

Rafael R. Shabetai



Biography 2022

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, into an international european business family, Rafael R. Shabetai is the former Vice President and Senior Chief Underwriter of Pan-American Life Insurance Group. He retired by mid 2021 and is now a Consultant in Underwriting Performance, Team Building and Training, New Business Efficiency and Sales Force Underwriting Consulting and Second Opinion Expert, associated with Global Performance Services Group.

With over 35 years of experience in Life and Health Underwriting, and more than 40 years of International business expertise in Latin America and Europe he has in-depht knowledge of Central and South American countries and Caribbean Island/Nations which he extensively visited during his last 20 years at Pan-American Life.

Besides underwriting large cases up to \$15 million and up, he provided underwriting training and support to staff members and producers throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, through Seminars and Workshops.

Before Pan-American, Mr. Shabetai held an international assignment as Director of Underwriting for South America for the start-up operation of the late Lincoln National Reinsurance Company in Buenos Aires Argentina. Among other accomplishments he completed the translation and edition of Lincoln Re's Life Underwriting Manual into Spanish in year 2000. The Manual was used by over 100 insurance companies at the time and was later adapted by Swiss Re, who acquired Lincoln Re in 2001.

Prior to Lincoln Re, he was Underwriting Manager, acting Chief Underwriter, at American Bankers Life Assurance Company of Florida. Before that, he was Assistant Chief Underwriter for the International TPA of The United States Life of New York, also based in Miami, where he started as a New Business & Operations Manager for several years.

He is an active member of the AHOU (Association of Home Office Underwriters), former member of their Program Committee, former President of the South Florida Life Underwriting Association and participated at the creation of Underwriter's associations in Argentina, Chile and Panama. And former member of the Steering Committee of the now extint International Underwriting Congress, Rio de Janeiro 2008, organization for which he was lecturer and presenter at the 1999 and 2005 in London and Geneva respectively.

In 2004 Mr. Shabetai along with four other colleagues, founded the International Underwriting Study Group, whose members are Chief Underwriters of companies doing business mainly in Latin America and the Caribbean. He now serves as Executive Director on a permanent basis. The group started with 6 members and has now over 35 who meet in connection with the AHOU Annual Conferences.

He served as member of the MIB Inc. Risk Advisory Council, for a three year term where he promoted the idea of the expansion of the MIB (formerly known as the Medical Information Bureau) to the Caribbean. The MIB is a non-profit organization that acts as a medical information clearing house for insurance companies in the US, Canada and other select countries.

Mr. Shabetai is a recognized speaker in the insurance industry, besides the International Underwriting Congress mentioned above, he participated at several Break Out Sessions of the Association of Home Office Underwriters Conference.

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In 2008 he was appointed as a member of the Executive Editorial Team of "On The Risk" Magazine, the Journal of the Academy of Life Underwriting, for which he was Editor-in-Chief for the year 2010. His legacy was the cover re-design and improved pages layout. He currently contributes as Caribbean Editor and formerly as Latin American Editor.

He holds a BA degree from the School of Law of the University of Buenos Aires, in Legal Translation and Compared Law in French and Spanish, and post-grad in Broadcasting Law. In the US, he is accredited by the American Translators Association.

He is also a graduate from the Institute of Social Communications of Buenos Aires with an AA degree in Radio & TV Newscasting and Broadcasting Journalism. In the early 70's he was a radio journalist and announcer, morning shift news chief at national public radios of Argentina. In 1976 he won a Fellowship from the French Government to do an internship at the French news agency France Presse and Radiodiffusion de France, the french radio and television organization in Paris. He returned to Argentina in 1978 to cover the Soccer World Cup, prior to moving to the US with his own company in 1981.

In other activities, he is an active member of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. Since he joined in 2006, he held different leadership positions from Flotilla Commander to National Staff Division Chief of Program Development and Support of the International Affairs Directorate and a member of its Interpreter Corps. He is fluent in French, Spanish, Italian, English and Portuguese. For his contributions, in 2011 Mr. Shabetai received a special Letter of Commendation from Rear Admiral Mary Landry, Commander of the 8th Coastal Region.

In 2019 he received the Medal of Achievement by the Commandant of the US Coast Guard, Admiral Karl Schultz, for sustained professional achievements and recognition of an outstanding level of performance assisting the Investigations Center of Expertise (INCOE) with specialized translations.

He is currently holds the position of Branch Chief Interpreter Outreach, International Affairs and also Vice Flotilla Commander of the Northlake Flotilla, USCG Auxiliary.

Mr. Shabetai and his wife Claudia are also producers and hosts of a cultural and information radio show in Spanish that airs weekly on KGLA 105.7FM. "Suplemento" has been on the air for 19 successful years. In 2019 they received the "Artistic Excellence Award" by the Cervantes Foundation and a Proclamation from the President of Jefferson Parish for their contribution to the arts and the Inspiration Award from the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana.

He is also the correspondent for CNN En Español Radio, covering only important and significant news or events in the New Orleans area such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Hurricane Gustav in 2008, Deep Water Horizon event, and Hurricane Isaac in 2012.

In his multiple career Mr. Shabetai received numerous awards from different entities in the US and other countries including the Fuerza Aérea Argentina (Argentine Air Force) and Prefectura Naval Argentina (Argentine Coast Guard), and was featured in numerous articles in different publications.

Both himself and his wife have served on the board of a number of local non-profit and community organization.

He lives with his wife Claudia in the Metropolitan Area of New Orleans, Louisiana, USA. They have a son who is a PhD candidate in Material Chemistry at University of New Orleans, and a baby grand-son.