



We Focus Our Law Firm On Representing Victims!



It is truly an honor to have the privilege of educating the readers of Atlantic County Woman in the areas of personal injury law. I value your time and appreciate that you are using that time to listen to my thoughts on various topics. We all come from different backgrounds and, as such, may have different preconceived notions about individuals in different professions. I was asked by Atlantic County Woman what the most common misconceptions are about attorneys. If you have not yet read my answer, please take a moment and before you read on, ask yourself that same question.

Know a good lawyer joke?

I am sure if we had a half an hour, we could probably come up with a bunch of lawyer jokes or stories about how attorneys have made someone's life horrible. Have you ever driven through Florida and seen some of the billboards? Just thinking of them makes me want to take a shower, they're so slimy.

I worked in my father's law office since I was 14 years old and while I have had other legal jobs in between, I have been practicing as a personal injury attorney for 15 years. I have run into many attorneys along the way and I have to say, most of them are truly good people. In law school we did an exercise in one of my classes where we went around the room and each of us answered the question, "Why are you in law school?" Out of the 45 people in that class, only 2 or 3 said it was to make money. One of them walked out of the contracts exam at the end of our first year and I never saw him again. The other went on to be a successful actor. I have not kept tabs on the third, but quite frankly he was not the type of person I cared to keep tabs on, if you know what I mean. Mostly everyone else in the class had noble reasons. One of my best friends wanted to go into education. Another friend wanted to work at a non-profit group. Another was pumped to work as a prosecutor putting away the bad guys. One young lady who stuck out in my mind was set to change the law relative to rights for transgender children. A gentleman friend of mine spoke three languages and wanted to work on United Nations policies. The different stories go on and on.

Millions of dollars for hot coffee?!

The point of all of this is that most lawyers start out wanting to change the world or make a difference. I think of the attorney who handled the infamous McDonald's hot coffee case. Did he dream of one day successfully representing a burn victim, and then the insurance industry and media whipping his success into a smear campaign against personal injury attorneys?

If you have ever heard anyone mention the McDonald's coffee case, you will often hear people say, "That lady got millions of dollars for having coffee spilled on her." The truth is 79-year-old Mrs. Liebeck suffered third-degree burns to her thighs, buttocks and crotch, was hospitalized for eight days and underwent numerous skin grafts because McDonald's served coffee that was 180-190 degrees (boiling is 212). Mrs. Liebeck tried to settle with McDonald's for \$20,000 to cover her expenses, but McDonald's would only offer her \$800, forcing her to hire an attorney and go to trial. The jury awarded \$160,000 for her pain and suffering and medical expenses. The \$2.7 million part of the award was for punitive damages, which are meant to punish and deter McDonald's from ever harming someone like that again. For more information watch the HBO documentary Hot Coffee. After you do, I guarantee any of those negative first opinions you had of lawyers would change.

Certainly there are those justice-seeking, world-changing law students who get lost along the way and get stuck in a career that was not something they dreamed of doing. Hopefully they find that law student they once were and change careers. Many of us, though, are blessed to be able to find a job in the career we had hoped for. I am proud to be a personal injury attorney. While there is the right attorney for everyone, I am honored my clients chose me and my firm to trust them with an incredibly difficult part of their lives.

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D'AMATO LAW FIRM

SOUTH JERSEY PERSONAL INJURY LAW CENTER

The D'Amato Law Firm focuses their practice in representing those who have been seriously injured in construction, products liability and motor vehicle collisions. The firm handles cases throughout the country with a primary focus on representing victims injured in Southern New Jersey. The D'Amato Law Firm has a national reputation for excellence.

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