

# COPLAN+CRANE CHRONICLES

Coplan+Crane is celebrating its 15th anniversary. We wish that we could celebrate this milestone with you.

In the meantime, we hope that you and your family are staying safe during these unprecedented times.

If there is anything that we can assist you with, our legal team is available by phone **708.358.8080** or email us at **info@coplancrane.com**.

As always, we remain devoted to winning for those who have lost.

Thank you for being a part of our first 15 years!

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## LOOKING BACK ON OUR FIRST 15 YEARS AND LOOKING AHEAD TO WHAT'S NEXT

In 2005, Coplan + Crane opened for business in a small office on the corner of Lake and Marion in Oak Park.

"It was just me and Greg and one assistant," says **Ben Crane**.



Ben Crane



Greg Coplan

Ben and **Greg Coplan** had first met over coffee a couple of years earlier, when they both came into the office very early while working at the same law firm. They would each go off to practice law on their own but stayed in touch and helped each other with cases.

While considering a job offer from another firm, Ben thought of an option he liked better. He called Greg and asked if he wanted to become partners.

"He said 'absolutely,' and we were off to the races," says Ben.

One of our first clients was a woman who had suffered broken bones after tripping and falling on improperly maintained pavement in Schaumburg. Ben and Greg worked the case relentlessly and ultimately caught a defense witness in a lie. The case settled for \$650,000.



Blake Vance



Stephen Blecha

As time went on, our caseload grew. So did the firm. **Blake Vance** was hired in 2011 as a paralegal, **Stephen Blecha** was hired that same year as a clerk. One



Erv Nevitt

year later **Erv Nevitt** was hired as a paralegal. All three were attending law school while working. All three are now attorneys and partners in the firm.

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# LOOKING BACK ON OUR FIRST 15 YEARS AND LOOKING AHEAD TO WHAT'S NEXT

(CONTINUED FROM COVER)



*Hon. Clayton J. Crane (Ret.)*



*Ted Jennings*

**Hon. Clayton J. Crane (Ret.)** became Of Counsel, and experienced attorney **Ted Jennings** came on board.

Things were going well. That changed in 2017.

Greg suffered a hemorrhagic stroke that left him partially paralyzed. He was facing a long and uncertain road to recovery. Everyone at the firm prayed for his health – and also wondered about the future.

The firm was in the middle of a big case Greg had worked on extensively. A woman had been killed when her car, stopped in traffic, was rear-ended by a freight truck. The trucking company was fighting the lawsuit aggressively and the case was headed toward trial.

There was a lot riding on this case. Our clients were counting on us to help them get justice. We had invested a lot of resources into it and now we were without Greg's drive, experience and sharp legal skills. We came together. We moved forward and gave it everything we had – and we won.

A jury awarded the woman's family \$15 million. It was a record verdict in Winnebago County. It was also a pivotal moment for Coplan + Crane.

"That verdict gave us confidence that we would be able to keep the firm going," says Ben.

Ben says Blake, Stephen and Erv all stepped up in Greg's absence – to work on this case and others and maintain the

firm's relationships in the legal community.



*Kevin Burke*

We've worked on other big cases in the past few years. **Kevin Burke** joined the firm after decades as a successful medical malpractice attorney. Experienced and talented support staff members have been hired.

"We have really developed our bench strength," says Ben. "Everybody is super engaged and we have great cases to work on."

Now in 2020, there is a new challenge – a pandemic.

From the beginning, Ben and Greg focused on scanning documents and going paperless as much as possible. In 2019, we made significant upgrades to our remote access, utilizing cloud storage that allows the team to work and meet the needs of our clients in all their diverse geographical locations. This ongoing commitment to technology – and flexibility in work schedules – helped us make a smooth transition to working from home. We stay connected with clients. Attorneys and staff meet online every morning. This helps us be goal oriented and focused on working together.

While the pandemic has put many things on hold, we still have 18 months of trials lined up. We have cases in northern Illinois, Iowa, California and Wisconsin. We're involved in mass tort cases in Florida and Minnesota.

Illinois courts are slowly progressing towards reopening, but the future remains uncertain. He does know the firm is ready for whatever comes next.

"I think our firm is as prepared as anybody to deal with this or whatever gets thrown our way," Ben says. "We're ready for takeoff." ■

## COPLAN+CRANE'S SUPPORT STAFF



*Anna Strong*



*Bradley Edwards*



*Emma Florian*



*Rebecca Burchell*



*Gia Benline*



*Juhi Desai*



*Kathy Sorce*



*Julia Dwyer*

# FIFTEEN YEARS OF COPLAN+CRANE

2005

January 1  
COPLAN+CRANE  
Opens Its Doors

2009

June  
The Largest Personal  
Injury Settlement in  
Winnebago County's History

**\$12 million settlement** for a baby who suffered permanent brain damage, paralysis, and cerebral palsy. This was the largest personal injury settlement or verdict in the history of Winnebago County (Rockford), IL.

2011

March  
Blake Vance  
Joins  
Coplan+Crane

May  
Stephen Blecha  
Joins  
Coplan+Crane

2012

January  
Erv Nevitt  
Joins Coplan+Crane

2014

April  
The Largest Medical  
Malpractice Settlement  
in the History  
of Stephenson County

**\$10 million settlement** for a man who was rendered a quadriplegic after doctors failed to properly diagnose a stroke. This was the largest medical malpractice settlement or verdict in the history of Stephenson County, IL.

2016

May  
Ted Jennings  
Joins Coplan+Crane

Hon. Clayton J Crane (Ret.)  
Joins Coplan+Crane

2017

March  
Historic \$15 Million Verdict  
in Fatal Truck Accident Case

**A historic \$15 million verdict** was returned by a jury in Rockford, IL for the family of a woman killed in a trucking crash. "We effectively put the trucking company on trial and held them accountable for their failure to ensure that their drivers were safe, dependable operators," says Ben Crane. "Our hope is that the verdict will make our roads safer and prevent other families from suffering as this one has."

2018

January  
Kevin Burke  
Joins Coplan+Crane

2019

June  
Building Renovation Completed  
(Photos on following page)



2020



## ... THE BUILDING RENOVATION PROJECT ...



Architect Daniel Roush, AIA | Field Guide, Oak Park Photo credit: Nathan Keay

### OFFICE INFORMATION

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