

Andrea Davis

From: Stewart Clontz [ncaj@ncaj.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2010 8:58 AM
To: Andrea Davis
Subject: Read It Here -- April ATS News!



AUTO TORTS Section Newsletter

April 2010

From the Communications Chair

In addition to our *Interrogatories* feature, the April issue of the Section e-newsletter highlights all the events going on that Auto Torts Section members would be interested in.

If any Section member would like to be an *Interrogatories* participant or contribute an article of interest in upcoming issues of the e-newsletter, please contact me directly at SClontz@Farrin.com and include SECTION NEWSLETTER in the header of the email.

ENJOY!

Stewart Clontz
Communications Chair, Auto Torts Section

Interrogatories



Each month an Auto Torts Section member responds to a few questions regarding their practice and experience, growth and changes in the auto torts practice area. This month, the *Interrogatories* spotlight is focused on **Adrienne Blocker** of *The Law Offices of James Scott Farrin*.

Adrienne Blocker recently joined The Law Offices of James Scott Farrin as a Senior Litigation Attorney. Prior to that, **Adrienne** was a partner in a boutique civil litigation firm in Greensboro, and an associate with a multi-office statewide firm. **Adrienne** received her J.D. from Campbell University's Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law and her B.A. in Business Management from Minot State University in Minot, North Dakota. **Adrienne** has been a practicing trial attorney since she was admitted to the NC Bar in 1998, focused in the area of personal injury. She is a member of the Million Dollar Advocates Forum.

In her free time, **Adrienne** is a supporter of the arts and currently serves as President of the Board of Directors of Community Theatre of Greensboro.

Adrienne is also the CLE Co-Chair for the NCAJ Auto Torts Section, and serves on the Board of Directors for Carolina Center for Civic Education.

I, on behalf of Auto Torts Section members, would like to send a huge THANK YOU to Adrienne for her excellent contribution. Enjoy! -- *Stewart*

1) What was your first personal injury trial and how did it go?

My first personal injury trial was against Walter "Kirk" Burton. There was practically no visible property damage. My client's husband was a police officer with the local police department that investigated the wreck. My client's only treatment was with the chiropractor for whom she worked. Disputed liability and

causation. At the end, the jury did find the defendant at fault but did not award any damages. My client was a lovely lady who thanked me for putting up a good fight. I lost that trial, but I won because I discovered that I needed the client "thank you" as much as any jury award.

2) What was your most memorable personal injury trial and why?

I have had many trials that were memorable for different reasons. However, one that stands out is one that I actually had to try twice. This was a slip and fall trial with Food Lion as the defendant. The first trial resulted in a hung jury. Believe me when I say that The Honorable Douglas Albright did all he could to persuade the jury they really weren't hung--but they were. I talked to some of the jurors afterward so that I could learn what to do (or not to do) the next time. Every juror I talked to told me that I was too mean to the guy who was mopping. He was just a kid, not too bright, and the jury thought I was too harsh on him. That is when I learned the benefit of the soft cross. Trial number two ended up with a satisfying plaintiff's verdict.

3) What did you learn most from mentoring lawyers when you started?

I was lucky enough to have two mentoring lawyers (one of whom is a judge now) when I began practicing. The two things I learned and still live by today are: (1) Be prepared - whether it is for a deposition, mediation, or trial, always be prepared. (2) Learn how to connect WITH the jury; don't talk AT the jury. They need to be and want to be your friend if you show them how.

4) What would you share with a young lawyer now?

The same two things that my mentors taught me plus remember that if you do get caught in a situation where you are uncertain, don't let the other side know. State your position with authority and firmness. That will get you further than you think.

5) How has the insurance defense bar changed?

Some members of the insurance defense bar have become more aggressive, which I partially attribute to the change in how they are directed by their insurance company clients. However, I have been fortunate in that most of the insurance defense bar is very civil in their dealings with me.

6) Please comment on the state of the auto injury practice in North Carolina?

We are practicing in difficult economic times. This makes jury trials even more unpredictable than they used to be, and makes insurance companies even more chintzy than usual. The value offered by insurance companies has consistently declined over the last ten years. All of these negatives, however, make the plaintiff's verdicts even more appreciated.

7) Who was the first personal injury client who touched you and why?

I represented a man who fell while indoor rock climbing. When we first met, his wife was three days away from giving birth to child number two. This was a difficult case with contrib. issues raised but resulted in a settlement that the client was happy to have. Prior to the fall, client had taken a few college classes and was working at a blue collar job. Due to his injuries, he would not be able to return to a full labor intensive job, so I asked him what he wanted to do in his next life. This gentleman told me it had always been his dream to be an elementary teacher, particularly in "inner city" type schools. We were able to set up a structure that allowed him to pay his family's bills (very important for this man) and go to school. When he graduated, he did exactly as he had always dreamed. His first year as a teacher, this client was selected as rookie elementary teacher of the year! This happened over ten years ago. I am proud to say that I am still friends with that client, his wife, and children.

Adrienne Blocker can be contacted at (800) 220-7321 or ablocker@farrin.com.

NCAJ Cocktail Reception – RSVP Today!

The short session of the NC General Assembly convenes on Tuesday, May 12. The NCAJ GOP Caucus will be

hosting a reception to kick-off the short session as well as to honor Republican lawyers serving in the NC General Assembly. The reception will be held at NCAJ in Raleigh on Tuesday, May 25 from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM. All GOP legislators will be invited and *all NCAJ members are welcome to attend*.

The reception will be a great opportunity for you to meet and discuss issues with lawmakers at the beginning of the session.

The reception is free, however, NCAJ is making a call for sponsorship for the reception. What better way to promote awareness of your firm with lawmakers than to be a sponsor of the reception? Sponsors' names will be prominently displayed on a sponsor board at the reception as well as be introduced at the reception.

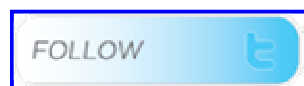
To RSVP or to sponsor the NCAJ GOP Caucus Reception, please contact Todd Barlow at Todd@ncaj.com or Kelly Graham at Kelly@ncaj.com for more details.

Follow Happenings at NCAJ...

Would you like to...

*Receive breaking news from the short session of the General Assembly?
Know what Section/NCAJ social events are coming up?
Network with NCAJ members statewide?*

Then follow NCAJ online by clicking on any one of the icons below to join the NCAJ group on Twitter, Facebook or Linked In.



(NCAJ Twitter account exclusively used for General Assembly updates)



(NCAJ Twitter account for non-advocacy NCAJ updates)



(NCAJ on Facebook)



(NCAJ on Linked In)

Questions? Contact Liz@ncaj.com.

On-Point: Topics from the Section Listserv

With the General Assembly convening the short session on May 12, there will be action on comparative negligence. If comparative negligence does ultimately become the law, the Auto Torts Section listserv will be the most valuable resource for you to ask questions, brainstorm and provide information.

Membership in the Section listserv is a tremendous and valuable (and free) benefit of being an Auto Torts Section member.

Below is a list of wide-ranging topics that have been recently discussed by Section members on the listserv. As you can see, these topics greatly benefited all members of the Section listserv.

- Legal Bucks update
- Wake County Verdict
- Urgent question re ancillary administration
- An amazingly bad new COA opinion on public duty doctrine
- FEHBA plan claim for reimbursement
- Neuropsychologist - High Point Area
- Trying to find a case about driver's liability for improperly attached trailer that causes accident
- Facebook/Myspace Discovery Requests
- Hospital Bills & Charity write off
- Trial: No defendant, Allstate to intervene
- Distribution Question - Injured Person Dies, Accident Unrelated to Death
- P&S before death - Expert Needed
- NC SEHP Reversal of Policy
- Can PhD Physical Therapist give causation testimony?
- UIM coverage question
- Charlotte Mediator Suggestions
- BMW Black Box / Air Bag Module
- Third-party settlement and denied WC claim
- Dog Bite Contributory Negligence?
- What are your SSN policies?
- Arbitration evidence issue
- HELP! need quick opinions!
- SEHP claim - follow up
- Robeson v. Cumberland Venue
- Ins. Co. liability for interest and costs
- Reckless and careless
- Wake Co Allstate MIST verdict - attorneys fees motion
- Lost Wages without Tax Returns
- Forsyth County Verdict Today
- Nash County ST/Chiro Results
- Dare or Currituck County Settlements / Verdicts
- Suit against sheriff's department
- Governmental Immunity Language
- ERISA REIMBURSEMENT
- Binding arbitration refusal
- PT in Fayetteville, treating on lien basis
- MedPay & HI discounts
- Medicaid question
- UIM arbitration question
- JURY INSTRUCTION

In addition to these topics there are often lawyer, expert, doctor, accident reconstruction, mediator, judge and other recommendations.

So don't delay - make the most of your Section membership, contact [Andrea Davis](#) today to set-up your Section listserv account.

Already a member of the Section listserv? [Click Here](#) for a handy listserv FAQ.

Regional Section Socials – A Great Way to Network!

The Auto Torts Section Membership Co-Chairs have huddled together and conspired to provide Section members with relaxation and fun!

On Thursday, May 6, from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM, join **Meredith Hinton**, *Section Membership Co-Chair (Eastern Region)*, **Don Higley**, *Incoming Section Chair*, and **Al Patrick**, *Incoming Section Vice Chair*, at Winslow's Tavern in Greenville for the **Auto Torts Section Eastern Region Networking Social**. [CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#).

And, Section members in the East won't have all the fun!

On Thursday, March 25, **Kevin J. Williams**, *Membership Co-Chair (Triad)*, hosted a successful **Triad Networking Section Social** at Big Shotz! Tavern in Winston-Salem for Section members in the Triad. Section members had the opportunity to reconnect with colleagues in an informal setting as well as meet Mike Sutton and Sean Dennis from Accident Reconstruction in Raleigh.

On Thursday, April 22, **Brian Davis**, *Membership Co-Chair (Western Region)*, hosted a successful **NCAJ Regional Social** at the Lexington Avenue Brewery in Asheville for NCAJ members. NCAJ members had a great time at this successful NCAJ social.

And, on June 19-23, **Convention** in Wilmington will provide Section members with the wonderful opportunity to obtain quality CLE and network with colleagues.

Stay tuned for future issues of the Section e-newsletter to find out what the Membership Co-Chairs have cooked up for you in your portion of the state! *A super huge thank you goes out to the Section Membership Co-Chairs for providing Section members with these awesome networking events. Great job!*

Convention 2010: Have You Registered Yet?

Make plans NOW to attend Convention 2010!

[Online registration](#) is NOW OPEN for NCAJ's Convention 2010, June 19-23, 2010 at the Hilton Riverside in Wilmington. The Convention 2010 program is packed with CLE for civil and criminal practitioners, and a full-day seminar for paralegals. Also on tap are exciting special events and networking opportunities you can't afford to miss. These are just a few events that Auto Torts Section members may be interested in:

Sunday, June 20*Auto Torts Section Meeting***Monday, June 21***Auto Torts Update - **Sean Cole****Civil Law Update - **Dave Pishko****Insurance Law Update - **Doug Maynard*****Tuesday, June 22***Auto Torts: Working with Speed Experts - **Ed Livesay****Overlooked Products Claims Involving Auto Torts, Med Mal and Workers' Comp - **Michael Pross, Hardison Wood***

Browse through the [Schedule-at-a-Glance](#) to get a taste of what awaits you at Convention. A detailed brochure will be mailed soon.

The early bird gets the worm! [REGISTER ONLINE](#) by May 15th to get the early registration rate.

Looking for other quality CLE, check out the NCAJ CLE calendar by [clicking here](#).

NCAJ Membership Renewals are in the Mail!

Please remember that your NCAJ membership renewal is due on July 1! To continue to partake in the many benefits of NCAJ membership, including access to section listservs, social events and discounted CLEs, please [click here](#) to renew your membership for the July 2010-June 2011 year.

2009-10 Auto Torts Section Officers**Chair:** [Jeremy Tanner](#) (Clayton)**Vice Chair & Ethics Chair:** [Don Higley](#) (Greenville)**Secretary:** [R. Alfred Patrick](#) (Greenville)**Immediate Past Chair:** [Julie Bell](#) (Winston-Salem)**CLE Co-Chair:** [Adrienne Blocker](#) (Greensboro)**CLE Co-Chair:** [Michelle Clifton](#) (Winston-Salem)**Communications Chair:** [J. Stewart Clontz](#) (Durham)**Legal Affairs Chair:** [Chris Nichols](#) (Raleigh)**Legislative Co-Chair:** [J. Brett Davis](#) (Raleigh)**Legislative Co-Chair:** [Douglas Nauman](#) (Winston-Salem)**Listserv Security Officer:** [Sean Cole](#) (Durham)**Membership Co-Chair (Charlotte):** [Thomas Ainsworth](#) (Charlotte)**Membership Co-Chair (Western):** [Brian Davis](#) (Asheville)**Membership Co-Chair (Eastern):** [Meredith Hinton](#) (Greenville)**Membership Co-Chair (Triangle):** [Gavin Routt](#) (Durham)**Membership Co-Chair (Triad):** [Kevin Williams](#) (Winston-Salem)**PAC Chair:** [Jason Orndoff](#) (Hickory)**Publications Chair:** [Michael Jordan](#) (Durham)**NLD Section Liaison:** [Meredith Hinton](#) (Greenville)**Registration Powered by 123Signup**