

COPLAN+CRANE CHRONICLES



SAFELY MOVING FORWARD

Though the pandemic is not over, there have been many positive developments.

Coplan + Crane has been taking steps to help us continue to safely serve the needs of our clients and support our community.

All of our attorneys have been vaccinated and we will continue to follow safe practices, including wearing masks and physical distancing, in the office and at court proceedings.

Our team continues to work on cases every day and is patiently waiting for the resumption of civil jury trials.

As things gradually get back to normal, we look forward to reconnecting with clients and friends in person!

\$1 MILLION SETTLEMENT AFTER WOMAN SCALDED IN SHOWER

Tap water in residential buildings should never come out hot enough to burn skin badly within seconds. Property owners have a responsibility to ensure that their premises are safe. When they fail to meet this responsibility, people can get hurt.



We were able to help one woman who suffered serious injuries while simply taking a shower at home – injuries that occurred as a direct result of a property owner's negligence.

Our client lived in an apartment complex in Chicago. She had suffered strokes in the past and had mobility issues. One day in 2016, she went to take a shower and sat in the shower chair in the tub.

When she turned on the faucet, scalding hot water came out. She instantly

tried to get away from the water but fell off the chair and into the water that was collecting in the tub.

She suffered significant burns to her legs and feet that resulted in permanent scarring. Our client spent weeks in the hospital, including time in the ICU where she needed a

feeding tube. There was ongoing treatment for the burns she had suffered and she also needed rehabilitation to help her regain the mobility she had.

Facing mounting medical bills, she turned to Coplan + Crane. **Erv Nevitt, Ben Crane** and **Ted Jennings** worked on the case.

Our investigation found that the apartment complex owners failed to

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“This didn’t have to happen... Someone got hurt because they neglected their basic responsibilities and we fought to hold them accountable.”

—Ben Crane

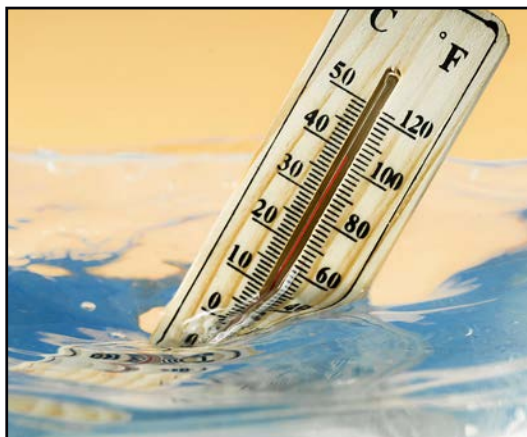
\$1 MILLION SETTLEMENT AFTER WOMAN SCALDED IN SHOWER (CONTINUED FROM COVER)

follow city and state regulations for installing and maintaining water heaters. They did not get a permit as required, they did not hire a licensed plumber, and they did not regularly maintain and inspect the water heaters after they were installed.

“Those regulations are in place to protect people,” says Erv. “Specifically people like our client who have existing health complications and mobility issues.”

The owners argued our clients only suffered burns because she had fallen in the tub and was exposed to the water for an extended period of time. They claimed the water was not hot enough to scald instantly.

But experts we hired determined the temperature of the



water was more than 140 degrees. The Chicago Plumbing Code states that water used in occupied structures cannot exceed 140 degrees.

“The water should never get at that point where it can burn you,” says Erv. “Where else are you more vulnerable than in the shower?”

We prepared our case for trial. During a pretrial settlement conference with the judge in January, the owners agreed to a \$1 million settlement.

“This didn’t have to happen,” says Ben. “The owners of this apartment complex blatantly disregarded regulations. Someone got hurt because they neglected their basic responsibilities and we fought to hold them accountable.” ■

FIRM HAPPENINGS



Erv Nevitt



Erv Nevitt spoke at a virtual ethics seminar for the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association (ITLA) on April 13. The topic of his presentation was “Civility Amongst Attorneys,” and addressed the rules and requirements on attorney civility that are found in the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct.

“As lawyers, we are all passionate about our clients, and that passion can sometimes make proceedings pretty tense,” says Erv. “All lawyers need to understand what the rules are and act accordingly and understand what the consequences are if you do not.”

Erv was also recently appointed to the ITLA Board of Managers. ■



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The Association for Trial Lawyers

Erv Nevitt spoke at the New Lawyers Boot Camp Webinar Series for the American Association of Justice (AAJ) on May 3. The series features accomplished faculty teaching foundational skills every new lawyer needs to succeed.

Erv’s presentation was titled “Best Practices for Communication within Your Trial Team.”

He discussed delegation of assignments, checklists to prepare for trial, teamwork and how to prepare your paralegal for trial. ■

FIRM HAPPENINGS



Ben Crane

Ben Crane spoke to attorneys from across the country at the first AIEG Virtual Medical Malpractice Symposium on April 13.

AIEG (Attorneys Information Exchange Group) is a national organization dedicated to sharing information and experiences among its members who represent clients hurt by dangerous and defective products and have recently expanded their focus to include medical malpractice.



Ben discussed “Communication Breakdown” and how it results in negligence that causes people harm.

“Communication breakdown is something that we need to look at when handling these types of cases,” says Ben. “Examples we’ve encountered include radiologists not communicating critical findings, neurosurgeons not listening to radiologists when they do communicate critical findings, medical workers not paying attention in office settings, workers not following up on lab results and failing to communicate directives to patients who need to get to the emergency room when they have certain symptoms. These are all problems that lead to people getting hurt.” ■



Coplan + Crane took part in the “Spring Swing for IMD Guest House” golf outing at Seven Bridges Golf Club on May 19. The firm sponsored the event.



IMD Guest House provides comfortable and affordable accommodations for patients and their families who travel to Chicago for medical treatment, as well as veterans being treated at the Road Home Program at Rush. ■



Coplan + Crane sponsored “Imagine Justice: Celebrating 10 Years of Legal Service,” a virtual fund-raiser to benefit the Pro Bono Network (PBN).

The organization was founded in 2011 to connect experienced attorneys – who took time off to raise children, who retired or maintained law practices outside Chicago – with people in need of legal services. Since its founding, PBN has grown to more than 450 volunteers and 30 translators who have clocked more than 20,000 hours.

PBN volunteer attorneys have helped victimized and undocumented persons apply for legal residency, seniors execute powers of attorney for health care and property, domestic violence victims obtain orders of protection, tenants resolve disputes with landlords and individuals appeal the denial of Social Security benefits. ■

... SPOTLIGHT ...



NICOLE MAVRAGANIS, executive assistant to Ben Crane, is always on the move – and she wouldn't have it any other way.

A graduate of Iowa State University with a degree in event management,

Nicole was working for a nonprofit as a member of the events team. Then the pandemic hit. Events were canceled and the team was dissolved.

Nicole was introduced to Ben by a mutual friend. Ben was looking for an executive assistant and Nicole was looking for a job that matched her skill set. She was hired last August, working virtually at first, then started in the office in February.

She says there's no such thing as a typical day at work. Her daily to-do list could involve ordering supplies, managing vendors, organizing files or wrangling re-

sources for a new project. She's a high-energy person in a job where high energy is an asset. "That's why I feel this job was the perfect fit," she says.

One of Nicole's first big tasks involved the office law library. She reorganized all of the firm's legal resources so that attorneys can easily find the information they need.

Another recent project addressed vendor management. Nicole organized the vendor database, made it easier for paralegals to access the login information they need and set up an efficient payment system.

There's a lot to do on any given day, but you won't always find Nicole at her desk. That's just fine with her.

"What I love about this position is that it gives me the flexibility to be out and about and working with other people in the office," she says.

A resident of Des Plaines, Nicole stays on the move even during her free time. When she's not working, she's often working out. ■

OFFICE INFORMATION

1111 Westgate Street | Oak Park, IL 60301

**Call us at (708) 358-8080
or toll-free at (800) 394-6002**

coplancrane.com

EDITORIAL NOTES

Rebecca Burchell
Intake Specialist
708.358.8080 Voice
708.358.8181 Fax



COPLAN+CRANE

1111 WESTGATE STREET
OAK PARK, ILLINOIS 60301



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