

COPLAN+CRANE CHRONICLES

DO YOU HAVE A WINTER EMERGENCY KIT IN YOUR CAR?

It's a good idea to have one in case your car gets stuck and you are stranded. **Be sure to include:**

- Flashlight 
- First Aid Kit 
- Batteries 
- Shovel 
- Cat Litter/Sand 
- Flares 
- Snacks 
- Blanket 

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VETERAN MEDICAL MALPRACTICE LAWYER BRINGS INSIGHT, EXPERIENCE TO FIRM

Coplan + Crane Welcomes Kevin Burke To The Firm.



Kevin joins us after 35 years as a successful attorney in Chicago, where he became known as a highly effective medical malpractice lawyer.

“We are very fortunate to have Kevin on our team,” says Ben Crane. “His insight, experience and legal knowledge will be tremendous assets to our firm.”

After getting his J.D. from Chicago-Kent College of Law – where he graduated in the top 10% of his class – Kevin began his career as a lawyer representing insurers. In 1982, he moved to Cassiday, Schade & Gloor, defending doctors and hospitals in medical malpractice cases and companies in product liability claims. He was made a partner in 1987.

In his last case with that firm in 1990, Kevin found himself facing the legendary Philip Corboy, the prominent personal injury attorney in Chicago. Before a verdict was reached, Phil came to talk to Kevin and asked him to join his firm. Kevin accepted, leaving his position as a partner in a large corporate firm to become an associate in a small personal injury firm.

At the time, it was a risky move for a rising lawyer with young children to support. But he welcomed the opportunity.

It was at Corboy & Demetrio that Kevin became known for his success handling medical malpractice cases. By 1996, he

became a partner. In 2002, Kevin left to become a founding partner of Burke Wise Morrissey & Kaveny, continuing to fight for victims of medical negligence. He left the firm in 2016.

Throughout his career, Kevin has recovered more than \$600 million on behalf of injured clients. His 8 years of experience representing doctors and hospitals gave him a unique insight into legal strategy. But his success also has a lot to do with his approach.

Kevin is very adept at breaking down complex medical malpractice cases in a way that is easy to understand. He tries to reconstruct the thought process of the medical professional, carefully considering each decision made along the way and determining whether or not it met the accepted standard of care. It's an approach that juries have found very persuasive.

Selected as one of the Top Ten Illinois Attorneys in Personal Injury each year from 2003-2016, he has also lectured extensively on legal issues and written articles for legal publications. He has also taught at Notre Dame Law School.

“I am truly excited to have this opportunity to work in an environment where there are young, aggressive lawyers who share my values and beliefs,” says Kevin. “We all believe that we should practice with a sense of urgency, that the client’s interests come before ours and that we should pursue worthy cases.” ■

\$1,000,000 SETTLEMENT FOR INJURED CONSTRUCTION WORKER

At Coplan + Crane, we are committed to working hard to help clients injured by negligence recover compensation to help them rebuild their lives, no matter how challenging their situation. Other firms recognize this commitment and feel comfortable referring complicated cases to us. In one of these cases, we were able to help a severely injured construction worker get justice.

Our client, Steve, was a union carpenter who was working on a construction site. His job involved combining gang forms to be used when pouring concrete. While performing this work, Steve was hanging in a harness about 6 feet above the ground.

The forms were supposed to come with safety hooks. The construction plan was to use retractable lanyards with the safety hooks, inserted into the top of the forms, to prevent workers from falling if something went wrong.

But the forms that arrived on the site did not have any safety hooks. The decision was made to proceed with the work anyway, using alternative tie-off points.

While Steve was working, a hook from his harness detached from the form and struck him in the head. The alternative tie-off points failed, and he fell to the concrete floor of the project site.

Steve was taken by ambulance to a local hospital, where it was determined that his injuries required treatment at a facility that could provide a higher level of trauma care. He was transferred to another hospital, where he spent four days. He had suffered a fractured pelvis, a complex injury to his right arm and a two-inch gash on his forehead.

While Steve had received some workers' compensation ben-

efits for his injury, it was not enough to help his family make ends meet. The law firm that handled Steve's workers' compensation claim thought that the negligence of another contractor had led to his injuries. They referred him to Coplan + Crane.

"This was a devastating injury for Steve and his family," said Blake Vance, who handled the case. "It was very tough on them, and it was very hard for them to get by."

Steve required two surgeries and was left with a permanent limp. Eventually, he attempted to return to work, but found the job too physically demanding following his injuries. He

was also suffering from vertigo as a result of his head injury. Doctors determined that he could continue working, but only with restrictions.

"These work restrictions were so stringent that companies weren't willing to hire him," says Blake.

After investigating Steve's injury, we pursued a general negligence claim against a contractor on the project, as well as a product liability claim against the manufacturer of the forms. We gathered evidence that helped us build a strong case, and set a date for trial. Five weeks before Blake and Ben Crane were set to begin trial, we were able to inform our client that the defendants had agreed to settle for \$1,000,000.

"He was extremely relieved, both emotionally and mentally," said Blake. "This meant that he could move on with his life."

"We're pleased that other law firms recognize the quality of our work, and are comfortable with referring clients to us," says Ben, "and we're even more pleased that we were able to help Steve get justice."



\$250,000 FOR WOMAN HURT IN PEDESTRIAN ACCIDENT

At Coplan + Crane, we approach each case individually and look for creative ways to help us meet our client's needs. This approach allowed Ted Jennings and Ben Crane to help a woman who was hurt in a pedestrian accident.

Our client, Jennifer Winters, was crossing Garfield Street in her hometown of Hinsdale on the morning of April 16, 2015. An employee of the Village of Hinsdale was taking a right turn from Symonds Drive in a car owned by his employer. He didn't check to see if anyone was crossing, and the car hit Jennifer, breaking her leg just below the knee.

Jennifer required surgery in which a metal plate and screws were implanted in her knee to stabilize it. She was out of work for 4 months, and was also no longer able to take part in her favorite activities, which included biking, skiing and yoga.

We filed a lawsuit on her behalf against the Village of Hinsdale in March 2016.

"From the beginning of this case, it wasn't about the money," says Jennifer. "I was motivated by medical issues and the poten-

“ From the beginning of this case, it wasn't about the money... Coplan + Crane understood that and respected my approach. —Jennifer Winters, Coplan + Crane client ”

tial for future problems. Coplan + Crane understood that and respected my approach.”

Jennifer was left with some permanent loss of motion and has also developed early signs of arthritis in her knee. We were committed to helping her prove her case in a way

that addressed her future medical needs.

In our investigation, we learned that the village had conducted surveillance of Jennifer and her husband, presumably looking for evidence that she had been faking her injury. During negotiations, we brought up the effect this could have at trial.

"We emphasized that the jury was not going to take kindly to Big Brother spying on its residents rather than doing the right thing," says Ted.

The village agreed to pay our client \$250,000 for medical expenses and pain and suffering – the full amount that the judge had recommended.

There are firms that take a cookie-cutter approach to cases. But we focus on getting the facts, being creative and keeping our client's interests in mind to get the best possible outcome.

FIRM HAPPENINGS



Attorney **Ted Jennings** was a volunteer assistant coach for the Let Me Run team at Lincoln Elementary School in Oak Park. Let Me Run is a national program that teaches young boys

healthy attitudes toward running while emphasizing important life lessons.

Meeting twice a week for seven weeks, Ted and the other coaches helped fourth- and fifth-graders become better runners and better people. "What was really gratifying was to watch the kids work together," says Ted. "There was a big emphasis on supporting each other and making good decisions."

The program ended with the team taking part in a 5K race in Elk Grove Village on November 11, sponsored by LUNGeVity.



Coplan + Crane was proud to be a co-sponsor of Oaktoberfest, the 30th annual benefit for Oak-Leyden Developmental Services, on November 3rd. The event was held at Hofbräuhaus Chicago and featured fine German fare and drink, raffles and a performance by Oak-Leyden's adult choir. Nearly \$100,000 was raised to fund programming and services for those with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Ben Crane, who is on the Board of Directors for Oak-Leyden Developmental Services, said the success of the event showcases the area's generous spirit.

"Adults and children with disabilities can lead quality lives with the right help," says Ben. "That's just the kind of help that Oak-Leyden provides."

...SUPPORT STAFF SPOTLIGHT...



REYNA LUJANO, a Legal Administrative Assistant at the firm, began working at Coplan + Crane in 2015. After graduating from Robert Morris University-Illinois, she worked at the insurance defense firm Kiesler & Berman, where she gained valuable experience in the day-to-day operations of a law firm. She then worked at Brady, Connolly & Masuda before becoming an administrator/manager at Whiting Law Group.

Among her duties, Reyna handles all the scheduling in the office, including court dates, depositions and meetings. All incoming mail goes through her desk. She also handles trial document preparation.

“I see a lot of compassion from the attorneys,” she says about working here. “There’s an understanding of what the client is going through, and the attorneys help them through the process.”

Reyna is a proud South Sider and mother of a son. She loves to cook and bake and pamper her two-year-old pit bull, Bella.



SAMANTHA ROSS, a Litigation Paralegal, joined Coplan + Crane in 2015. After graduating from Northern Illinois University with a degree in political science, she became an intern at the firm of Mahoney & Hauser. Her responsibilities there included preparing court documents, sitting in on trials and focus groups, helping with research and organizing case files.

In her position at our firm, Samantha handles pleadings and has a lot of contact with clients. Her day-to-day tasks involve a little bit of everything, from helping with research, organization, and trial preparation to assisting the attorneys with last minute tasks that require speed and proficiency.

“I like that it’s interesting and always changing,” she says about her job. “And it’s rewarding to know that we are helping people.”

Samantha is from Freeport but likes spending time in her new home of Chicago, including watching her beloved Cubs play at Wrigley Field. She enjoys spending time with friends and family.

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