

## We wish you all health, happiness and prosperity throughout the new year!

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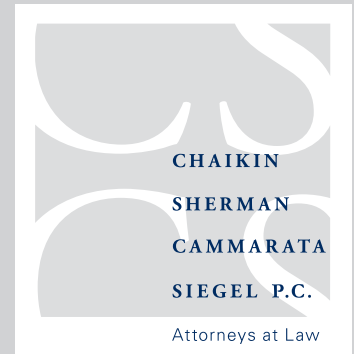
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- No recovery, No fee.  
We do not get paid  
unless you do.

The entire **Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C.**, family would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a joyful holiday season and a new year filled with health, happiness and peace. We look forward to 2008 with enthusiasm because of the new leadership roles we will be taking in our community. **Partners Joseph Cammarata** and **Ira Sherman**, President and Vice President of the Brain Injury Association of Washington, D.C., are very excited about the local chapter becoming an affiliate of the Brain Injury Association of America in 2008. In May, 2008 **Partner Allan M. Siegel** will take the helm as the President of the Trial Lawyers Association of Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Mr. Siegel will be the third partner to hold that leadership role. It will also be the first full year the firm will be operating with its new name, logo and website. **Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C.**, could not enjoy this success and the opportunity to be leaders in the community if it were not for the support of our clients. We appreciate the trust and confidence you have placed in us.



## Partners Joseph Cammarata and Allan M. Siegel are named "Best Lawyers"—again

The December 2007 issue of *Washingtonian Magazine* named **Partners Joseph Cammarata** and **Allan M. Siegel** two of the "Best Lawyers" in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., area. The *Washingtonian* compiles this list by asking local attorneys who they believe are the best lawyers in the area, and who they would choose to represent them if they needed help. The article identifies Mr. Cammarata and Mr. Siegel as two of "Washington's best—most honest and effective—lawyers." Mr. Cammarata has been recognized by the *Washingtonian* as a "Best Lawyer" in every survey year since 1997, and this is the second consecutive survey in which the magazine has acknowledged Mr. Siegel as "Washington's best." We congratulate Joseph Cammarata and Allan M. Siegel!

## D.C. Council introduces legislation to prevent the District of Columbia from benefitting from its own negligence

Eleven out of 13 members of the D.C. Council cosponsored legislation authored by Council member Phil Mendelson entitled "The Frank Harris, Jr. Offset Justice Act of 2007." The legislation was drafted and introduced at the urging of **Partners Ira Sherman** and **Joseph Cammarata** in an effort to assist our client, Frank Harris, Jr., and to prevent the District of Columbia from attempting to collect money for medical expenses paid by the District of Columbia out of compensation awarded by a judge or jury to a victim of the District's negligent care after the victim sues the District for negligence.

In 2002, the Williams Administration established a policy of not attempting to bill a victim of the District's negligent care when the victim sued the District for negligence. Mayor Fenty refused to follow that policy, although he previously supported it before he became Mayor. Instead, he permitted the District to attempt to collect a bill of approximately \$2.5 million for "room and board" from Frank Harris, who was rendered permanently blind as a result of the District's negligent care of him. The legislation was needed to prevent the District from billing victims of the District's abuse. (See related article on the Frank Harris case.)

## Firm settles case of man blinded due to District's negligence

Frank Harris, Jr., age 55, is a mentally ill ward of the District of Columbia and has been a resident of St. Elizabeth's Hospital since 1973 as a result of being found not guilty by reason of insanity of two nonviolent property crimes. In March 2003, Mr. Harris was under doctor's orders to be in restraints to protect him from harm, and in particular to prevent him from injuring his eyes. On March 19, 2003, a "psych tech" inappropriately, and without authorization, released Mr. Harris from restraints. As a result, Mr. Harris gouged out his own eyes with his bare hands. Mr. Harris is permanently blind.

**Partners Ira Sherman** and **Joseph Cammarata** sued the District of Columbia for negligence. After the suit was filed, the District sent a bill to Mr. Harris for approximately \$2.5 million for "room and board" since 1987. The District claimed that it was entitled to reduce any jury verdict by the \$2.5 million bill. Partners Ira Sherman and Joseph Cammarata were successful in obtaining legislation aimed at preventing the District from billing Mr. Harris for its negligence. (See related article.)

After extensive discovery, the case was settled at mediation and the District agreed to give up its claim of \$2.5 million for "room and board."

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## Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C., associates with Aseged Yimer—named one of the "Best Lawyers" by *Washingtonian Magazine*

The law firm of **Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C.**, has been active in the Ethiopian community for many years. We have participated in events celebrating the Ethiopian Millennium and have been a sponsor at those events. The law firm is also the founder of the "Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C., Ethiopian Heritage College Scholarship," which will be given to a high-school senior who has been admitted to an accredited two- or four-year college beginning in the fall 2008 semester. Applications for this college scholarship are targeted to be available in January 2008.

The law firm also recently established a relationship with Aseged Yimer, a Maryland attorney of Ethiopian heritage. Mr. Yimer has a practice that includes personal injury as well as immigration law, and his office is in Silver Spring, Maryland. Mr. Yimer was recently named a "Best Lawyer" in the D.C. Metropolitan area by the December 2007 edition of *Washingtonian Magazine*. We are proud to add Mr. Yimer to the array of attorneys with which this law firm is associated.

## Law firm obtains \$140,000 settlement for woman who slipped and fell on ice

The “slip and fall” case is one of the most difficult cases for an injured person to win. This is especially true in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, since the law provides that if the injured party causes or contributes to the incident, at all, there cannot be any recovery. Although many lawyers do not take slip and fall cases **Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C.** routinely has success obtaining justice for our clients.

Recently, **Partner Allan M. Siegel** obtained a \$140,000 settlement on behalf of a woman who slipped and fell on ice on the parking lot in front of her apartment. Many of you may remember the treacherous snow and ice storms in December 2003. Our client, who had two prior knee replacements, was literally stuck in her apartment for days while these storms bombarded the area. After the storms stopped, our client waited approximately 24 hours to give the management company ample time to clear the walkways and the parking lots. She decided to go out for brunch with her daughter at approximately 10:00 a.m. on a Sunday morning. When she left the apartment, the walkways and parking looked clear. She was able to navigate down the sidewalk, but she did not know that the parking lot was covered with black ice. When she stepped down off the curb onto the parking lot, she slipped on the black ice, severely injuring her right knee. She had a revision surgery to repair the right knee replacement.

The management company had a contract with a snow removal company to plow the parking lot. While the snow removal company drove through the apartment complex with their plows the day before our client fell, neither the management company nor the snow removal company bothered to inspect the parking lot the next day to make sure the parking lot had not frozen over. **Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C.**, filed suit against the management company and the snow removal company. The case was settled approximately four weeks before trial. This article should serve as a reminder to all of our clients, as winter approaches, to exercise caution when walking after snow or ice storms. However, if you do fall and injure yourself, you should call us to determine if you have a claim.

## Ebony M. Robinson leads firm in drive to clothe the needy

Join **Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C.**, in our efforts to clothe needy residents of Washington, D.C., by donating seasonally appropriate clothing for adults and children to Bread for the City.

Bread for the City is a private, nonprofit organization that provides vulnerable residents of Washington, D.C., with comprehensive services, including food, clothing, medical care, and legal and social services. See [www.breadforthecity.org](http://www.breadforthecity.org) for more details. All of the clothing distributed by Bread for the City comes from donations and is distributed at no cost to needy individuals.

The firm began collecting clothing December 3, 2007, and will continue to do so through December 17, 2007. If you have not done so already, please stop by our office between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to drop off gently used winter clothing, including shoes and coats. There is a bin in the lobby area of our office designated for donations.

*Let's make the holidays a little warmer  
for our D.C. residents.*

[www.breadforthecity.org](http://www.breadforthecity.org)

## New associate Ebony M. Robinson hits the ground running!

Associate **Ebony M. Robinson** joined the firm on September 17, 2007 after completing a judicial clerkship with the Honorable Anna Blackburne-Rigsby of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. Ms. Robinson is a member of the District of Columbia and Maryland Bars.

In her very first trial, she had the honor of representing a longtime client of the firm in the District Court of Prince George's County. In that case, our client was struck by a vehicle that failed to yield the right of way. However, the defendant claimed that our client changed lanes into him. Ms. Robinson not only convinced the judge to find the defendant 100 percent at fault for the accident, but received a verdict that compensated our client for all of his medical expenses and provided him compensation for pain and suffering. We are all proud of Ms. Robinson's progress and look forward to many more successes.

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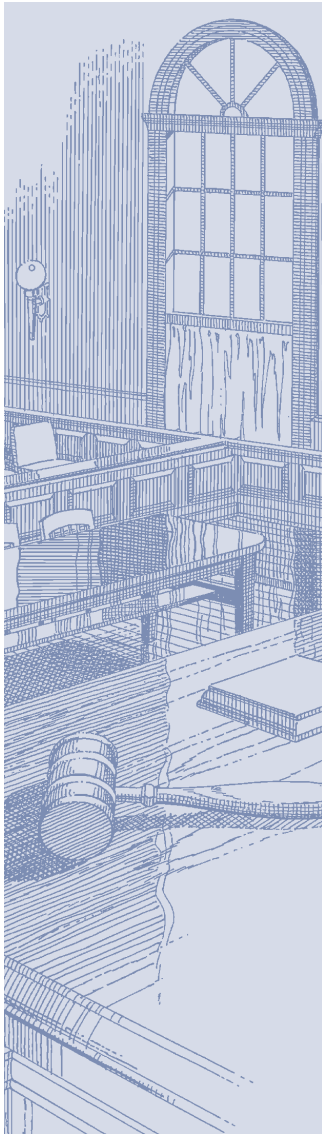
## We are your law firm

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.**



## Group home case featured on WJLA I-Team "Special Report"

**Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C.,** has become known within the community as the law firm to go to with cases of family abuse at nursing homes, hospitals, and group homes for the developmentally disabled. As many of you know, the law firm has represented approximately 20 families as a result of injuries sustained to loved ones in group homes for developmentally disabled individuals in both the District of Columbia and in Maryland. WJLA's I-Team news, headed by reporter Roberta Baskin, is doing an exposé regarding the continuing abuses in the group home system.

The first group home case, filed in January 2000, brought attention to an institutionalized system of abuse and neglect resulting in injuries and deaths to almost 200 people. Nevertheless, and despite the fact that this system has been under review for years and the law firm has identified abuses and testified before the District of Columbia committee chaired by then-Council member Adrian Fenty, the District of Columbia group home system remains broken in many ways. Roberta Baskin's report sheds light on this system of abuse of the District of Columbia's most vulnerable citizens. We appreciate the reporting by Roberta Baskin regarding this most important subject matter and hope that many of you have seen it. If not, please visit WJLA's website to see this special I-Team report.

## Client Corner

Our client **Goitom Bisrat** is a case manager with the **Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC)**, is a community-based social service agency that provides assistance to the African community. As winter approaches, this agency attempts to locate homeless individuals, find them shelter, and provide them the assistance they need to get back on their feet.

We wanted to acknowledge the wonderful work that Mr. Bisrat and the ECDC does on behalf of people in need.

*In this section, we acknowledge the achievements, events, special recognitions, honors, awards, and promotions of our clients. If you would like to be part of our newsletter, please contact us; we will put you in the next edition.*