



RUSSELL & LAZARUS APC
PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEYS

Exclusively handling serious and catastrophic personal injury claims as well as wrongful death claims due to the negligence of individuals or business entities.



The Right Help When You Need It Most

Fall 2013 | Vol. 1, Issue 2

- Auto Accidents
- Motorcycle and Bike Accidents
- Slip-and-Fall Accidents
- Construction Accidents
- Wrongful Death Claims
- Dog Bite Injuries
- Brain Trauma Claims

..... THE BATTLE FOR THE SOUL OF OUR STATE BY CHRISTOPHER RUSSELL

Highlighted in the "Case Results" section on the back page of this newsletter is the reporting of a settlement of a wrongful death claim for one of our clients. We represented Gary, a devoted husband who lost his wife Linda, the love of his life, as a result of medical mistakes made by her doctor and a hospital that caused her to bleed to death due to simple miscommunication regarding a blood transfusion.

Gary and Linda had known each other for over 60 years, with their marriage being the second for both of them; they had found once again found love with each other. They did everything together, including camping, fishing and traveling; they were truly in their golden years. They had quite a bit of living left, since they were only in their 60s.

Gary, a 30-year veteran police officer, was satisfied with the settlement we obtained and glad to not have to go to the trial that was scheduled to resolve the matter. However, the \$175,000 settlement was in no way indicative of the loss Gary suffered. With so many years ahead of her, why was Linda's life worth only \$175,000? The answer to that question can be found within legislation that was passed in 1975, almost 40 years ago, which limits compensation to a surviving spouse in these types of medical malpractice claims to \$250,000. I encourage you to read about the sordid history of that legislation and the fabrications/exaggerations by the insurance industry as to why that legislation was passed, by going to: www.38istoolate.com

In terms of value, the \$250,000 awarded in 1975 is worth approximately \$62,000 in 2013 dollars. Conversely, if the \$250,000 was indexed for inflation, it would have a value of \$1,040,000 in today's dollars; yet, the insurance industry and medical community oppose any modification of the law. This means they believe the life of someone like Linda is really worth only \$62,000. The dirty little secret is that \$250,000 is never paid out, since that is the worst an insurance carrier can do at trial. That is why Gary's claim settled for \$175,000 despite our strong facts. In effect, Linda's life was not even worth \$62,000, but closer to \$43,000 in 1975 dollars.

I am telling the above story to alert everyone that after almost 40 years of its passage, there will be a proposition sponsored by various consumer groups on next year's ballot to modify this dehumanizing and unjust law. The law will only be changed via a proposition, as Sacramento will do nothing about it since the insurance industry funds every politician seeking re-election, and what politician is willing to bite the hand that feeds a re-election? Apparently none, if the last 40 years is any indication.

Regardless of whether you vote Republican or Democrat, valuing life at \$250,000 or \$62,000—or even \$43,000 as in the case of Linda—is an issue that goes to the soul of how we view each other as human beings, including our neighbors, our friends, our family and our spouses. Please be on the lookout for additional information as the election gets closer so you can make up your own mind as to how to vote on this important issue. I think you know which way Gary will be voting.

Russell & Lazarus APC

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We are Russell & Lazarus. We provide the highest level of service exclusively to those who have been injured in accidents. We work diligently each day, offering our clients uncompromising legal assistance and support. We continually strive to exceed the expectations of those we represent. We commit to being a positive force in their lives and the communities in which we serve.



ATTORNEY SPOTLIGHT: MARC LAZARUS

Marc Lazarus graduated from Chapman University School of Law, and has been practicing law for 14 years. He has been admitted to practice law in all of the Superior Courts in California, as well as the Federal Court system. Marc joined the firm in 2001 when it was the Law Offices of Christopher Russell.

The drama of the courtroom and trial practice inspired Marc to place his emphasis on personal injury litigation. For the past 27 years, he has dedicated his career to helping personal injury accident victims. For the past 6 years, Marc has served as a volunteer on the Los Angeles Superior Court Arbitrator Panel. He also taught as an instructor at UCI and at the Southern California College of Business and Law, in both American Bar Association-approved paralegal programs.

Marc Lazarus is an active volunteer in his community. He has been an assistant basketball coach, assistant soccer coach and referee for the Laguna Hills AYSO for 7 years, and a volunteer Cub Scout Den Leader for 3 years. Marc's wife of 16 years, Cathy, has also served as an active volunteer in their community with NEGU (Never Ever Give Up), providing Joy Jars for pediatric cancer patients and organizing donation drives for the Buena Vida orphanage. Marc and Cathy have a son, Jacob, who enjoys playing soccer, basketball, lacrosse, and baseball. He also loves skiing, snowboarding, surfing, and skateboarding. The Lazarus family enjoys spending their free time traveling the world together.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Christopher Russell

OC METRO Magazine has joined up with Avvo, a national attorney evaluation organization, to publish its annual list of the region's top attorneys. Fewer than 1% of attorneys receive this recognition; however, Russell & Lazarus' very own Christopher Russell has been highlighted as a top attorney in Orange County for 2013.

With a "superb" Avvo score of 10—which is calculated by using a mathematical model that considers many features including years in practice, disciplinary history, professional achievements and industry recognition—Chris stands out from the crowd. However, this number is simply a small expression of his successful road as a personal injury attorney.

Marc Lazarus

Although Marc spends most of his time handling our larger claims, he has found enough time to give back. Marc was recently awarded "Top Contributor 2013" and "Clients' Choice" badges from Avvo. Marc makes time in his own personal schedule to share his expertise with both attorneys and clients seeking free legal advice and information.

ATTORNEY FENJA KLAUS JOINS RUSSELL & LAZARUS

We are pleased to announce the newest addition to our experienced legal team. This month, the firm offers a warm welcome to Fenja Klaus, an experienced California-based trial attorney.

Fenja is excited to join the team and looks forward to using her substantial skills to assist injured clients and their families. A long-time Californian, Fenja is a 2002 graduate of Loyola Law School in Los Angeles and has accomplished much over the last decade.

While working with nationally recognized and successful firms as a trial attorney and class counsel, Fenja has proven her expertise and her dedication to her clients again and again.



TWO GUYS' EASY APPLE PIE

Recipe by Jake & Marc Lazarus



1/3 to 2/3 cup sugar

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Pinch of salt

8 medium sized apples (about 1 cup)

2 tablespoons margarine

- Heat oven to 425 degrees.
- Peel, core and slice the apples. Try to keep the size of the slices even.
- Mix sugar, flour, nutmeg, cinnamon, and salt in large bowl.
- Stir in apples.
- Pour into pastry-lined pie plate.
- Dot with margarine.
- Cover with top crust and seal the edges. Cut slits in the top.
- OPTIONAL: Cover edge with 3-inch strip of aluminum foil to prevent too much browning. Remove foil during last 15 minutes of baking.
- Bake 40 to 50 minutes or until crust is brown and juice begins to bubble through slits in crust.

FIRM NEWS

Marketing Department—Russell & Lazarus recently added a marketing department, which will provide additional services to clients, doctors, and referring attorneys. We know we can always work to better serve our clients so that they are continually treated with the respect and care they deserve.

NEW STAFF

We are growing! We have added some amazing new talent to our team.

Aldo Figueroa: Case Manager
Rory Mills: Litigation Paralegal
Dani Glidden: Case Manager
Rosa Guerrero: Administrative Assistant
Grace Kummerfeld: Legal Assistant



American Cancer Society Relay for Life

Russell & Lazarus raised over \$2,500 while walking, running, skipping and dancing in a non-stop 24-hour relay. "Team Emma" was given the bronze medal for their fundraising efforts, as well as the title of "Most Spirited." Paralegal Teri Peniston was inspired not only for personal reasons, but wanted our firm to celebrate the life of a special client, Emma Garcia, who recently passed away from cancer.

Helene Russell entered the Chili Cook-Off and won 3rd place for her famous chili that was featured in our Spring Newsletter. The relay was complete when Emma's son Henry arrived to show his support and love for his mother. Our team would like to thank all who helped us to exceed our fundraising goal and for supporting our efforts to fight cancer.

Sarah DeMille 5k Memorial Run

On July 20, Santa Margarita alumni, students, families and friends attended the 5th Annual Sarah DeMille 5k Memorial Run, held in memory of Santa Margarita alumnus Sarah DeMille '05, who passed away in 2006 in an automobile accident.

More than 200 runners ran the 5k trail in support of the event. "In years past, when asked what Sarah would think of the run in her honor, I would respond that she would be a little embarrassed by all the attention," said Mary Jane DeMille, mother of Sarah DeMille '05. "But this year I'd say she would be very proud of this event and what it has accomplished."

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Safer 3 Water Safety Foundation

We are once again proud to be Gold Sponsors of the 11th Annual Ocean Swim, which takes place on Sunday, September 13th. The non-competitive one-mile Ocean Swim is the premier fundraiser held by the Safer 3 Water Safety Foundation to raise money to further support its mission: to save lives through water safety education.

"Every day, about ten people die from unintentional drowning. Of these, two are children aged 14 and younger. Drowning ranks fifth among the leading causes of unintentional injury death in the United States."

- Centers for Disease Control

For more information, contact Lauren Bordages at:
laurenbordages@gmail.com

WEDDING: STEPHANIE & JOHN

On July 27th, Chris and Helene Russell, along with their three other daughters, celebrated the wedding of their daughter Stephanie Russell to John Halvorson in Boulder, Colorado.

The wedding took place on a picture-perfect sunny day at Sunrise Amphitheater, located in the Flat Irons overlooking Boulder. Stephanie and John met while attending the University of Colorado 6 years ago and it was love at first sight. As vows were exchanged, there wasn't a dry eye amongst the guests.

The wedding was officiated by a close college friend, Nick Eaton. Bridesmaids included Stephanie's sisters, as well as best friends Jennifer Schicktanz and Mandy Culler, who are legal assistants at Russell & Lazarus. The reception took place at Rembrandt Yard art gallery where friends and family danced the night away.





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CASE RESULTS

Refer to our website's "Case Results" section
for more results

PERSONAL INJURY

Settled a case on behalf of a 13-year-old girl who lost 15% of her peripheral vision and now has an increased risk of glaucoma as a result of being shot in the eye by an airsoft pellet gun. The claim was settled one week prior to trial for **\$500,000**.

WRONGFUL DEATH

As featured on the first page of this newsletter, Marc Lazarus settled a medical malpractice, wrongful death claim involving the wife of our client—a 69-year-old woman who bled to death in a hospital due to miscommunication between the in-charge doctor and hospital staff. That claim was resolved for **\$175,000**.

AUTO ACCIDENT

Resolved a knee injury case, 3 days into trial, which involved our 70-year-old military veteran client. Settled for **\$135,000**.

TESTIMONIALS

Thank you very much, Mr. Russell, for all that you have done for me throughout the claim—including arranging the surgery that fixed my knee. I am also very pleased with the fact that you were able to settle the claim for more than the policy limits of the other person's insurance because of the games that the insurance company was playing. I really don't know what I would have done without your firm and I am glad I picked your firm. Thank you again and give my best to your entire staff.

-Dean

My car was totaled and I suffered from aggravating neck and knee joint pain—both things that couldn't have come at a worse time. I called the law offices of Russell & Lazarus because I was familiar with Chris and Marc, and I knew they'd do great work. They went above and beyond great work for me. Not only did I reach a settlement on replacing my car in an incredibly timely fashion, but the team was able to get me an added benefit for all of the trouble and pain the accident caused me. I couldn't have gotten through this tough time without the Law Offices of Russell & Lazarus. Thank you for all you did!

-Crystal