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WINTER | 2021

Happy Holidays from CSCS

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Thanksgiving Does Not Come Once a Year

A message from Managing Partner Ira Sherman

There is nothing like the feeling of summer turning to fall, and the leaves magically turning from green to an array of other beautiful colors. One of the reasons we welcome this change is because we all know Thanksgiving, the holiday season, and New Years are not far behind. Despite the cooler air, the mere thought of the upcoming holiday season enlivens our spirits and warms our hearts. The Thanksgiving holiday has now come and gone, and we all anticipate the fun and the sense of renewal our holidays and the new year provide.

But this Thanksgiving, for me, was different than all others. The handshakes, hugs, and kisses welcoming family and dear friends had more significance than in years past, because those welcomes that we took for granted pre-COVID were now also symbolic of our ability to say goodbye to the lethal threat that COVID presented before vaccines were available. I can now walk into my office without a mask, and

can now again see the faces of the people I work with every day. What a joy it is to return to this "new normal," which is less than what we were used to, but much better than what we have been through the last eighteen months. With all the terrible consequences of COVID, we were left with the benefit of having "Thanksgiving" whenever we see old acquaintances, friends, or family again, and perhaps we wake up every day with a stronger sense of gratitude.

We are beginning the new year with a new group of talented members of our team. Claims Manager Erik McConnell retired and is succeeded by Melonie Mills, and Tira Barnes joined the team as a Claims Manager in April 2021. I anticipate that 2022 will provide an opportunity for us to meet with clients more often in the office, whenever a client prefers that over a virtual Zoom meeting. We all look forward to being "in person" again.

On behalf of the entire staff, I wish you all happy holidays, and good health in the new year.

CSCS Named "Best Law Firm" by U.S. News and World Report in the Field of Personal Injury and Medical Malpractice and Featured as "Top Lawyers" by Northern Virginia Magazine

We are proud to announce that for the third consecutive year, Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C. was named a "Best Law Firm" by **U.S. News and World Report**. To be eligible, firms must have a lawyer recognized in The Best Lawyers in America®, which only recognizes 5% of lawyers practicing in the United States. Mr. Sherman, Mr. Cammarata and Mr. Siegel have all been named as Best Lawyers®. The firm was ranked as one of the "Best Law Firms" in the Washington, DC metro area in the fields of Personal Injury Litigation and Medical Malpractice.

In addition, **Northern Virginia Magazine** recently named Ira Sherman, Joseph Cammarata and Allan M. Siegel as "Top Lawyers" in their December 2021 edition. To compile its list, the magazine asks area attorneys: "If you had a close friend or relative who needed a lawyer and you couldn't handle the case yourself, to whom would you refer them?" The list includes attorneys licensed in Virginia and/or Washington, D.C. Ira Sherman, Joseph Cammarata and Allan M. Siegel all received enough votes to be included in this elite list, for the third consecutive year.



Employee Spotlight: Lynette James

If you've called our office, you've likely spoken to **Lynette James**, who has been with the firm of Chaikin Sherman Cammarata & Siegel, P.C. for four years. Lynette is one of our receptionists, so if you call in, you are likely to hear her sunny "hello," before she helps you find whoever you're trying to reach at the firm.

Lynette has a long history working in the field of law. A native Washingtonian who grew up in the area, Lynette attended Morgan State University in Maryland, and after graduating in 1982 she worked several years for the Federal Government in D.C., performing legal secretarial work. In particular, for a period Lynette worked in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Clarence Thomas, who today sits as one of the nine Justices on the Supreme Court. Most recently, Lynette worked as an intellectual property specialist for the large patent law firm of Nixon Peabody. Fortunately, in 2017, Lynette decided to make a change and work with us at CSCS.

If you speak with Lynette, we hope you will express your appreciation for the valuable work she performs for all of our clients.



Claims Manager Corner

My name is **Melonie Mills**, I am the newest claims manager at Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata, & Siegel, P.C. I have a Master's of Science Degree in Legal Studies, with an emphasis in Health Care Delivery; a Master's Degree in Public Health, with an emphasis in Epidemiology and Health & Policy Management. I am currently working on my Doctorate in Public Health with an emphasis in Epidemiology and Health & Policy Management. My continued passion and purpose for the past 24 years is to be an advocate on behalf of injured victims, and to deliver impactful results on their behalf. My interest in the long-term impacts on victims who have suffered personal injuries, as it relates to their mental, physical, social, and economic status, is what sparked my interest in Public Health.

Perfect Match! This is my exact sentiment regarding joining the prestigious team of Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata, & Siegel, P.C. I gravitated to CSCS because of the lawyers' combined 100+ years of experience in advocating and consistently securing justice on behalf of injured victims. I was further impressed and intrigued to see that the firm's advocacy expanded into public health. For me to learn that Partner Ira Sherman and Joseph Cammarata founded the Brain Injury Association of Washington, D.C.; and that Joseph Cammarata drafted the Athletic Concussion Protection Act of 2011 of Washington, D.C., which is the most comprehensive legislation ever enacted in the nation designed to protect youth athletes from the known risks of a concussion. I immediately felt that I was getting the best of both worlds, and my expertise in both personal injury and public health would be utilized.

My dissertation research topic is the correlation between traumatic brain injuries in youth contact sports and opioid addiction. Unfortunately, the medical management of concussions/traumatic brain injury is often through prescription opioids, which carries a high risk for addiction, misuse, overdose, and death. I hope to share more about my research and dissertation in this column, in the future.

Liability and Umbrella Insurance Protects You and Your Family

As we enter a new year, it is the perfect opportunity to take stock of the various categories of auto insurance coverage available and to review our own coverage to determine whether it satisfies our needs for the following year. Far too often we find that our clients who have been seriously injured in a motor vehicle collision are deprived of just compensation due to a lack of coverage. Over the next few newsletters, we will discuss the various categories of auto insurance.

In this article, we will be addressing liability coverage. Liability coverage protects you and your assets when you are at fault for causing a motor vehicle collision. Every state requires a minimum amount of liability coverage; though, this minimum amount is typically only sufficient to cover minor bodily injury. In the event of a more serious injury, such as a broken bone, a traumatic brain injury, a permanent injury, or even death, the likely recovery for the victim could amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars, or even millions of dollars. Any judgment in excess of your policy limits would be your obligation to satisfy. This could expose you to garnished wages and liens on your property, and could even require you to file bankruptcy proceedings.

Even then the maximum amount of auto coverage may still be insufficient. You can also purchase umbrella coverage which would cover any claim against you with a value in excess of your auto liability coverage. Umbrella coverage is relatively inexpensive compared to other types of insurance, but it does require that you purchase the maximum amount of auto liability coverage.

The bottom line is that it is smart to protect yourself, in the event that you cause an accident. If you have any questions about your insurance, please do not hesitate to call us for a free insurance evaluation.

Former CSCS Associate Nominated by President Biden to be an Associate Judge of The Superior Court of The District of Columbia

Magistrate Judge **Ebony M. Scott** has been nominated by President Biden to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court. Judge Scott started her career at Chaikin, Sherman, Cammarata & Siegel, P.C., first as a law clerk, and then as a very successful trial attorney.

While an associate of our firm, Judge Scott showed compassion and empathy for our clients, and she successfully communicated the impact of their injuries, resulting in many successful settlements and verdicts. She also actively participated in the local bar and trial lawyer organizations, including the Trial Lawyers' Association of the District of Columbia (DC-TLA). As a tribute to the respect she garnered in a few short years Judge Scott was elected to serve as a member of the DC-TLA Board of Governors. She will be a passionate, fair, and dedicated Judge. President Biden could not have chosen better.

This is the second time that CSCS has had the honor of a former associate being nominated to the Superior Court Bench. The Honorable Stephanie Duncan-Peters was nominated to serve as an Associate Judge for the District of Columbia Superior Court in 1992. Judge Duncan-Peters was an extraordinary success, demonstrated by the fact that she was appointed to be the Presiding Judge of the Civil Division.

Partner Joseph Cammarata Wins Pre-Suit Settlement of \$1,500,000

Partner **Joseph Cammarata** was successful in obtaining a settlement, without having to file a lawsuit, for a client who was significantly injured in a motorcycle collision. Our client, who was driving a motorcycle on the beltway, was cut off by a man trying to exit, resulting in our client rear-ending the other vehicle. Our client was hospitalized and underwent multiple surgeries. Mr. Cammarata was able to convince the insurance company to pay \$1.5 Million, which was all of the available insurance, to settle the case without having to bring the matter to court.

Partner Allan M. Siegel Recovers \$635,000 For Clients Who Slipped and Fell on Ice

Winter is here, which means that we all have to be careful to avoid ice and snow on parking lots. However, black ice is not always visible on parking lots and sidewalks, and thus not easy to avoid. Property owners should take reasonable steps to remove and prevent black ice. Unfortunately, they do not always do so.

Partner **Allan M. Siegel** was able to resolve two cases involving situations in which our clients fell on black ice. One client fell in a parking lot, and one on a sidewalk. In both situations, the property owner had removed snow from the premises, and piled it up on the grass next to the pavement. When the weather warmed during the day the piled snow melted. But when it got colder at night, the snow that had melted refroze on the pavement, causing a very dangerous condition. In both cases, our clients slipped and fell on this invisible ice. Both clients suffered serious fractures to bones in their legs, which required surgery. Unfortunately, one of the clients is going to require a total ankle replacement as result of the initial fracture, at a very young age. After extensive litigation, both cases settled at mediation, one for \$500,000, and one for \$135,000. If you are injured as a result of a fall on the ice this winter, you should call us to learn your rights.



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Partner Joseph Cammarata is Featured as a Character in FX Series



Partner **Joseph Cammarata**, who represented Paula Jones in her lawsuit against former President Bill Clinton, was recently portrayed in the 10-episode FX Series called, *Impeachment: American Crime Story* by actor Emil Beheshti, who was in the movie *Ford v. Ferrari*. The series chronicled the Paula Jones lawsuit, the Monica Lewinsky affair and the eventual impeachment of President Clinton. The series can be seen through Amazon Prime and Hulu. Mr. Beheshti was cast for the role after Al Pacino was not available (only kidding)!

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A referral is the greatest professional compliment we can receive. If you have a friend, neighbor, or family member who is in need of legal representation, please consider referring them to our firm. We will do our best to provide the highest possible level of service and deliver winning results.



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Congratulations to Tanya Bailey— The First Winner of our Nationals Ticket Drawing

We wanted to Congratulate **Tanya Bailey** who was the first winner of our Nationals Ticket Drawing in September. Tanya won four tickets to a September Nationals game.

While the beautiful days of summer may seem far behind us, they will be back before we know it. Stay tuned for our next contest!

