



# COMMEMORATING YEARS All client stories are authentic, reflecting their actual experience and words, without any compensation paid.

### REFLECTING ON 50 YEARS

Gary and Steve Pajcic grew up in a house their daddy built with his own hands in Woodstock Park on Jacksonville's Westside. Gary went on to star as quarterback for FSU, while Steve played basketball at Princeton.

They decided to go to law school so that they could spend their lives working together and helping others.

It has now been 50 years since the brothers started Pajcic & Pajcic with a \$10,000 loan and Steve's wife Anne running the office. In looking back over these years, the firm is proudest of how it has been able to help clients in their time of need.



The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Newsletter focuses on some of our 12,500 clients and how they have heroically overcome great tragedies with the help of Pajcic & Pajcic.

These client stories and more at pajcic.com





# "I'm Alive. And I'm Thankful."

### HOW ONE WOMAN RECLAIMED HER FUTURE

Daphnie was 18 years old when the future she had planned was forever changed.

She was on her way to celebrate Martin Luther King Day with her sorority sisters in Atlanta in 1989 when a bale of hay fell off a farm truck in front of them. Her friend swerved to avoid it, but the car crashed into the concrete median. Although all four wore seatbelts, a hidden defect caused Daphnie's buckle to fail. She struck her head, broke her neck, and woke to a new reality: She was a quadriplegic.



"I don't know if I understood what they were telling me at the time,"

Daphnie said of processing the life-altering scale of her injuries.

"I still had hope that I would recover... I didn't really think about being paralyzed and not being able to walk again."

Pajcic & Pajcic fought on her behalf, uncovering the seatbelt defect and securing the resources Daphnie needed not just to survive, but to thrive. Lawsuits against the farmer and the car and seatbelt manufacturers gave her in-home caregivers, her accessible van, and her financial and personal independence.

"I don't know what I would've done without that help," she said. "Caregivers are expensive, and being able to afford them made all the difference." Today, 36 years later, Daphnie has outlived all expectations and lives life well: a home of her own, a vehicle she drives herself, a strong connection to her family, church, and community. The journey hasn't been easy—she's battled serious health challenges along the way—but she continues forward with grace and determination.



Trey was just 19 years old when his pickup hit a patch of soft sand, then hit a tree beside the dirt road. Because of a design flaw in the truck, the engine caught fire and engulfed the cab. Trey's foot was caught behind the brake pedal and he was trapped. Trey had burns over 80 percent of his body, including severe 4th degree burns. Both of his legs had to be amputated above the knee.

In 2023, Trey didn't hesitate to go to Tallahassee with his family to speak out against a bill limiting access to lawsuits.

"I am not one to sit idle and tolerate injustice."



"They made it possible for me to move ahead and live a fulfilling life."

Trey is now married and has two sons. His family gives him such joy. He loves riding a custom bike and scuba diving with his wife where he can be in the water and feel free again.

# Teenager Overcomes Devastating Injury

He has also become a lifeline to others in similar situations. "I reach out and offer support and advice. It can sometimes be a big help for them to see what is possible. When you go out in public, you get the stares, people avoid you, they don't know what to say." He is hoping to make a difference on that front, including his participation in health and wellness podcasts.







# Safer Automobiles

Pajcic & Pajcic is part of a select group of attorneys whose lawsuits have helped significantly enhance automobile safety by forcing auto manufacturers to:

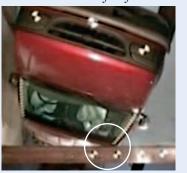
- » Eliminate a seatbelt design that allowed belts to snap open upon impact.
- » Strengthen roofs so that they would not crush like a tin can during a rollover.
- » Add technology and design features to greatly reduce the chances of a vehicle rollover.
- » Change tire design and manufacturing standards to help prevent tire detreads.
- » Strengthen and relocate gas tanks to reduce explosion and fire after accidents.

Pajcic & Pajcic is especially proud of its role in eliminating the dangerous combination of defective tires on rollover-prone SUVs with weak roofs. On July 24, 2000, Pajcic & Pajcic filed suit for two separate deaths caused by the same exact tire and auto defects.

The problem had existed for almost a decade, but the magnitude of the problem had been concealed by confidential settlements. When these two lawsuits were filed, the shocking deaths received nationwide media attention. The outcry was enough to cause a total recall of the tire two weeks later, saving countless lives. A few years later, Pajcic & Pajcic won an eight-figure verdict in yet another death case condemning the same weak roof design, which has since been substantially strengthened.



Dynamic tests clearly showed the roof defect.



# \$1 Billion Verdict Grabs Trucking Industry's Attention Nationwide

Mellissa was waiting for her son Connor to return home on Labor Day in 2017. When she couldn't reach him, she checked the shared location app and tracked him to Interstate 95 where there was a massive pileup on the highway. Mellissa will never forget the horror upon realizing Connor had been killed. The moment forever etched in her mind.

All the southbound traffic was stopped for miles after a truck driver without a CDL rear-ended a vehicle and caused a fiery mess. Connor, heeding the signs warning of congestion ahead, was slowing for traffic when another truck driver plowed into Connor and 19 other cars. That trucker had been up all night and could not read the FDOT warning signs.

The case was tried in Nassau County where the jury sent a loud and clear message: Dangerous truck drivers and the companies that put them behind the wheel will not be tolerated. The verdict, including punitive damages,

was over \$1 Billion. Mellissa recalls that her jaw hit the floor when she heard the numbers. "The magnitude of what that mean weighs very heavy on my shoulders. It gives me the opportunity to make much needed changes for everybody's safety."

The verdict sent shock waves through the trucking industry nationwide. Four different trucking magazines broadcast

the billion-dollar verdict as a warning to dangerous trucking companies everywhere.



INSIDE A NUCLEAR VERDICT: Florida Jury Renders \$1 Billion Ruling

Mellissa is now a crusader for trucking safety, pushing for safety features on trucks, such as automatic braking systems. She is supporting "Connor's Law" named after her son, which backs enforcement of laws requiring commercial truckers to be able to read English, something that may have saved Connor's life. She is even considering getting a commercial driver's license herself and has started an "angel parent" support group for parents facing immeasurable heartbreak.







# "Look at the Man, Not the Chair"

Bruce's Story of Resilience and a Life Fully Lived

Bruce was 30 years old when his life turned upside down. He was riding his motorcycle to an early morning class when a logging truck pulled out in front of him and kept on going. He owes his life to a Good Samaritan who found him unable to move in the middle of the dark highway.

The hit-and-run left him paralyzed from the waist down. Bruce chose not just to survive, but to live boldly.

As a married man with young children, becoming paralyzed could have stolen his spirit. Instead, it pushed him to new places, and he was always a man who sought adventure. Bruce returned to school, earned technical certifications, and chased his dreams.

He bought a specially adapted motorcycle, learned to drive with hand controls, and even rode up the East Coast on his own.

No one knew who caused the hit-and-run crash so when Bruce needed someone to fight for him most, his doctors referred him to Pajcic & Pajcic.

"It seemed like the right people were in the right place at the right time for me," Bruce said. "I would say I had the best representation any man could have had." Through tireless detective work—including tracking down the truck responsible and hiring a former NASA employee to use cutting edge electron microscope analysis - the firm secured the resources Bruce needed to build a full life.

With the settlement, Bruce built a home, complete with a swimming pool where he hosts family parties. He travels the world, from Paris to Israel, refusing to let his injury limit his horizons.

Bruce speaks of his Pajcic lawyer with deep affection. "Seemed like he really took a liking to me," he said. "He saw the man, not just the wheelchair."

As the son of migrant farm workers in Crescent City, Florida, he never set out to become a symbol of resilience. "But if you really see me, you'll know I'm not someone to feel sorry for. I'm living."

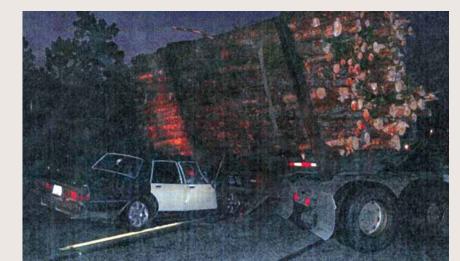


### LOG TRUCKS Still Haunt the Roads of North Florida



Far too often, logs hang out of the back of dilapidated and dirty trailers, often with little or no lighting. At times, underpaid, overworked, and unqualified drivers are not trained or supervised and skirt safety regulations and weigh stations. What's worse is that the log trucks frequently operate in the dark, predawn hours.

Over the past decades Pajcic & Pajcic has gotten large verdicts, followed by even larger verdicts in these cases. In one trial, the log truck bypassed a weigh station and made a U-turn in the dark, in front of an oncoming vehicle, leaving "Turtle" with a life-altering brain injury.







# Malpiactice Client's son inspired

TO BECOME A LAWYER



Tina was a veteran and hard-working manager for Merrill Lynch. She was also a brand-new mom. She needed routine gallbladder surgery, but in a preliminary procedure the day before, her common bile duct was perforated. Despite labs which should have halted the operation, the doctor performed it anyway. That negligence resulted in sepsis, multi-system organ failure, and a stroke.

Tina was hospitalized for nearly four months, most of it in a coma. She spent six more months at Brooks Rehabilitation Hospital, where she had to relearn how to walk and talk. She missed critical bonding moments with her son Chip. On his first birthday, she was allowed to go home for a few hours in a wheelchair.

Tina and her husband. Chris. couldn't understand how this could happen to a healthy 32-year-old. Pajcic & Pajcic told Tina, "We will find you answers and the truth." The complex case took years to resolve. The Pajcic Firm uncovered, among other things, evidence of falsification of medical documents. with entire sections of her medical records missing.

Because of the settlement, Tina was able to return to school to obtain a Master's in Education. She remains grateful for all the Pajcics did for her.

"They went beyond helping me with the case. They were our advocates."



# Miracle Child



Hayden has defied all the odds.
He can smile. He loves singing
when he hears music. He enjoys
the beach, the wind in his face,
and being with his family.

On Hayden's behalf, The Pajcic Firm contributed toward the establishment of a Field of Dreams baseball field and playground for Hayden and other disabled children in St. Johns County.

Hayden's mom is still amazed at both her son's perseverance and the Pajcic's work on Hayden's malpractice case. "It blows my mind every day that he is still here with us. His life, our life, would not have been possible without the Pajcic Firm."

## MALPRACTICE MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE



# THE LEGACY OF TH



It's still hard for Tina to believe it's been ten years since the El Faro cargo ship sank in the Atlantic Ocean during Hurricane Joaquin killing all 33 crewmembers on board. Among those who died was her husband, third mate Jeremie, leaving her a widow and their two children without their beloved father.

Tina describes every day as still being a struggle for their family, but they lean on each other and over the years have found that when one of them is having a bad day, the others are always there for emotional support.

Traveling has also been a big source of comfort for the family. They have taken many trips throughout the world. As Tina puts it, "This would not have been possible without the epic battle Pajcic & Pajcic took on to seek justice for the families."

The Pajcic Firm assumed a leadership role among the large group of plaintiff attorneys coordinating their resources to prove the shipowner's liability for this disaster. Their efforts were successful and, in the end, all the cases settled separately for confidential amounts. What was critically important to Tina was that the truth came out.





Pajcic & Pajcic called the antiquated El Faro a piece of junk that never should have set sail from Jacksonville to Puerto Rico during deteriorating weather conditions. When the ship's black boxes were recovered, Jeremie is heard urging the captain to reroute south, away from the storm. However, the captain pressed forward, feeling pressure to get the ship's load to port on time, despite the hurricane.

Following the lawsuits, the National Transportation Safety Board recommended sweeping changes aimed at improving maritime safety, including upgrades to survival equipment and better access to weather data.







Firefighters

A fire broke out on the Hoegh Xiamen ship as it sat anchored and loaded with junk cars at Blount Island. Some of the car batteries had not been disconnected, and the fire quickly spread, fueled by gas tanks that had not been emptied.

As Jacksonville firefighters heroically responded, attempting to contain the blaze and prevent an environmental disaster, there was an explosion and 11 firefighters were seriously injured.

The ship owners and transportation companies responsible for the fire argued that they were immune from liability under the ancient common-law "fireman's rule." But Pajcic & Pajcic

believed the negligence was so egregious and the underpinnings of the old fireman's rule so unjust that it had no place in modern maritime law. In a nationally published opinion, the federal judge agreed. See 546 F. Supp.3d 1105 (M.D. Fla. 2021)



The case was hard fought in federal court and exhaustively defended by all five corporate defendants. Through the work of the Pajcic & Pajcic team (successfully defending five summary judgment motions and approximately 15 Daubert challenges) the case proceeded towards a jury trial. Then as trial approached, Pajcic & Pajcic used its highly developed and proprietary mock trial procedures to produce reliable indicators of the high jury verdicts that would likely result.

All five corporate defendants settled for substantial and fair amounts for each firefighter. The money will not only help the injured firefighters, but more importantly, the results of Pajcic & Pajcic's advocacy hopefully will have a lasting impact on public safety nationwide.

# "We Were Told to Let Go. We Said No."

In July 2012, Josh called his fiancée, Lauren, from Jacksonville to say goodnight. They were just weeks away from starting a new life in Nashville. Their apartment was waiting. Their future was unfolding.

But that night, everything changed.





Outside an iconic neighborhood bar where Josh was a regular, he tried to stop a fight and ended up getting punched by a stranger. He fell backward, hitting his head on concrete. When Lauren got the call, it was from Josh's best friend: Josh is in a coma. You need to get here now.

At the hospital, Lauren found him surrounded by wires and tubes. "You couldn't even see him," she recalled. Doctors told her to prepare for the worst. "They said he wasn't going to come back from this. But we had faith. We would not give up on him."

Though Josh's brain injury left him permanently disabled, he slowly began a long recovery. He still needs a walker and has trouble articulating words, but he has independence within the home and Lauren always knows what he is trying to say. And with the help of Pajcic & Pajcic, Lauren and Josh were able to rebuild the life they thought they had lost.

"Pajcic & Pajcic just took care of us the entire time," Lauren said. "They felt like family." The night of the verdict, Steve gave Josh a favorite hat that Josh coveted Remarkably, Josh kept the hat all these years in pristine condition.



Josh still has the hat Steve gave m the day of the verdict, and a new one Steve gave him for this photo.



The verdict also gave Josh and Lauren options for their future.

They moved across the country to Las Vegas, a dream of Josh's to move out west.

They bought and renovated a beautiful home. And though they were told children weren't possible, they pursued IVF— and it worked. Today, they have a bright, joyful daughter.



"We wouldn't have anything we have today without Pajcic & Pajcic," Lauren said. "We wouldn't have this house. We wouldn't have our daughter. I'm able to stay home and take care of both Josh and our little girl because of the jury's award. We owe everything to them." Josh now receives in-home physical therapy three times a week and continues to make progress. Their daughter is thriving. "She's turning into a daddy's girl," Lauren said.

« The trial team after the verdict



Jade was just a 13-year-old sunbathing on the Jade was just a 13-year-old sunbathing beach with a friend when she was run a City of Atlantic Beach Public Works pickup truck, suffering severe burns. beach with a friend when she was run over by them fully.

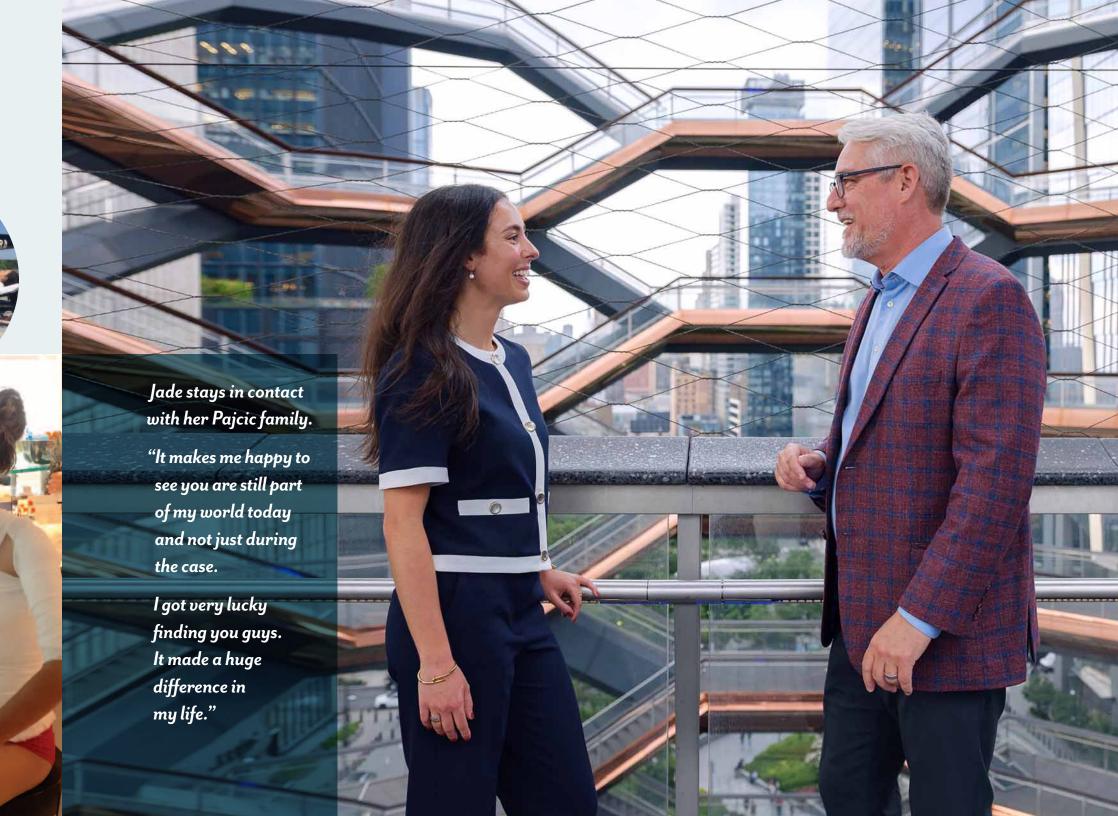
Jade said it was such a traumatic period in her life, but the one thing she clearly remembers is feeling safe and comfortable whenever she was at the Pajcic Firm. She explained, "I trusted them fully and knew they always had my best interest at heart."

The case was complex because it was against a government entity. But Pajcic attorneys found a way to prevail without going through the arduous process of approval from the state legislature. Ultimately, the city of Atlantic Beach did the right thing and paid significantly above the usual caps that are in place.

Jade recently graduated from The University of Maryland with a degree in Criminal Justice and Criminology. She is thrilled to be working in New York City as an investigator in the private sector.

She is emotionally healed from the ordeal, but faces more physical therapy and surgeries in the future.





# FAJCIC FIRM WOLKS

Over these 50 years, the Pajcics have been busy serving the public beyond their practice of law by creating charitable programs to help the disadvantaged and by playing major roles in historic political campaigns.

### FIRST TRIAL LEADS TO LASTING FRIENDSHIP

It will never go down in history as being one of the largest verdicts or having a precedent-setting outcome, but it forged a friendship that has spanned nearly three decades.



Deanna was hurt in a car crash and Pajcic & Pajcic proved to the jury that even a low impact collision can cause significant injuries. Verdict for the plaintiff.

The case may have ended, but the relationship between Deanna and the firm carries on. Not only has Deanna provided the firm with fabulous lunches from time to time, but every year during the holidays, Deanna and the Pajcic team can be seen handing out gift bags in downtown Jacksonville to help those who have fallen on hard times.

"I just love everyone at the firm so much. I have always had so much respect because they treat everyone like family."



### \$1 MILLION FOR TEACHER INCENTIVES

Steve and Gary donated \$1 million to Annie R. Morgan Elementary School, which they attended.

The money was used for incentive pay for teachers and at the time this helped raise the school's academic achievements from the bottom to a top ranking.



### **MONETARY MOTIVATION**

Over the last eight years Steve has invested \$2.5 million in a program he and his daughter Helen established to provide mentoring and cash assistance to disadvantaged youth.

Riverside Turning Point is run by two men who Steve and Gary used to coach in a youth basketball program they started.

Atrews Bell and Don Jackson grew up to be success stories from those basketball days and they want to pass it forward. The mentoring program is proud to announce its first college graduate, with more getting close. Another two are currently active military. The Pajcics know these efforts are a mere drop in the bucket of what needs to be done to combat the harms done by centuries of racism and sexism in our society.



In 1993 Steve and Gary established a \$1 Million endowment for graduates of their alma mater, Paxon High School, to attend The University of North Florida for free.

Now more than 30 years later, there are nearly 100 Pajcic Scholars.

Coley Jones was one of the early scholars. He graduated from UNF in 2000 with a degree in Political Science and Business. Today he is a Senior Vice President at Bank of America. The Pajcic scholarship was like a lifeline for him.

"Their support empowered me

to pursue a profession where I now help others achieve their financial goals. Their generosity was a seed that continues to grow through the work I do every day."

# GOOD WOLKS

### \$2 MILLION TO FLORIDA'S FIRST HBCU

Steve and Anne donated \$2 Million to Edward Waters University in 2014. At the time, Dr. Nathaniel Glover was President of the college, which was also his alma mater.



It remains the largest gift in the institution's history from a single donor. Edward Waters is the oldest historically black college in Florida.

The donation came almost two decades after Steve and Gary ran Nat Glover's campaign for Jacksonville sheriff.

Glover won the race in 1995 in a huge upset, becoming the first Black sheriff elected in Florida since Reconstruction.

GIVING
GREEN
TO THE
EMERALD
TRAIL



Their love of biking and kayaking made it a perfect fit for the Pajcics to become early major supporters of Jacksonville's Emerald Trail project.

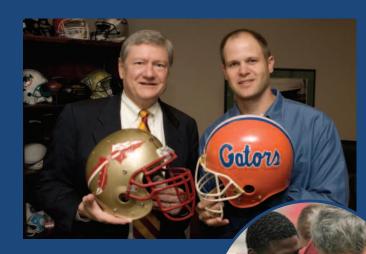
rard Waters College \$2,000,000.00

Dollars & No Cents

The 34-mile trail will connect bicycle and pedestrian paths through Jacksonville's urban core neighborhoods. Restoration of major creeks is also part of the plan. The first phase is already open. The goal is to have it completed by 2029.

### **TEAMING UP**

There was no bitter rivalry when Gary donated \$100,000 each to a Seminole and a Gator for a great cause.



Following Hurricane Katrina, two athletes had charities that assisted young people devastated by the storm.

Both athletes have ties to the New Orleans area.

As Gary said at the time,

"When it comes to helping kids,
there is no Florida State or Florida,
we're all on the same team."

### GOLFING FOR GOOD

It's known as a party with a purpose. The annual Yard Golf event at the homes of Steve and Michael has raised well over \$1 Million for Jacksonville Area Legal Aid.

Legal Aid provides
economic, social and
housing justice for
low-income and at-risk
individuals and families.

The highlight of the wiffle golf event is always the celebrity shoot-out with Jaguar players, former progolf legends, and our favorite local NBA Hall-of-Famer.

For attendees who get a hole-in-one on certain holes, it can mean either a \$6,000 or \$9,000 prize. The Pajcics match all prize money, donations, and sponsorships to JALA, so it is always a win-win.









### CASE MANAGERS

Pajcic & Pajcic's readiness and willingness to take every single case to trial is critical to all the good results we get for our clients. That mindset can be helpful in reaching settlements when that's the best option.

That's where our pre-suit case managers come in. They have a combined 50 years of experience. Under the guidance of the attorneys, they are seasoned in negotiating with insurance companies for the optimal results.

The Pajcic appellate team has a hand in every single case at Pajcic & Pajcic. They work behind the scenes to help ensure that the firm always completely understands and persuasively uses current law.

As one attorney quipped, "They are our better version of 'human' artificial intelligence."



### FROM RUNNERS TO RUNNING THINGS

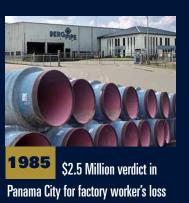
Antonio, Eva and Damon all started working at the Pajcic Firm in the entry level position of "runner", meaning they did whatever little jobs were needed around the office. Today, they are all in the top management positions, members of what's known as the X-Team or Executive Team. They have a combined more than 75 years of experience with the firm.



# Every case is unique. The results of one case do not necessarily indicate the value of another case and most cases result in a lower recovery. It should not be assumed that your case will have as beneficial a result.

### SOME OF THE PAJCIC & PAJCIC VERDICTS OVER PAST 50 YEARS

Pajcic & Pajcic has developed its own proprietary jury selection algorithm and sophisticated mock trial procedures that have made record breaking jury verdicts not only attainable, but predictable.



of leg in a products liability lawsuit

for unsafe design of conveyor system.







young wife's death from a Ford Explorer roof crush. Federal regulations have since doubled the strength requirements for SUV roofs.



\$13 Million verdict for brain injury caused by a log truck making U-turn in predawn hours on US-1.



Nearly \$19 Million

verdict for brain injury to innocent

victim of a bar fight just outside

an iconic neighborhood bar.



\$1 Billion verdict for compensatory and punitive damages against two trucking companies for death of an 18-year-old stopped in traffic on I-95.



compensatory and punitive damages against log truck company and driver injuring three people in two different cars.



50 YEARS OF SERVICE, EXPERIENCE & RESULTS.

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