

MARC TAXMAN

A Passionate Advocate in Personal Injury and Construction Negligence

by Kristine Lenneman

It's one thing for an attorney to be praised by clients. You might even expect fellow attorneys from your firm to say nice things about you. But it's a whole other matter when the lawyers you take on in the courtroom—and perhaps beat—go on the record praising your skills. That's respect.

For Marc A. Taxman, preparation is key, and his passion to be the best before he enters the courtroom has made him one of the most successful personal injury attorneys in Chicago.

That's why a highly respected attorney like Tom Boylan of Cassiday Schade LLC, who has handled many cases against Taxman for over 30 years, says, "Marc is truly a gifted lawyer, if not the best construction personal injury lawyer, definitely among the top three in the city."

Boylan notes Taxman's extensive experience and comments that "His handshake is his bond. You know when he tells you something you can count on it."

"It's my job to help put the pieces together," Taxman says about his work at Taxman, Pollock, Murray & Bekkerman, LLC. His passion for winning has been borne out in the record-breaking settlements awarded to his clients in major precedent-setting decisions.

THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Taxman kept an open mind about where his legal education might take him. When he entered Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago-Kent College of Law, "It was a way to continue my education and search for a career that spoke to me."

His focus toward a litigation role only came about when he met Illinois Supreme Court Justice Thomas Fitzgerald, who served as an adjunct professor at the time. "The way he taught trial advocacy was unique and just incredible to experience," Taxman says. "It really matched up well with my skill set and gave me the confidence to advocate in a courtroom."

After experiencing Judge Fitzgerald's class, Taxman knew trial work was his future. "I just



knew I would do this forever," he says.

And once he had that focus, Taxman did well studying torts and discovering a zeal for personal injury litigation. He worked hard to ensure he could perform at a high level and try those cases. This calling set the trajectory of his career.

Once he graduated from law school, Taxman served as a law clerk at Anesi Ozmon Rodin Novak & Kohen Ltd. Eventually, he

would "hit for the cycle," beginning as an associate, then being named a partner, and finally becoming a 25 percent owner in the firm. He left in 2016 to open his own shop, where he practices today.

While at Anesi Ozmon in 1998, Taxman argued the case of *LaFever v. Kemlite* before the Illinois Supreme Court. This was a premises liability case that Taxman, an associate at the time, took on as a new file case in 1990.

It an understatement to say the case had a major impact on his career when the client, Carl LaFever, placed his trust in the young Taxman.

“He knew he had been assigned an associate to lead this effort. It was a potentially difficult case, and yet he placed all his trust in me,” Taxman recalls.

Taxman tried this landmark case before Cook County Circuit Court Judge James S. Quinlan, and the jury awarded Mr. LaFever more than he had asked for.

“It was that romantic moment for an attorney when the verdict felt like it came from a Hollywood script. I felt like Paul Newman in *The Verdict*,” remembers Taxman. There was zero offer on the case.



With wife Nancy Mann Taxman



After \$67 million *Becker v. ConAgra* verdict

LANDMARK APPEAL

But this movie didn't end with the verdict. The defendant in the case submitted an unsuccessful post-judgment motion attempting to negate the verdict by arguing that LaFever was owed no duty.

The defense then appealed, but the original ruling was affirmed by the appellate court and then upheld by the Illinois Supreme Court, with Justice Mary Ann McMorrow writing for the majority. The landmark case was the first time the Illinois Supreme Court adopted the “deliberate encounter” exception to the “open and obvious” doctrine.

The case has changed the way courts instruct juries and has made its way to nearly every premises liability case that involves workers injured on the job. For Taxman, it was obviously a very special career milestone.

Taxman brought his wife Nancy to Springfield to observe the arguments before the Illinois Supreme Court. Having her with him at that major point in his career was an incredibly meaningful and memorable moment, he says.

Taxman could have finished his career at Anesi Ozmon. The firm had trained him well and offered him tremendous opportunities. He had grown both his practice and his reputation in large part due the doors opened there. Taxman had the financial freedom to do whatever he wanted.

He began talking with a select cadre of attorneys about opening their own firm. It was a moment in time when all of them could be available to start their new path.

“The availability of these partners happens once in the universe,” Taxman says about starting the firm. That's how, in 2016, Taxman became a founding partner of Taxman, Pollock, Murray & Bekkerman, LLC.

The firm has gone on in less than two years to win judgments and settlements of more than \$60 million on behalf of their clients. Taxman, in his career, has had single verdicts net more



Taxman arguing the *LaFever* case before the Illinois Supreme Court



With a northern pike during 2016 Manitoba fishing trip with sons Charlie and Noah Taxman



Taxman enjoys legal triumphs and riding his Triumph Tiger.

than \$67 million and \$21 million. Many other cases have included verdicts and settlements of seven and eight figures, including an \$18 million settlement in a traumatic birth injury case.

With the creation of the new firm, Taxman wanted to demonstrate a commitment to his clients. He wanted them to know that he and his partners were at the very top of their game and that they were willing to work hard and lead by example to practice the law at the highest level.

This is in direct response to what Taxman has observed with other experienced peers: Just when they reach the peak of their abilities, many attorneys tend to stop practicing their craft in favor of other distractions.

Taxman insists the culture of his new firm is to be willing to work hard and achieve good results for their clients. This rare group of accomplished attorneys litigate their cases from the first chair with the goal of teaching and passing this craft to the younger lawyers in the firm.

THE CONSUMMATE PROFESSIONAL

Taxman has handled every type of personal injury case including medical negligence, transportation negligence, product liability,

premises liability and construction negligence. He enjoys mentoring and collaborating with the lawyers in his firm and speaking at bar association seminars.

The high marks that Taxman gets from peers extend to the bench. "Consummate



Taxman poses for a photograph with family members in Madison, Wisconsin.

professional" is how Judge Thomas Lyons describes Taxman in court. "Always well prepared. He knows the file, and he has a very

good presentation. Taxman knows how to present the case in an effective and persuasive manner. He knows the law and how to use it."

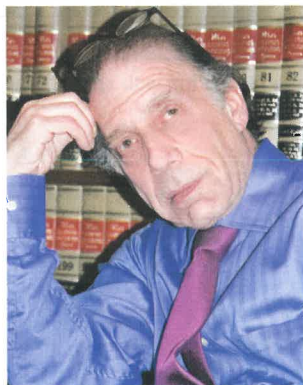
Taxman grew up in Chicago, a proud 1981 Chicago Public School graduate of the esteemed Von Steuben High School. In the fall of that year, he enrolled in the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and graduated in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in psychology before heading to IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law.

Marc and Nancy Mann Taxman have come a long way since that fateful case as an associate. They have been married 28 years, and they have three children. Sara is a graduate student working on her Ph.D. in clinical psychology and a yoga instructor. Charlie is at the University of Wisconsin School of Business and is a phenomenal poker player at the semi-pro level. Youngest son Noah is a high school senior with a charm and intellect that will make his future bright.

When he's not arguing cases before the Illinois Supreme Court, Taxman relaxes by playing golf, poker, going fishing and riding his Triumph motorcycle.

Don't expect Taxman to relax in his career though. "I love what I do, and I want to keep doing it," he says. ■

Ingenious Criminal Defense Strategies



Nationally recognized and respected, Mr. Ackerman practices almost exclusively in the area of criminal defense, both at the trial and appellate levels. As a trial lawyer, he has successfully defended some of the country's most problematic cases, including major racketeering (RICO), drug, and white collar prosecutions.

As an appellate advocate, he has successfully briefed countless cases before the United States and Illinois Supreme Courts, as well as most federal and Illinois appellate courts. In addition, Mr. Ackerman's work is the subject of study in law schools throughout the nation.

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