

Atlantic COUNTY Woman™

An Educational Resource for Women and Their Families



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WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN CHOOSING A DENTIST

At DS Dental, we are committed to providing better treatment options and making our patients' care a long-term investment.

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TREE OF LIFE

At Advanced Care Ob/Gyn, we are committed to providing safe, individualized care to the families in our community.

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THINKING AHEAD THIS SUMMER

The Pediatrician's office is the best place to get your child's physical because they know your child the best and they have the most to offer in terms of improving their health.

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D'Amato Law Firm is a real family business. They are here to help you in cases of injuries due to construction accidents, product liability, motor vehicle collisions, and more. Read more on pages 28 & 29.

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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.

www.damatolawfirm.com

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The D'Amato Law Firm is a Family Affair

Attorney Alexa D'Amato knows first hand how a serious injury can turn a person's life upside down. As a personal injury lawyer, her firm specializes in representing those who have been injured in construction accidents, product liability issues, and motor vehicle collisions. Although the firm handles cases throughout the country, there is a primary focus on victims in Southern New Jersey. Their reputation for excellence has been well documented and Alexa considers her role a blessing. She adds, Alexa has been practicing for 15 years and has the distinct honor of being her father's law partner.

ACW: What are the most common misconceptions about your field?

Alexa: I have heard that personal injury attorneys are ambulance chasers and only care about money. The insurance companies' smear campaigns have tried to destroy the reputation of personal injury attorneys. "I am honored to be able to help people whose lives have been affected by tragedy. My clients share intimate details of their life, both before and after they were injured. If there was a mechanism to take the hurt and pain away I would do that, but in this lifetime obtaining a monetary award to make life a little easier is as good as it gets."

ACW: What led you to want to specialize in personal injury?

Alexa: I started working with my dad, Paul R. D'Amato when I was just 14 years old. One of the first clients I met was a young man who had been run over by a tractor at a construction work site. He had numerous surgeries but the doctors were unable to save his leg. When he met me he said that my father saved his life. I remember thinking that he must have had the wrong guy. My dad was a lawyer – not a doctor. I later asked my dad what he meant and with tears in his eyes he told me what this young man had been through. The horrible way he recalled the tractor rolling on top of his leg, pulling at his flesh, and the intense pain that followed. The numerous surgeries that failed to keep his leg and the loss of a job that he thoroughly enjoyed. This young man had gotten to a very low point in his life and my dad was there with him the whole way. He was more than an attorney to the young man – he was a friend and a support system. I knew from that day I wanted to be a lawyer and help people just like my father.

ACW: What sets your practice apart from others like it?

Alexa: We treat our clients like family and fight hard to get them the best possible result. They receive copies of every document that has to do with their case so they always know we are working for them. In an attempt to protect their privacy, we do not advertise our settlements or verdicts.

ACW: How do you balance your career with your other job as "Mom?"

Alexa: When I am home I focus solely on my family. Some nights I may have to work until 11 PM to make a school field trip, but I will make that field trip. For me, it's a matter of making the right things a priority at the right time. Thank goodness I have the flexibility to do that.



A Real Family Business

Paul, Alexa's father, started practicing law in 1974 and opened his own office in 1987 limiting his practice to personal injury trial work. Alexa's mom, Sandi, who was an insurance underwriter for years, took on the role as office manager at that same time to manage the financial end of the business.

ACW: What do you enjoy most about working with your daughter?

Sandi: It was always my hope that Alexa would find something meaningful to do with her life. It is so validating for my my husband and me that she "got" what is so meaningful in our lives, so much so that she decided to go to law school and join Paul in his law firm. I also love being able to say good morning and good night to her in person every day. **Paul:** It is so heartwarming to see your own child so respect your career choice that she attends law school and ultimately becomes your law partner.

ACW: Why do you think the D'Amato law firm stands out among others like it?

Paul: Once you walk through the doors of our office, you become family. I believe our clients know from the first time they meet us that they will have a strong and dedicated team on their side until the conclusion of their case. Our attorneys are accessible 24/7 and are with them every step of the way.

