New Orleans in fall 2019 when a hotel collapsed near the theater. While producers managed to move the show to a smaller theater and add an extra performance, the tour took a revenue hit nonetheless, said Chris Morey, general manager for the New York-based touring company 101 Productions. Rebecca

LaFazia suggested the company could make a claim for the lost sales, Morey said. And she pushed it through to a successful conclusion. "She always goes the extra mile."

It's a quality that came in handy this year when 101 Productions had to renew its insurance policies amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The company was among the few with no virus exclusion in its business interruption policy. It wasn't able to avoid the exclusion at renewal, however, and faced other unwelcome policy changes from its existing carrier. LaFazia found a new carrier and came as close as possible to replicating the previous coverage. "I cannot sing her praises enough," Morey said.

In addition to navigating a challenging market for another theater client, LaFazia provided a sounding board as it launched a new program. The New York-based Lucille Lortel Foundation, which operates an off-Broadway theater and several grant programs, recently started a program for high school playwrights. LaFazia identified several critical insurance needs for the new program, said George Forbes, the foundation's executive director. "Rebecca is always incredibly helpful and responsive and creative," Forbes said.



### Brendan Quinlan

**Senior Vice President  
Alliant Insurance Services, San Francisco**

#### **Conscious of Your Time**

Everyone wants claims paid quickly, but in the energy infrastructure world, where a loss could leave thousands of people without heat or electricity, time is truly of the essence.

"We have very, very quick turnaround when we have business interruption or property damage claims for money in the door," said one client in renewable energy infrastructure.

"And Brendan gets the insurance underwriters out of the way, meaning we're the experts that can fix the sites and alleviate the financial loss. He's very, very involved and very good at getting them to accept the claim and allow us to repair things as fast as possible."

That level of advocacy is just one of Brendan Quinlan's strengths as a broker. That same client was unable to find coverage for a facility they had acquired.

"People weren't even interested in providing coverage for it," said the client. "Mr. Quinlan, just through bartering, through investigating markets we weren't in, through going international ...and limiting the risk profile of certain underwriters, was able to find us a solution that was better than we thought we would get."

Of course, finding coverage is only helpful if the rates make sense, and going into renewals, the client's direct competitors were reporting 30% to 70% increases in premiums. "We got through our renewable period with just over a 20% increase," said the satisfied client.