

Discovery & Depositions

Many property tax litigants agreed that trials are won and lost in the discovery phase. A good (or bad) deposition or the discovery of a key document can turn a losing case into a winner and vice versa. With consideration to both the assessor's and owner's perspective, this presentation will look at all types of discovery – interrogatories, requests for production, requests for admissions, depositions, inspections of property and non-party depositions. The panel will focus on specific discovery strategies for property tax litigation and particular attention will also be paid to taking the deposition of the appraiser expert witness.

Speakers

Damian Lara, Esq.

Damian Lara brings a wealth of experience and perspective to his new role as Bernalillo County Assessor. His experience as a young person working the fields in eastern New Mexico and exposure to stark differences in the quality of life among neighboring communities inspired him to pursue higher education and a career in government. Mr. Lara earned a bachelor's degree in political science and philosophy from Brown University and a law degree from the University of New Mexico. His public service career began as congressional staffer with the U.S. House of Representatives and includes service as deputy assessor for Bernalillo County and leadership roles with the Assessor's Affiliate of New Mexico Counties; and deputy director for economic development, City of Albuquerque. Legal experience includes representation of immigrant victims of domestic violence, staff attorney for the NM Legislature, and private practice.

William Shepherd, J.D.

Attorney Will Shepherd is the president of William D. Shepherd, P.A. where he practices property tax and real estate valuation litigation. Will has represented property appraisers in all aspects of property tax law for more than 30 years. He was general counsel for the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser for 26 years during which he represented the office in all matters including litigation over real estate and tangible personal property assessments and tax exemption and agricultural classification disputes at the administrative, circuit court and appellate court levels. He is a graduate of the University of South Florida and the University of Illinois Chicago (John Marshall) Law School. He is the recipient of the Florida Chapter IAAO 2018 Member of the Year and Lifetime Achievement awards and is a regular speaker on property tax and real estate valuations matters.

Christina Lynch, Esq.

As the Director of Legal for the Cook County Assessor, Christina focuses the scope of her work on complex commercial valuation issues, property tax incentives, including affordable housing, exempt and omitted properties and FOIA matters. She also serves as its Ethics Officer. Immediately prior to joining the Cook County Assessor's Office in 2018, Christina served as Ethics Manager and Staff Attorney to Cook County Clerk David Orr in the Elections Department, with oversight over

ethics filings for lobbyists and units of local government, vote by mail and electoral board operations.

Christina also has significant experience in the private sector, having practiced as a litigator for far too long, representing financial institutions and businesses, both large and small, in a variety of matters in federal and state court.

Christina received her Bachelor of Arts in International Studies, with minors in Spanish and Latin American Studies, from Miami University in Oxford, OH, and her Juris Doctorate from the DePaul University College of Law in Chicago, IL.