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Attorneys at Law

Progress Is Not a Straight Line, But It Is Certain



A message from Managing Partner Ira Sherman

On January 21, 2009, I wrote an email celebrating the inauguration of Barak Obama as President of the United States and entitled it “A Day of Special Pride.” I wrote, “Yesterday, the industry of justice seekers celebrated a special, indeed once in a lifetime, success ... we have proven that we have come to the point where anyone can lead this country, irrespective of their race or sex. This was truly unimaginable to many of us who grew up in the 1950s, despite the civil rights ‘revolution’ of the 1960s. There can be no greater, clearer validation that dedicated hard work can and will pay off, if not quickly, eventually, if the cause is right and just, than the election of President Obama. I know we are all walking with a little more bounce in our step and a warmer feeling inside. I pray that this feeling stays within each of us for many years to come, and that it fortifies us for the challenges to the justice system that we will be fighting in the future.”

I did not know that we would be suffering the multitude of horrors that have befallen us. However, I did know that the fight for justice was not over and there would be difficult times ahead. And difficult times have overwhelmed us for months. First, we had the virus. That led to illness, massive unemployment, and death. People who were comfortable in their lives were suddenly unable to pay their bills. We have all been in “lockdown” for months, and that has caused a unique sense of frustration. Our lives, and the lives of our families, have been dramatically disrupted — our children can’t go to school, and families and friends can no longer hug or even go to dinner together as they once did. Loved ones, family or friends, are left lonely in hospitals; weddings, graduations,

and other ceremonies have been cancelled; and people die alone, with only Facetime available to say goodbye.

This once-in-a-lifetime disruption has taken a back seat to the stark reality that hate, and hate-based crimes, have not been eradicated. We are reminded that the hate that confronts so many of us — whether based on race, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation — can cause misery and death. People have been killed for no good reason whatsoever and in such heartless ways, we have to turn away from the news when it is shown over and over again because the raw violence portrayed is so difficult to watch, understand, and accept. The horrific murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd are the latest on too long of a list of people murdered due to hate and indifference for human life. I mourn for them and pray that our country will return to the days of enlightenment and love of our fellow man.

I also hope my prayer on January 21, 2009, that *“this feeling [of pride] stays within each of us for many years to come, and that it fortifies us for the challenges to the justice system that we will be fighting in the future.”*

Perhaps, if each of us can recall the optimism of the day Barak Obama was inaugurated, and see beyond these darker days, hopelessness will not find its way into our hearts. I know we all feel a kinship towards each other. We are a community that is hurting now. Yet, we must do all we can to assure that we influence as many as we can to not react to the pain by inflicting pain on other innocents. I look forward to better days ahead.

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**PARTNERS SHERMAN, CAMMARATA & SIEGEL NAMED
WASHINGTON, D.C. 2020 *Super Lawyers*[®]**

FOR 10th CONSECUTIVE YEAR



PARTNERS CAMMARATA & SIEGEL NAMED TO “TOP 100”



**PARTNER MATTHEW TIEVSKY AND STEPHEN OLLAR
NAMED “RISING STARS”**

The 2020 *Washington, D.C. Super Lawyers*[®] annual list of “Top Lawyers” was featured in the *Washington Post Magazine* in May. We are proud to announce that every lawyer at Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C. was featured this year.

This is the 10th consecutive year that partners Ira Sherman, Joseph Cammarata, and Allan M. Siegel have been named *Super Lawyers*[®]. Partners Joseph Cammarata and Allan M. Siegel also both made the Washington, D.C. “Top 100” list for the second consecutive year. Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C. was the only personal injury law firm which had two lawyers in the Top 100 list, and partners Cammarata and Siegel are two of only 11 personal injury lawyers to make the Top 100 list.

Partner Matthew Tievsky and associate Stephen Ollar were both named “Rising Stars.”

Super Lawyers[®] uses a patented multiphase selection process. *Super Lawyers*[®] evaluates each nominee on 12 indicators of peer recognition and professional achievement.

We are proud to get these recognitions but take even more pride in helping people get the justice they deserve.

COVID AFFECTS THE COURTS

The global pandemic has touched every facet of our society, and the courts were no exception. Starting in mid-March, every court in the region was forced to shutter its doors to minimize the spread of the coronavirus. In the process, the courts cancelled nonemergency hearings and trials for a period of March through June. This resulted in the courts having to extend deadlines for the hundreds of thousands of lawsuits affected by the closure. The courts also extended statutes of limitations — the deadlines for people to file their lawsuits — during this period. These extensions were enacted so that no one would be prevented from seeking justice as a result of the court closures.

Now that the rate of new infections in our area is on the decline, the courts are beginning the arduous process of reopening. There are, however, many obstacles that must be addressed before normal court operations can be achieved. The most onerous obstacle is the backlog of hearings and trials that have to be rescheduled. This means that a trial originally set in 2020 may not be reset until 2021. The courts also have to address the continued danger of spreading the virus. Courts universally have been forums where the public gathers in large numbers. Jury trials in particular can bring anywhere from six to 12 people in close proximity with each other for a prolonged period of time, and the courts need to figure out how to conduct jury trials without spreading the virus. There are no easy answers to these difficulties, and each courthouse must individually determine what procedures to implement.

Ultimately, the courts will return to normal operations, as will the rest of our society. As your attorneys, we have implemented measures to track the various orders and operating procedures originating from each of the various courts in which we practice. We are always available to answer any questions you might have regarding how court operations may affect both your case and your health and safety.



CORONAVIRUS CAN'T STOP CSCS

While the coronavirus has dramatically changed life for us all, it has not interfered with our ability to aggressively pursue justice on behalf of our clients. Even before the District of Columbia decided that it would close all nonessential businesses, we began making changes to ensure the safety of our employees and our clients.

We quickly transitioned our entire staff to remote working so that we could stay open and continue to advance our clients' cases. Our technology, such as our case management system, remote access systems, and advanced phone systems, allowed us to operate without skipping a beat. Many of you may have called the office during this time and heard Lynette's or Sharice's friendly voice, as you would normally expect. They transferred your call to your lawyer, or our team of professionals, and you probably never realized that we were spread out across the DMV while you were talking to us. We established a system so that videoconferences are readily available for anyone who wants to "meet" with us, and we transitioned many of our documents to DocuSign to make it easy for our clients to sign documents without having to come into the office.

We have also continued to fight for you every day since the pandemic started. We have conducted depositions, mediations, and arbitrations through videoconferences. We have also continued to resolve cases even though the courts have largely been closed, and have cancelled trials and hearings during the emergency.

In fact, we have been quite busy obtaining remarkable results for our clients. Some of the highlights are listed below:

- **A \$311,000 arbitration award** on behalf of a man involved in a T-bone collision who suffered a shoulder injury requiring surgery.
- **An almost \$300,000 settlement** on behalf of a woman who suffered a fractured pelvis as a result of a car crash.
- **A \$250,000 settlement** on behalf of a woman who suffered a brain injury in a car crash.
- **A \$200,000 settlement** on behalf of a man who was a passenger in a car crash, and who suffered a shoulder injury requiring surgery.
- **A \$175,000 settlement** on behalf of a woman who fractured her knee as a result of a car crash.
- **Another \$175,000 settlement** on behalf of a man who was rear-ended at a high rate of speed and suffered a back injury.

While this unprecedented time in our history has not been easy, we have adapted, and will continue to adapt, to ensure that we can serve your needs. While we hope that normalcy will return soon, we want you to know that our commitment to you, our clients, and the pursuit of justice will continue however long it takes, and regardless of the challenges that we may face.



#MyCovidheroDC

Some of you might have noticed on Facebook or Twitter that Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C. partnered last month with local charities to celebrate COVID heroes. We wanted to recognize the heroes among us who have been working tirelessly on the front lines and behind the scenes, administering health care, providing and preparing food, picking up our trash, educating our children, and caring for vulnerable populations, and at the same time donate to charities who desperately needed the funds in these unprecedented times. We selected six local charities and encouraged people to submit videos or pictures of their COVID heroes. For every video or picture submitted, the law firm agreed to donate \$25 to one of the six selected local charities, chosen by the submitter, up to \$20,000. The six local charities included Capital Area Food Bank, Food & Friends, House of Ruth, Martha's Table, Miriam's Kitchen, and United Way of the National Capital Area. We are proud to support these charities, as they have been crucial in providing much-needed support during these very difficult times.

We got some great submissions, and even though the submissions did not bring us to the maximum contribution, the law firm has made contributions totaling \$21,000 to the selected charities.

We want to thank everyone who participated, and especially the charities, who helped get the word out. However, most importantly, we want to thank all of the COVID heroes, who continue to make endless sacrifices to make our world better, safer, or just a little more normal in these turbulent times.

We are your law firm

We want you to think of us as your law firm.

If you have legal matters that need attention, please let us know. If we cannot handle the matter, we will refer you to a competent firm that can.

Please feel free to refer us to your family, friends, and neighbors for their legal needs. We welcome the opportunity to help.

Call us. You're going to feel a whole lot better about things.

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The information included in this newsletter is not intended as a substitute for consultation with an attorney. Specific conditions always require consultation with appropriate legal professionals.

CSCS PROVIDES FREE FACE MASKS

In anticipation of the eventual gradual reopening of our society and the expected growing need for face masks, we made face masks available, at no cost, to anyone who wanted one.

We are happy to report that we had many people request face masks. We are also happy to report that face masks are still available.

If you would like a face mask, please send an email to lynette@dc-law.net with your name, address, contact number, and the number requested. They will be shipped directly to you from Bonfire, the company we contracted to make the masks. In addition, for each mask purchased by the law firm, Bonfire is donating one mask to a person in need of one, providing a benefit to the community at large.

The face mask is 100 percent cotton, designed for daily use, and is washable. An image of the face mask is shown above. From our law firm family to yours, we wish you continued safety and happy times in the days ahead.

