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Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C., provides valuable services in a bad economy

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CHAIKIN, SHERMAN, CAMMARATA & SIEGEL, P.C., DOES NOT CHARGE FOR SERVICES PROVIDED TO RECOVER PIP OR MEDPAY—Many law firms charge a fee to process PIP (Personal Injury Protection) or MEDPAY (Medical Payment) benefits. PIP and MEDPAY are insurance coverages that many people carry on their own automobile insurance policies which can pay for medical expenses and lost wages. We apply for these benefits, on behalf of our clients, for free. If you have been in an automobile collision you should call us as soon as possible after the collision to ensure that you are getting the insurance benefits you deserve.

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We have been here for you, your family, and your friends for over 40 years, in good times and bad. Please do not hesitate to call on us if you need us!

Joseph Cammarata named "Super Lawyer" for third consecutive year

Partner Joseph Cammarata was named to Washington, D.C. Super Lawyers for 2009 by *Law & Politics* magazine. This is the third consecutive year that Mr. Cammarata has received

this honor. *Law & Politics* utilizes a rigorous multistep process that incorporates peer recognition and professional achievement to select lawyers for inclusion in its Super Lawyers publication.

Super Lawyers

Partner Allan M. Siegel completes his term as President of the Trial Lawyers Association of Washington, D.C., and is elected AAJ delegate

Partner Allan M. Siegel's term as President of the Trial Lawyers Association of Washington, D.C. (DC-TLA) officially ended at the organization's Annual Awards Dinner on May 12, 2009. When Mr. Siegel's tenure as President began this country was in the twilight of the presidency of George W. Bush, and we did not know what the future would bring for the civil justice system in America. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama were still battling for the Democratic nomination, and it was unclear as to who would occupy the White House, or which party would dominate the Congress.

During Mr. Siegel's year as President we witnessed a clear shift taking place in Washington, D.C., on both the federal and local levels, in favor of the protection of individual rights. For example, there are currently four bills pending on Capitol Hill that would significantly protect consumers. The Sunshine in Litigation Act would restrict protective orders and secrecy agreements in federal cases. A bill like this could have potentially prevented hundreds of deaths caused by the shredding of Firestone tires, the danger of which was shrouded by court secrecy agreements before 2001. The Nursing Home Arbitration Act would prohibit binding mandatory arbitration agreements in nursing home contracts, safeguarding the legal rights of that vulnerable population. The Medical Device Safety Act will restore the rights of patients injured by faulty medical devices—a right patients lost last year as a result of the Supreme Court's decision in *Riegel v. Medtronic*. Lastly, the Arbitration Fairness Act of 2009 bill will eliminate unfair binding mandatory arbitration contracts in consumer agreements.

During Mr. Siegel's presidency, there were also great strides made in the District of Columbia. DC-TLA worked hard to successfully achieve the goal of electing 13 D.C. council members who are empathetic and sympathetic to the rights of District of Columbia citizens to access the courts and obtain justice. The city published regulations designed to implement a law that members of DC-TLA were instrumental in drafting, which requires the city insurance office to hold hearings to monitor requests for malpractice insurance rate increases. Most recently, a bill called "The Insurance Claims Consumer Protection Amendment Act of 2009" was introduced. This bill is designed to provide consumers more equitable treatment from their insurance companies.

In addition, the organization continued to provide quality educational programs to lawyers throughout the D.C. metropolitan area, creating innovative programs, many of which sold out. Mr. Siegel intends to stay involved in the organization, having recently been elected to serve as the organization's delegate to the national organization—the American Association for Justice (AAJ). He is looking forward to his new position with the national association. The law firm of **Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C.**, is a member of the Leaders Forum of AAJ, and partner **Ira Sherman** serves as a co-chairman of one of AAJ's litigation groups.

Defendant's offer: \$5,000 Verdict: \$611,000

Our client was driving in a funeral procession when an employee of the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (DCWASA) failed to yield to the funeral procession and crashed into our client's vehicle. As a result of the collision, our client suffered a herniated disk in her back at the L4-L5 level of her spine, which caused permanent back pain. She was not a candidate for surgery, so there was nothing she could do to alleviate the back pain. Our client is 34 years old and has three children. The pain interfered with her ability to enjoy many activities with her family.

DCWASA refused to take responsibility for the collision. They claimed our client ran a red light, since the traffic light governing traffic in the direction our client was travelling was red at the time she proceeded through the intersection. DCWASA was also relying on an independent witness who was expected to testify that our client had lagged behind the funeral procession, making it appear as if the funeral procession was over. **DCWASA offered our client \$5,000** to settle the case.

Partner Allan M. Siegel took the case to trial in the Superior Court for the District of Columbia.

At trial, the independent witness stated that he was paying attention and was therefore able to determine that there was still a funeral procession proceeding through the intersection, despite his testimony that our client had lagged behind by six car lengths. There were also other witnesses who said our client was stopped in the middle of the intersection, one car length behind the vehicle in front of her, when the collision occurred. The jury found that the DCWASA driver was negligent and entered a verdict against DCWASA for **\$611,238.40**.



Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C., associates with Nakeasha Sanders, Esq.

The law firm is proud to announce its new association with **Nakeasha Sanders, Esq.** Ms. Sanders is the principal of the Sanders Law Firm, PLLC, where she practices in the areas of employment law, consumer bankruptcy, and family law. Ms. Sanders is a rising leader in the D.C. legal community. After serving several years on the Board of Directors, Ms. Sanders was recently elected president-elect of the Greater Washington Area Chapter, Women Lawyers Division, National Bar Association (GWAC), an affiliate chapter of the National Bar Association, which is comprised of over 300 African-American women lawyers and judges. She is also an active member of the Metropolitan Washington Employment Lawyers Association, the National Consumer Bankruptcy Association, the Women's Bar Association, and the American Bar Association. Additionally, Ms. Sanders gives her time freely to the community at large as she regularly volunteers with the D.C. Bar legal clinic, tutors at Malcolm X Elementary School, and sits on the board of The Women's Collective, a local nonprofit for women affected by HIV/AIDS. We look forward to working with Ms. Sanders for many years to come.



Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C., associates with Alan Dobson, Esq.

We are proud to announce our new association with **Alan Dobson, Esq.** Mr. Dobson's practice focuses on all types of immigration law, including family cases, fiancé visas, student visas, citizenship, employment (temporary visas and green cards), consular processing, asylum, and removal proceedings. Mr. Dobson also does volunteer work with local government and nonprofit organizations to assist metro D.C. area residents with their immigration matters. He works with immigrants from all over the world. Many of the clients whom he has assisted with immigration matters have returned to him, or referred family and friends to him, for legal advice and assistance relating to personal injury matters. In order to provide these clients with the highest quality of representation, he has decided to associate with the law firm of **Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C.** We are excited to have Mr. Dobson on our team and look forward to working with his diverse client base.



Military veteran suffers fifth brain injury—settles case for \$250,000

Our client was working at a local golf course. He was crossing a wooden bridge that traversed a small creek when one of the planks collapsed, causing him to fall off the bridge and into the creek below. As a result of the fall, our client was rendered unconscious and was found lying facedown in the water. He was taken to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with a concussion. This was our client's fifth traumatic brain injury (hereinafter "TBI"). He had suffered three prior brain injuries while serving as a Marine. He also suffered a brain injury as a civilian when he was assaulted after trying to assist a stranded motorist.

At the time he fell off the bridge, he still had cognitive deficits, headaches, and a seizure disorder as a result of his prior injuries. He also suffered from neck, back, and knee pain as a result of injuries suffered while in the military, but was able to live with the pain and function despite his injuries.

Partners Joseph Cammarata and Allan M. Siegel filed a lawsuit on behalf of the client. During the discovery process, they uncovered that the defendant knew that the bridge was in disrepair. The information obtained in discovery demonstrated that it was the defendant's failure to adequately maintain the bridge which caused the plank to collapse. The law firm also retained an expert who would have testified that the defendant should have put guardrails on the bridge, which would have prevented our client from falling off the bridge, even though the plank collapsed.

The case was scheduled for trial in June 2009. It settled at mediation for \$250,000.

