



## Seventh Annual Mid-South Agricultural & Environmental Law Conference

### *Speaker Biographies*

**Grant Ballard** is a partner with the Firm of Ark Ag Law, PLLC, which maintains a nationwide practice focused on the representation of Agricultural producers and other rural businesses. Ballard focuses his practice on the representation of farmers and ranchers in areas including federal farm programs, crop insurance litigation, contract law, environmental law and governmental compliance investigations.

He has extensive experience in crop insurance and farm program payment litigation where he has represented producers in litigation before private arbitrators, State and Federal Courts, and the USDA National Appeals Division. He has also regularly defended individuals charged with violating federal program requirements and federal criminal laws. Ballard practices across the nation and is currently admitted to practice before multiple Federal District Courts, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court of the United States.

Ballard regularly speaks to agricultural groups across the country, including at events such as the Beltwide Cotton Conference, and he has written on legal issues facing today's agricultural producers for various publications including the Drake Journal of Agricultural Law, The Delta Farm Press, The Southwest Farm Press, and The Arkansas Lawyer. His "Practitioners Guide to the Litigation of Federally Reinsured Crop Insurance Claims", previously published in the Drake Journal of Agricultural Law, has received wide recognition and Ballard has worked in the past with the National Agricultural Law Center in its efforts to publish relevant information on Mid-South agricultural law issues.

**Greg Cole** joined the Farm Credit System more than 29 years ago as a student intern with what was then known as the Farm Credit Bank of St. Louis. During his tenure, Greg has served in various roles and was named as President and Chief Executive Officer of AgHeritage Farm Credit Services by the Board of Directors in April 2008. Prior to being named CEO, Greg was the Chief Operating Officer for AgHeritage. Greg earned a Bachelor of Science of Agriculture Business and Economics at Arkansas State University and is a graduate of LSU Graduate School of Banking. AgHeritage Farm Credit Services is a cooperative lending institution with managed assets in excess of \$1.1 Billion that services the financial needs of the agricultural community in 24 counties throughout Central and Southeast Arkansas. AgHeritage Farm Credit Services is part of the national Farm Credit System with assets in excess of \$260 billion and is one of four Farm Credit associations in Arkansas with total assets in excess of \$2.8 billion. Farm Credit is the largest single lender to agriculture in the U.S. and in the state of Arkansas. Its mission is to serve agriculture and rural America.

**Michael Cooley** has been an attorney at Allen Wellman McNew Harvey, LLP, since 2006. Michael concentrates his practice in the area of business law, advising and assisting clients with a range of issues from business planning and transactions, to business litigation, including business dissolutions and employment disputes. Michael also regularly represents clients in appellate matters in both administrative and judicial reviews over a wide range of legal areas. Michael handles the majority of the firm's bankruptcy work, representing debtors and creditors in cases and litigation arising under Chapter 7, Chapter 13, and Chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code. Michael also devotes a significant amount of his practice to representing clients in general civil matters including litigation before both federal and state courts. Among his many accomplishments, Michael recently secured a landmark legal victory, *Boucher v. United States Dep't of Agric.*, 934 F.3d 530 (7th Cir. 1990) before the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in the area of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service wetlands compliance.

Michael grew up in Rush County, Indiana, and obtained his undergraduate degree from Franklin College in Franklin, Indiana, and his law degree from the Indiana University School of Law in Indianapolis. He is a member of the Indiana State Bar Association, the Indianapolis Bar Association, and the Hancock County Bar Association.

Michael resides in the Meridian Kessler neighborhood of Indianapolis with his wife Michele, their son, Evan, and their two dogs, Maggie and Pete. Michael enjoys spending his free time with his family and friends, and enjoys running, playing golf, watching sports, cooking, and sampling local cuisine.

**Walter Kelley** is deeply respected for his extensive knowledge and background in the bankruptcy arena, specifically including agricultural-related bankruptcy issues. Since 1980, Walter has been a Senior Partner at Kelley, Lovett, Blakely & Sanders, P.C.. Walter has served on the Panel of Chapter 7 Trustees for the Middle District of Georgia as well since 1986 and a member of the National Association of Chapter 7 Trustees since 1990. Since 1986, he has served as the Standing Chapter 12 Trustee for the Middle District of Georgia. Additionally, he served as the Standing Chapter 12 Trustee for the Northern District of Florida from 1990 to 2016.

Walter was a founding member of the Association of Chapter 12 Trustees, has been a member of the Association since 1990, and has served as the Association President. He is a member of the Middle District of Georgia Bankruptcy Institute, a Founding Member and Director of the South Georgia Bankruptcy Institute, and a Founding Member and Director of the American Bankruptcy Institute. Walter is engaged in a number of civic activities, including being an active member of the Dougherty Rotary Club in Dougherty, Georgia.

**Hunt Shipman** has more than two decades of experience in Washington, D.C., including having held a variety of positions in government and the private sector. Prior to joining Cornerstone, Hunt was a senior executive for the largest trade association serving the food and beverage industry, where he led the association's government affairs and communications programs. From 2001 to 2003, Hunt was Deputy Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services and served as the acting Deputy Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs at the United States Department of Agriculture. In this capacity, he led three agencies with over 18,000 employees stationed around the world, and administered over \$31 billion in programs. Hunt was the Department of Agriculture's principal negotiator with the Congress for the 2002 Farm Bill. Hunt also served as the staff director of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Professional Staff Member at the Senate Appropriations Committee, and on the personal staff of Senator Thad Cochran.

In his time with Cornerstone, Hunt has used this experience to assist a variety of clients as they pursue their policy, regulatory and legislative goals with key members of various Congressional committees, the White House and executive branch agencies. The industry sectors he has worked with include food and agriculture, higher education, telecommunications, technology, international trade, environment and energy.

Hunt has served on the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Board of Directors for the U.S. Committee for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. He is a graduate of Mississippi State University, where he was inducted into the University's Hall of Fame and received the College of Agriculture's Distinguished Service Award and was named the 2012 Alumni Fellow.

**Amanda Jones Tollison** currently serves as President of the Mississippi Bar Association and focuses her legal practice on administrative and environmental law, election and campaign finance, and government relations. Before joining Butler Snow, she served as Counsel to Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour. Amanda has represented and represents clients before the Mississippi Secretary of State, the Mississippi Ethics Commission, the Mississippi Development Authority, the Mississippi Department of Revenue and Alcoholic

Beverage Control Division, the Mississippi Department of Health, the Mississippi Department of Human Services, the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, the Mississippi State Board of Medical Licensure, the Mississippi Board of Pharmacy, the Mississippi State Board of Nursing, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries & Parks and various other state boards and commissions Amanda has ongoing representation of industry clients in agency enforcement actions and in investigating and implementing remedial measures to address contaminated soil and groundwater and related vapor intrusion issues. Additionally, she has negotiated the purchase of wetlands mitigation credits from a local mitigation bank under section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

**Autumn Veazey Price** joined Land O'Lakes in 2013 as Director of Government Relations. Prior to that, she served as professional staff and counsel for U.S. Senator and Ranking Member Thad Cochran of Mississippi. She previously served as professional staff and counsel for U.S. Senator Pat Roberts of Kansas, while he was Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. Autumn served as a litigation attorney representing insurance companies in both insurance defense and workers compensation areas, served as Associate Counsel and Director of Legislative Affairs for the United Fresh Produce Association, a trade association that represents 1,300 member companies. Autumn has also held the position of manager of federal affairs at Troutman Sanders Strategies, a full-service government relations and issues management firm.