



\$2 million settlement for fatal crash caused by inattentive and irresponsible truck driver

Driver of fully-loaded semi-truck and trailer failed to reduce speed on fog-shrouded highway.

In the early morning hours of December 29, 2016, John Smith (not his real name) was driving his 2009 Honda Civic on Interstate 10, in the panhandle of Florida, on his way to Tallahassee. Though the posted speed limit was 70 miles per hour, conditions that morning required Mr. Smith and every other reasonable driver to lower their speed due to dense fog that shrouded the highway. Mr. Smith had reduced his speed to approximately 50 to 65 mph, and was driving in the slower outside lane.



Traveling behind Mr. Smith was a semi-truck hauling a loaded trailer weighing over 60,000 pounds. The semi-truck was operated by a driver contracted by a large motor carrier to work the “red-eye” shift delivering

a load to a client in Alabama. Despite the dense fog, the driver of the semi-truck kept his rig on cruise-control running at 72 mph. As the semi-truck approached Mr. Smith’s vehicle, the truckdriver failed to notice the slower-moving vehicle in front of him and the truck plowed into the rear of Mr. Smith’s car. The impact sent the Honda off the highway and over a grassy embankment where it rolled over and smashed at the bottom of the embankment. Mr. Smith’s lifeless body was found hanging from his seatbelt. The medical

examiner later determined that Mr. Smith died from blunt-force trauma to his head and chest.

Mr. Smith was 61-years-old at the time of his death. He left behind a wife and children. His family was devastated by the loss of their husband and father. The family asked SDSBS attorneys **Cameron Kennedy** and **Carter Scott** to represent them in an action to hold the semi-truck driver accountable for the accident.

In the days following Mr. Smith’s death, a dispute arose concerning the circumstances that occurred moments before the impact of the vehicles and what had actually caused the semi-truck to crash into Mr. Smith’s vehicle. The semi-truck driver blamed Mr. Smith for causing the crash. He testified that moments before the impact, he observed taillights on the shoulder of the highway. As he approached the taillights, the vehicle suddenly pulled off the shoulder of the highway and into the right lane directly in front of the semi-truck causing the semi-truck to crash into the car.

Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Scott initiated an exhaustive investigation to uncover the facts that caused the tragic accident. They analyzed the black-box data recorder and performed a full-scale accident reconstruction. Experts retained by SDSBS were able to dispute the driver’s testimony that Mr. Smith had pulled out of the shoulder area in front of the semi-truck. The expert accident reconstruction showed that Mr. Smith was already driving in the right-hand lane at a reasonable speed before the impact. The analysis also showed that the deadly crash could have been avoided if the semi-truck driver had been paying attention.

Eventually, the parties reached a settlement of \$2 million. The settlement will help provide security for the Smith family as they face a future without their patriarch. ♦

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Ed Ricci and Matt Schwencke Florida Bar Board Certified

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SEARCY DENNEY SCAROLA BARNHART & SHIPLEY PA ATTORNEYS AT LAW

SDSBS reaches beyond insurance policies deliberately designed to limit liability of wrongdoers

Demanding assets beyond wrongdoer's limited liability policy provided additional fair and reasonable compensation for the victim's damages.

Searcy Denney has been representing victims in automobile accidents for over 45 years. We know what it takes to ensure that the at-fault party's insurance company agrees to pay a fair and reasonable amount to compensate our clients for what often is a lifetime of pain and suffering. We also are aware that sometimes individuals who are uniquely wealthy may opt to be "underinsured" – choosing lower monthly premiums over ensuring that victims of their potential negligence might be fully compensated for damages caused by such negligence. Searcy Denney will not hesitate to pursue the wrongdoer's personal assets – over and above their effort to limit their liability by designing a limited insurance policy.

Recently, SDSBS attorney **David Vitale** represented a woman who, while crossing a street in a designated crosswalk in broad daylight, was run over by a local resident who was a doctor. The doctor had a limited liability insurance coverage of \$100,000. Nonetheless, Mr. Vitale relentlessly pursued his client's claim. With the assistance of SDSBS paralegals and investigators, the at-fault driver was convinced to contribute \$125,000 (out of his personal accounts), in addition to the insurance proceeds, to bring the case to settlement. ♦

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A REPORT TO CLIENTS & ATTORNEYS **VOLUME 19, NUMBER 3**

MANAGER: **JOAN WILLIAMS**
MANAGING EDITOR: **ROBIN KRIBERNEY**
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CREATIVE DIRECTOR: **DE CARTERBROWN**

NOTE: The accounts of recent trials, verdicts and settlements contained in this newsletter are intended to illustrate the experience of the firm in a variety of litigation areas. Each case is unique, and the results in one case do not necessarily indicate the quality or value of any other case. Omitting clients' names and/or defendants' names are the result of requests for anonymity.

Emergency room doctor ignored signs of vascular injuries leading to amputation of young patient's leg

Timely detection and treatment would have prevented severe deterioration of the boy's leg.

On May 14, 2015, 15-year-old John Smith's morning began like that of any other ninth grader. He got up early, got dressed, and went to school. He had gym class in the morning which on this day took place at a local park. As the class ended, John hoisted one of his friends onto his back and began running toward the bus that would take the boys back to school. As he ran, his lower left leg hyperextended in front of his body, and he fell to the ground.

In considerable pain, John was taken to the nearest hospital's emergency room. His left knee was obviously swollen, and an x-ray revealed that he had suffered a Salter IV tibial plateau fracture. This type of fracture can occur in children and involves all three elements of the bone – the growth plate, metaphysis, and epiphysis. Of particular concern in fractures of this type is the possibility of a vascular injury that may not be revealed by an x-ray. At the emergency room, John was already showing signs of having suffered a vascular injury as well as the fracture. Medical records noted a decrease in temperature of his left foot, and swelling and numbness on the anteromedial sole of his left foot. Unfortunately, the emergency room doctor failed to note the significance of these findings and ordered John to be discharged after two hours in the emergency room. At discharge, the ER doctor simply recommended that John's parents follow up with an orthopedic surgeon within the next 24 to 48 hours.

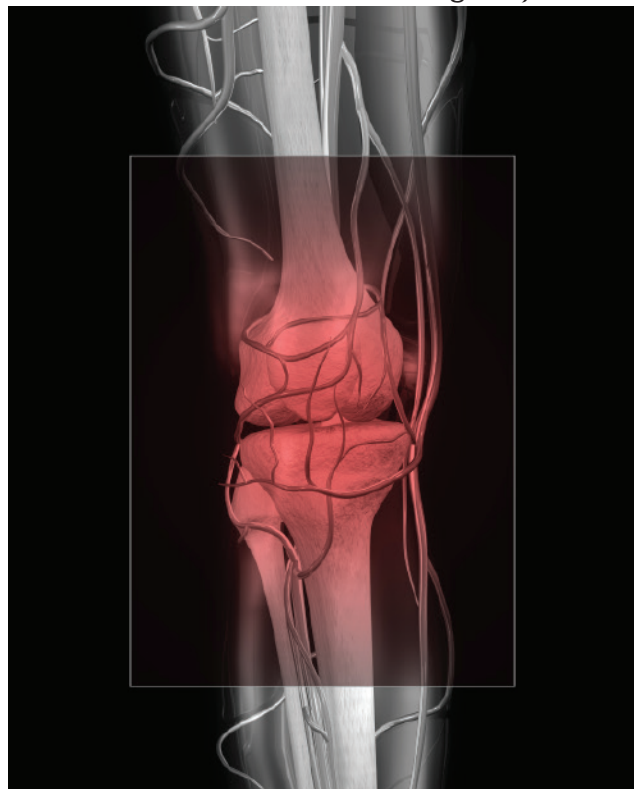
Concerned about her son's well-being, John's mother was able to schedule an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon the first thing the next morning. By the time John

reached the orthopedist's office, his left leg was fully numb, cold to the touch, and had no pulse in the lower leg. The surgeon immediately recognized that John had suffered a vascular compromise in his left leg. Knowing that time was critical, the surgeon placed John in a wheelchair and took him across the street to a hospital for emergency surgery. The orthopedic surgeon performed a fasciotomy surgery that took from morning until afternoon in an effort to relieve the pressure building in John's leg. Unfortunately, efforts to regain circulation and pulse were unsuccessful. Following a number of other surgeries, John ultimately lost his left leg in a through-the-knee amputation.

With John now on the road to recovering from his surgeries, John's parents reached out to SDSBS attorneys **Chris Searcy, John Shipley, and D. J. Ward** for help in determining whether John's healthcare providers had breached the standard of care. During their investigation and the ensuing litigation, they were able to show that John had suffered an injury to the intima – the innermost layer of the artery in the vascular structure behind the left knee. This intimal tear caused a lack of perfusion of blood to the left leg. Blood was diverted from traveling down the normal

path of the artery and, instead, collected around the knee causing an occlusion. The signs of this condition, they argued, were evident during the emergency room examination when John presented with decreased temperature and numbness in his foot. Had the emergency room physician followed the simple maxim, "Keep the kid, keep the leg," as the plaintiff's expert orthopedic surgeon suggested, John would never have had to undergo the amputation.

After several years of litigation, the case was resolved for a confidential amount. ♦



Push-button ignitions: dangerous if driver is inattentive

“You got smarts?” Nowadays, most all of us have “smarts” – smart phones, smart toasters, smart home lighting, heating, and air conditioning, smart toilets, and smart security systems. Now we have smart cars. And now, perhaps, we have something that is so smart and efficient that it can kill us.

In the old days, your car had a key. You inserted that key into a cylinder and turned it to unlock the car door, then inserted it into the ignition cylinder to start the engine and make the car’s systems operational. When you turned the key in reverse and removed it, all systems including the engine shut down. You went home with your key in your pocket or purse, and all of your vehicle’s systems were down and done.

In the early 2000s, auto manufacturers began developing “push-button ignition systems.” Super-cool, super-swift, super-efficient! With your new car, you have a key that permits you to unlock your car, open the car doors, start the car, operate it, and turn it off – all with that key sitting in your pocket or purse. This technology is easy and convenient, but it removes a critical fail-safe that prevented you from unintentionally leaving your car’s engine running. Since the key in a push-button ignition vehicle never needs to be removed from your pocket or purse, it is easy and not uncommon to leave the vehicle running even when the key is miles away. If your vehicle is unintentionally left running outside, the worst that will happen is that you will run out of gas. However, deadly consequences can result if your car is unintentionally left running inside your garage or other enclosed space.

Imagine that you return from an afternoon of shopping to your house and park in your own garage. You exit your vehicle with the key in your pocket or purse, and enter your house to grab a glass of lemonade and a quick nap before the evening news. You are totally unaware that you left your car’s engine running. Your very modern and efficient car has an engine that is so quiet that you did not

hear it running as you went inside your home. You have that glass of lemonade, check the mail, and take a nap. And while you are napping, carbon monoxide is flowing from your garage into your home.



New cars are so smart and efficient that they may seriously harm or kill us if we do not pay attention.

In warmer climates such as Florida, many home air handling systems are located in garages. The poisonous gas enters the home through that system, and even through walls or spaces under doors. Carbon monoxide detected at levels from 300 to 500 PPM (parts per million) can seriously and permanently injure or kill a person. The automobile sitting in your garage has inherently unsafe equipment – a push-button ignition that will allow your vehicle to run until there is no more gas, even while the key is nowhere near it.

After numerous incidents of injury and death involving car owners accidentally leaving their car running, both Ford and General Motors are installing automatic shut-off systems to prevent these terrible tragedies. However, the rest of the industry’s automobile manufacturers using

push-button ignition systems have done nothing to correct the problem with their own vehicles. According to SDSBS attorney **Michael Kugler**, the automotive industry needs to stop fighting its customers and prevent these incidents by including automatic shut-offs in all of their push-button ignition vehicles. While the automobile industry continues to fight the National Highway and Transportation Safety Administration’s efforts to require automatic shut-offs, consumers’ only opportunity to make push-button ignitions safe is to fight the automaker’s through civil litigation. Our firm is actively litigating these tragic cases in an effort to make automobiles safer for all consumers. In fact, after years of litigation, including cases filed on behalf of Searcy Denney clients, Toyota has finally announced that all of their 2020 vehicles with push-button ignitions will include automatic shut-offs. ♦

Slip on uncleaned spill causes a permanently damaged ankle resulting in six-figure settlement

Nightclub ignored the initial spill clean-up, then couldn't identify the server, the busboy, nor produce the group's receipts from that night.

In January 2017, Michelle Diaz (not her real name) and a group of friends were celebrating a birthday in downtown West Palm Beach, Florida. Following dinner, they continued their celebration at a nearby nightclub. At the nightclub, the group was seated in a “VIP” lounge area bordering the dance floor. The seating area was one step up from the dance floor on an elevated platform.

Over several hours, the group was served a number of drinks. One of the guests accidentally spilled a drink on the edge of the elevated platform which dripped down onto the dance floor below. The group asked their server to clean up the spill as it could become a slip hazard. A short time later, a busboy returned and attempted to clean up the spill. Ms. Diaz assumed their request had been completed. Later in the evening, however, a member of her group slipped in the area of the spill, but was able to maintain her balance. A second request was made to the nightclub staff to clean up the spill. Unfortunately, that was not done. As the group began to leave the nightclub, Ms. Diaz stepped down from the elevated area onto the edge of the dance floor and slipped on the portion of the spill that had not been cleaned. Ms. Diaz fell to the floor dislocating and breaking her ankle. She was carried from the nightclub to a car and then transported to a nearby emergency room.

At the hospital, Ms. Diaz already knew what the doctors confirmed – she would need surgery to repair her badly broken ankle. She eventually had to endure two more surgeries to fix her ankle. She was bedbound for weeks, and slowly transitioned from wheelchair, to walker, to cane, before walking on her own. It was more than a year later before she could return to riding horses, but never at the level she previously enjoyed as a competitive jumper.

While convalescing after her first surgery on the ankle, Ms. Diaz contacted SDSBS attorney **Jack Hill** to represent her and her husband in a legal action against the nightclub for failing to maintain its premises in a reasonably safe condition. Mr. Hill immediately filed a notice of claim to the nightclub and requested all surveillance footage covering the incident. The nightclub's defense was undermined by its failure to save the films. It was further complicated because the nightclub could not identify the group's server, or the busboy, or produce any of the group's receipts from that night. Ultimately, the case settled shortly before trial for a confidential amount in the mid-six-figure range. ♦



SDSBS Websites

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for the latest news and information on our firm, attorneys, articles, cases, etc.



Log on to...

www.SearcyMassTort.com
for the latest news and information on Mass Torts (such torts involve many people who have been harmed in a similar way, usually by a drug, medical device or a product).



Log on to...

www.SearcyLatino.com
for the latest news and information about our firm in Spanish.



Speaking Opportunities



Chris Searcy



Brenda Fulmer



Laurie Briggs



Cal Warriner



Karen Terry



Bonnie Stark



Vince Leonard



Olga Patterson

On August 7, 2019, **Chris Searcy** spoke on “Experiences in Voir Dire and Lessons Learned” for FJA’s Christian D. Searcy Voir Dire Institute held at in Orlando, Florida. ♦

In June 2019, the Florida Justice Association held its annual convention at The Breakers, Palm Beach, Florida. With the convention held “in our very own backyard,” SDSBS staff were significant participants in the presentations offered by FJA. **Brenda Fulmer** spoke at the FJA Women’s Caucus Section Annual Retreat on “Building Your Own Book Outside of the ‘Good Ole Boys’ Network (Learn methods to create your own value and develop your own Book of Business).” **Laurie Briggs** spoke on “Lead Time in Preparing for Trial.” **Olga Patterson**, SDSBS Mass Torts Unit Case Manager, offered introduction and opening remarks for FJA’s Civil Litigation for Paralegals & Legal Assistants Seminar. Paralegals **Bonnie Stark** and **Vince Leonard** provided “Client Intake” and “Trial Preparation Panel Roundtable,” respectively, at that seminar. ♦

At the American Association for Justice’s convention held in July 2019 in San Diego, California, **Chris Searcy** spoke on the topic: “Advocacy Track: Lessons from the Courtroom – Developing the Case Theory in Your Opening.” At the same AAJ Convention, **Cal Warriner**, as leader of the hip implant

litigations and co-lead of the national litigation efforts, did a presentation for the Stryker Litigation Group meeting. ♦

In June 2019, **Brenda Fulmer** spoke to the Broward County Justice Association meeting in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on “Hot Topics in Mass Tort Litigation.” On July 24, 2019, Ms. Fulmer participated in a presentation at the HarrisMartin’s MDL (multi-district litigation) Conference for both plaintiff and defense mass tort litigators. Their topic was “Litigating MDLs from A to Z.” Later in July 2019, Ms. Fulmer spoke on mass tort settlement issues at the AAJ Convention and pre-meetings in San Diego. Ms. Fulmer is co-leader of the Biomet hip implant litigation group and co-lead of the national litigation steering committee. She also spoke, along with San Diego trial lawyer John Gomez, on ethics in litigation (“Ethics of Attorney Advertising in a Digital World”). At the AAJ convention luncheon and at the AAJ’s Board meeting, Ms. Fulmer received recognition from AAJ for her service to the organization in the areas of membership recruitment and political fundraising. ♦

Karen Terry spoke at the 22nd Annual Convention of the American Board of Trial Advocates held in July in Orlando, Florida. Ms. Terry’s topic was “Plaintiff v. Defense Perspectives.” ♦




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SDSBS and friends assist Bahamians displaced after storm destroys homes

Good Neighbors and Good Samaritans offer compassion after Hurricane Dorian

On September 1, 2019, Dorian, a category 5 hurricane, made landfall in Great Abaco Island, Bahamas with sustained winds exceeding 185 mph. The storm completely devastated the Abacos and Grand Bahama, terrifying its residents, leaving tens of thousands homeless, and taking a still undetermined number of lives.

Donnell Pubien's home is still standing but gaping holes in the roof, blown out windows and water damage throughout make it unlivable. He and his family reached out to their long-time friend, Teena Lovalvo of Tequesta, Florida, asking for support. She helped arrange for a private plane to take the family off the island and bring them to Florida where she shared her condominium home with the displaced Bahamians. Most of the family members were soon able to shelter with other friends in Florida, but Donnell needed to remain with Teena in Tequesta.



Shortly after her guests arrived, Teena received notice from her Condominium Association that accommodating the emergency needs of even one visitor violated condo rules and would subject her to a daily fine of \$100 or more for each day the violation continued. SDSBS attorney **Jack Scarola** heard of Teena's plight and offered help in responding to the Association's threats. Mr. Scarola quickly sent an email to the Association indicating that he represented Teena, appealing to the Condo board to allow common sense and fairness to prevail over technicalities and making it clear that SDSBS was prepared to stand with Teena if the Association's unreasonable demands were not withdrawn. Very shortly thereafter, the Association's counsel notified Mr. Scarola that the Board of Directors had waived its restrictions on Teena's visitor and would consider extending the waiver if it became necessary in the future.

Thanks to the generosity of Teena Lovalvo and the help of Mr. Scarola, a simple email generated both reason and empathy. SDSBS attorneys are themselves providing temporary shelter in their homes to other Hurricane Dorian victims and both lawyers and staff members have been actively involved in multiple relief efforts to assist people who desperately need the help. Speaking on behalf of the firm, **Chris Searcy** commented, "Time to Care is an important emphasis for us, our families, and our community today and every day." ♦



Chris Searcy



Jack Scarola



Greg Barnhart



Sia Baker-Barnes



Brian Denney



Brenda Fulmer



Mariano Garcia



Jim Gustafson



Jack Hill



Ed Ricci



Chris Speed



Karen Terry



Cal Warriner



Hardee Bass



Andrea Lewis

SDSBS attorneys listed in *The Best Lawyers in America* for 2020

In August 2019, *The Best Lawyers in America* released its listing of the 2020 top legal talents in America. The listing, a result of peer-reviews evaluating 7.8 million applicants and recognizing 60,000 attorneys in 145 practice areas, included SDSBS attorneys **Chris Searcy, Jack Scarola, Greg Barnhart, Sia Baker-Barnes, Brian Denney, Brenda Fulmer, Mariano Garcia, Jim Gustafson, Jack Hill, Ed Ricci, Chris Speed, Karen Terry, Cal Warriner, Hardee Bass,** and **Andrea Lewis**. Two attorneys were selected West Palm Beach Lawyers of the Year - **Jack Hill** in personal injury litigation (plaintiffs), and **Cal Warriner** in mass tort litigation/class actions (plaintiffs). ♦

MASS TORT PROJECTS OF INTEREST

3M Dual-Ended Combat Arms Earplugs

Tinnitus
Hearing Loss

Abilify

Pathological Gambling

Actemra

Heart Attacks
Strokes

Bair Hugger Warming Blankets

Infections

DePuy Attune Knee Implants

Premature Device Failure
Tibial Baseplate Loosening

Essure

Organ Perforation

Hernia Mesh

Bowel Obstruction
Mesh Migration

Invokana and Farxiga

Amputations
Kidney Failure
Ketoacidosis

IVC Filter

Device Fracture
Heart and Lung Perforation
Migration

Januvia, Janumet, Byetta, and Victoza

Pancreatic Cancer
Thyroid Cancer

Metal-on-Metal Hip Implants

Device Failure and Loosening
Inflammatory Response
Metallosis

Smith & Nephew Modular SMF and REDAPT Hip Implants

Premature Device Failure
Metallosis
Inflammatory Response

Onglyza, Kombiglyze and Kombiglyze XR

Heart Failure

OxyContin and Oxycodone

Local Government Abatement Costs

Proton Pump Inhibitors (Nexium, Prevacid, Prilosec, Aciphex, Protonix, Zegerid, and Dexilant)

Renal/Kidney Failure

Provigil & Nuvigil

Birth Defects

Risperdal

Gynecomastia

Roundup Weed Killer

Cancer

Stryker Modular Hip Implants

Premature Device Failure
Metallosis
Inflammatory Response

Talcum Powder

Ovarian Cancer
Mesothelioma

Tasigna

Atherosclerosis
Amputation
Stroke
Death

Taxotere

Permanent Hair Loss

Valsartan

Cancer

Viagra and Cialis

Melanoma

Xeljanz

Blood Clots
Pulmonary Embolism

Zimmer Biomet Shoulder

Device Fracture

Zimmer M/L Taper, Kinectiv, and VerSys Hip Components

Premature Device Failure
Trunnionosis
Metallosis
Inflammatory Response

Zofran and Depakote

Birth Defects

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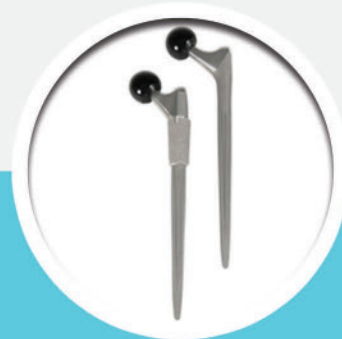
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3M Dual-Ended Combat Arms Earplugs

USE: Ear Protection

HARM: Tinnitus; hearing loss and other hearing problems.



Smith & Nephew and Stryker Modular Hip Implants

USE: Hip implant devices

HARM: Breakdown of metallic surfaces; abnormal wear; premature device failure; elevated cobalt and chromium; metallosis and pseudotumor formation.



Metal-On-Metal Hip Implants

USE: Hip implant devices with metal head and liner

HARM: Breakdown of metallic surfaces; abnormal wear; premature device failure; elevated cobalt and chromium; metallosis and pseudotumor formation.



Zimmer M/L Taper, Kinectiv, and VerSys Hip Components

USE: Hip implant devices with metal head and liner

HARM: Breakdown of metallic surfaces; abnormal wear; premature device failure; elevated cobalt and chromium; metallosis and pseudotumor formation.

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Honoring Justice Barbara Pariente - Fla's advocate for children and justice

In June 2019, the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County and the Florida Supreme Court Historical Society hosted the 31st Annual Recognition Evening honoring Justice Barbara J. Pariente for her 45+ year legal and judicial career, and her advocacy to protect the rights, interests, and needs of children, especially those in Florida's foster care system. SDSBS was a presenting sponsor for the event. **Sia Baker-Barnes** co-chaired the celebration, with **Mariano Garcia** as master of ceremony. **Jack Scarola** offered a "call to the heart." Proceeds from the event went to the Legal Aid Society to fund the establishment of a child trauma specialty division.

Following years in private practice in West Palm Beach, Justice Pariente was appointed to the Fourth District Court of Appeals, serving there until her appointment to the Florida Supreme Court. In her time on the Court, she worked to improve methods for handling cases involving families and children in the courts, and served as the Chief Justice's designee to the statewide Florida Children and Youth Cabinet. The children and families of Florida will always be grateful for the advocacy and determination of Justice Pariente. ♦



Chris Searcy



Jack Scarola



Greg Barnhart



Brian Denney



Jim Gustafson



Karen Terry

Florida Trend magazine lists its selection of "2019 Legal Elite, plus their "Hall of Fame"

Florida Trend recently announced its selection of "2019 Legal Elite," a prestigious roster of attorneys chosen for recognition by their peers. Included in the selection were **Chris Searcy, Jack Scarola, Greg Barnhart, Brian Denney, Jim Gustafson, and Karen Terry.** Mr. Searcy was also inducted into "Legal Elite Hall of Fame." ♦

Substantial seven-figure settlement for serious injury and damage from semi-truck crash

March 30, 2015 was a dreadful day for 53-year-old Amy Jones (not her real name). Amy is a single mother of a 15-year-old daughter. They live in Palm Beach County, Florida. She worked hard as an office manager to make ends meet and to provide a good life for herself and her daughter. She was heading home after work that day, driving her 2005 Jeep Cherokee Utility Truck on Florida's Turnpike. She exited the Turnpike through a toll booth and came to a stop for the traffic light at Lake Worth Road. As she waited for the light to change, a large semi-truck slammed into the rear of her car forcing it to crash into the car in front of her.

The two collisions caused serious injury to Amy and destroyed her car. Amy suffered herniated discs which caused extreme pain in her neck and back. For several years, she has endured physical therapy, injections for pain, and eventual surgeries to remove the damaged discs and fuse the remaining bone together. With medical bills exceeding \$200,000 and inability to return to full-time work, Amy



contacted SDSBS attorney **Sia Baker-Barnes** for assistance in seeking accountability for the accident.

Ms. Baker-Barnes demanded insurance policy limits from both the semi-truck driver's policy and Amy's own uninsured motorist coverage. Ms. Baker-Barnes vigorously pursued the case, providing the carriers with a comprehensive package clearly detailing the liability. Both carriers eventually tendered their policy limits resulting in a substantial confidential settlement of seven figures. Although Amy still has a long road ahead of her for recovering, she takes comfort in the fact that her medical expenses and lost wages are covered. Instead of worrying how she will take care of her daughter, she can now focus on her recovery. ♦



Chris Searcy



Jack Scarola



Greg Barnhart



Sia Baker-Barnes



Brian Denney



Brenda Fulmer



Mariano Garcia



Jack Hill



Ed Ricci



Chris Speed



Karen Terry



Cal Warriner



Jordan Dulcie



Andrea Lewis

"Top Lawyers" for 2019 selected by Palm Beach Illustrated

The September 2019 issue of *Palm Beach Illustrated* listed "Top Lawyers 2019." The listing included **Chris Searcy, Jack Scarola, Greg Barnhart, Sia Baker-Barnes, Brian Denney, Brenda Fulmer, Mariano Garcia, Jack Hill, Ed Ricci, Chris Speed, Karen Terry, Cal Warriner, Jordan Dulcie, and Andrea Lewis.** ♦

Accolades



Chris Searcy was selected for membership in the Craig S. Barnard American Inn of Court LIV, in West Palm Beach, Florida. The American

Inns of Court is an association of lawyers, judges, and other legal professionals from all levels and backgrounds who share a passion for professional excellence. The Inns of Court have a national and international reputation as an organization that bridges the gap between formal law school education and legal practice by offering career-long continuing education in the Common Law tradition. ♦



Brenda Fulmer is the recipient of the 2019 Weidemann & Wysocki Award presented by the American Association for Justice during its

convention in July 2019 in San Diego. The award recognizes AAJ members who have made outstanding efforts to support AAJ's Political Action Committee which is dedicated to the principles of the civil justice system. ♦



On June 1, 2019, **Andrea Lewis** was sworn in to serve another term as a director on the Board of the Palm Beach County Bar Association. ♦

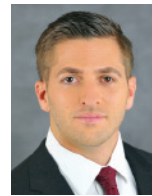


Carter Scott was sworn in as chair of the Florida Justice Association's Young Lawyers Section. FJA is dedicated to strengthening and upholding Florida's civil justice system and protecting the rights of Florida's citizens and consumers. And Mr. Scott was recently sworn in as a member of the State Bar of Georgia. ♦



Sia Baker-Barnes was elected to the Executive Council of the Trial Lawyers Section of The Florida Bar.

The Executive Council is evenly divided among judges, plaintiff lawyers, and defense lawyers. The Trial Lawyers Section is devoted to preserving access to courts, ensuring judicial independence, and providing timely continuing educational opportunities for its members. The Section also provides a forum for discussion on matters of interest or impact on trial practice in Florida, particularly concerning issues that arise with the Florida legislature. ♦



David Vitale and **Boris Zhadanovskiy** were recently recognized by the National Trial Lawyer's selection of "Top 40 Under 40," a professional organization composed of top trial lawyers from each state who are under the age of 40. Membership is by invitation only, and is extended exclusively to those trial lawyers practicing civil plaintiff and/or criminal defense law. ♦



Laurie Briggs received the Florida Justice Association's Cornerstone Award for the sixth consecutive year. The award recognizes FJA

members who have worked tirelessly to set the Cornerstones upon which the association is built and maintained. Ms. Briggs was also re-elected to FJA's Executive Committee. Ms. Briggs was also recently appointed to serve on the Student Education and Admission to the Bar Committee, under The Florida Bar. ♦



Olga Patterson has been appointed to the Paralegal Eligibility and Compliance Committee of The Florida Bar. ♦



Aracely Felix Mayorga has been appointed to the Florida Registered Paralegal Enrichment Committee of The Florida Bar. ♦



In July 2019, Lawdragon released its 2019 guide, "Lawdragon 500 Leading Plaintiff Consumer Lawyers." **Jack Scarola** and **Brenda Fulmer** were included in the recognition of the best of the U. S. plaintiff bar who specialize in representing individuals who have suffered injuries from accidents, pharmaceuticals, civil rights abuse, and other torts. Lawdragon also recognized **Chris Searcy** in the 25 members of the bar who have made Lawdragon's Hall of Fame. ♦



Congratulations to **Ed Ricci** and **Matt Schwencke** for passing their Florida Bar Board Certification! ♦



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Laurie Briggs



Cameron Kennedy



Ed Ricci



Andrea Lewis



Matt Schwencke



Carter Scott



D. J. Ward

18 SDSBS attorneys in 2019 Super Lawyers, Rising Stars

Super Lawyers, a rating service of outstanding lawyers who have attained a high-degree of peer recognition and professional achievement announced its selection of 2019 Super Lawyers and Rising Stars. Included in the selection of Super Lawyers were **Chris Searcy, Jack Scarola, Greg Barnhart, Sia Baker-Barnes, Brian Denney, Brenda Fulmer, Mariano Garcia, Jim Gustafson, Jack Hill, Karen Terry, Cal Warriner, and Laurie Briggs**. Super Lawyers also announced its selection of 2019 Rising Stars which included **Cameron Kennedy, Ed Ricci, Andrea Lewis, Matt Schwencke, Carter Scott, and D.J. Ward**. ♦



Pet supplies for Leon County Humane Society and Meow or Never Cat Rescue.



A busy summer for SDSBS Tallahassee: Collecting school supplies, supporting the Humane Society and Meow or Never Cat Rescue, helping A Full Summer to feed kids, and running Tails and Trails 2019 Race for the Animal Shelter

Staff at SDSBS' Tallahassee office had a very busy summer participating in numerous events that provided support for community organizations. They collected school supplies for **Leon County School District** teachers to use in their classrooms. The materials were distributed by the Florida Department of Education.

Supplies for students in Leon County School District.



Pet supplies were also collected for the benefit of the **Leon County Humane Society** and the **"It's Meow or Never"** cat rescue organization.

The Tallahassee staff also participated in the "2019 A Full Summer," a community event to help feed local kids and other vulnerable neighbors during the summer months. Volunteers assembled 65,220 meals and collected 8,138 pounds of non-perishable food during May 2019. Tallahassee's **"Second Harvest"** distributed the food to insecure children and their families in the Big Bend. Fighting hunger in north Florida is a committed effort by numerous organizations.

SDSBS was a sponsor for the annual "Tails and Trails 2019 Race," with staff participating as a team in the race. This event benefits the **Tallahassee Animal Shelter Foundation**. ♦



Tails and Trails 2019 Race for the Animal Shelter.



A Full Summer provides food for children.





Florida Highway Patrol Advisory Council Awards event held

SDSBS sponsored and attended the **Florida Highway Patrol Advisory Council's** Awards event. The Council is comprised of business, professional, and community leaders throughout the state. Members of the Council provide assistance to the director of the FHP by offering input regarding the performance and quality of service provided to the public by the FHP. Chris Searcy is a member of the Advisory Council. ♦



“Father’s Day Daddy Dash & Family 5K Run,” supporting Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

In June 2019, SDSBS sponsored and had a team participate in the Father’s Day Daddy Dash and Family 5K Run, held in Royal Palm Beach Commons Park. The event was held to benefit the **Leukemia and Lymphoma Society**. It was created by a group called “The Purple Chicks,” dedicated to funding research and finding a cure to end blood cancers. ♦

Taking... Time to Care



“Live Like Jake Foundation” promotes swim lessons and training assistance to prevent drownings

SDSBS was a sponsor and had a team participate in the Fifth Annual Live Like Jake 5K Run/Walk held at Abacoa Town Center in Jupiter, Florida, in May 2019. **The Live Like Jake Foundation** raises awareness for drowning prevention through swim lesson scholarships and financial assistance to families who have a child with critical care needs. ♦



Fishing tournament raises funds for “A Second Chance Puppies and Kitten Rescue” and Marine Industry Education Foundation

In July 2019, Nick DeBellis participated in the “2019 Big Dog Fat Cat KDW Tournament” held at the Sailfish Marina in Palm Beach, Florida. The fishing tournament raised funds to benefit “**A Second Chance Puppies and Kitten Rescue, Inc.,**” and the **Marine Industry Education Foundation**. SDSBS was a sponsor of the tournament. ♦



SDSBS participated as “Team Priscilla” in the 2019 Best Buddies Florida Friendship Walk

In May, SDSBS staff and their families formed “Team Priscilla” and participated in the 2019 **Best Buddies Florida** Friendship Walk held in West Palm Beach, Florida. The name was in honor of Priscilla Searcy who was dedicated to supporting Best Buddies, an international organization that establishes a volunteer movement to create opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. ♦



A REPORT TO CLIENTS & ATTORNEYS VOLUME 19, NUMBER 3

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*“Listen! The wind is rising, and
the air is wild with leaves,
We have had our summer evenings,
now for Autumn eves!”*

-- Humbert Wolfe

HAPPY AUTUMN SEASON... FROM ALL OF US AT SEARCY DENNEY.