



# RUSSELL & LAZARUS APC

PERSONAL INJURY TRIAL 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!

January 2019

- AUTO COLLISIONS
- MOTORCYCLE COLLISIONS
- BICYCLE ACCIDENTS
- TRIP/SLIP AND FALL ACCIDENTS
- CONSTRUCTION SITE ACCIDENTS
- ELDER ABUSE CLAIMS
- BRAIN TRAUMA CLAIMS
- WRONGFUL DEATH CLAIMS



# A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION WE CAN KEEP

## Positive Lessons From Negative Experiences

Many of us are focused on New Year's resolutions around this time of year, whether it is finally losing that spare tire around the old gut that has been your best friend for decades or doing something with your career other than wishing you could tell your boss to "take this job and ..." well, you know the rest. Some of those resolutions stick, but many don't because we humans are a funny lot as we don't really like change. Our firm is no different in resolving to do better in 2019 as we start out this new year. However, our resolution is not really a big change but rather a further commitment to something we have focused on over the last decade. However, before I go further, a little context would be helpful.

Our firm started off small back in 1998 with just me and our wonderful paralegal of 25-plus years, Teri Penniston. But the first law firm I ever worked for as an attorney (along with Teri) from 1984 to 1998 didn't have serving clients as its overriding philosophy. It was a classic, old-thinking law firm, which focused on getting the client in the door, making as much money as it could, and

then saying, "Nice talking to you!" There was no connection, no real determination to do what was best for the client, and no serving the clients in any real way.

After opening up the Law Offices of Christopher E. Russell (changed to Russell & Lazarus when Marc jumped in a bit later), I slowly began to appreciate the need for something more than just "burn and churn," despite the success we initially had. I knew there had to be a better way that was more fulfilling and provided a better experience for our clients. That slowly evolving, newfound thinking involved the belief that service to our clients had to be the top priority. Our fantastic marketing director, Lynne Powers, called it "concierge service." When we changed our mission statement to "service above all else" for our clients in terms of handling their personal injury claims, something amazing yet unexpected

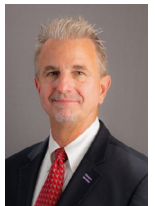
**"When we changed our mission statement to 'service above all else' for our clients in terms of handling their personal injury claims, something amazing yet unexpected occurred."**

occurred. The success we had in serving our clients actually resulted in more success for the firm and tremendously more fulfillment as well!

Since a few years after the firm's inception, we've handled about the same number of personal injury clients annually. The only difference now is that our team has doubled in number. Instead of having 10-12 team members helping our clients, we now have 24 team members to assist with our clients' needs. We are on the hunt for another attorney as we speak, because we realized at the end of 2018 that we needed even more help to provide an even better experience with even better results for our clients.

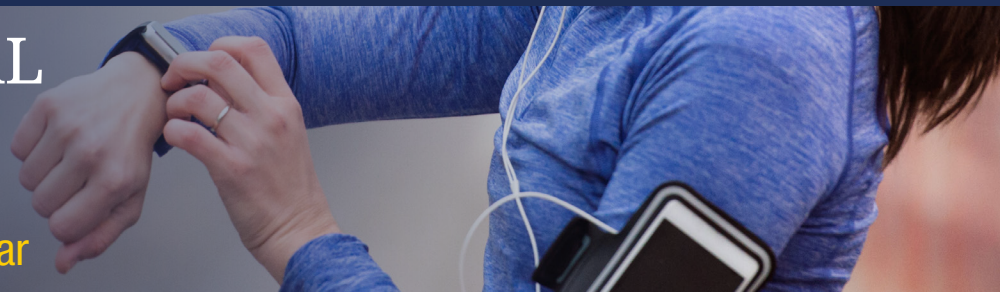
Now circling back to our firm's New Year's resolution — and yes, I would love to finally lose that decades old spare tire sitting snugly around my waist — what I, as the owner of Russell & Lazarus, and we, as a law firm of 24 strong warriors for justice, resolve to do in 2019 is to ratchet up our service even more for the benefit of our clients. In that regard, I want to hear from any client who is not receiving the service he or she deserves so we can not only rectify that immediately, but also stay true to our 2019 New Year's resolution. Thank you all for letting us serve your needs in 2019 and beyond!

*Chris Russell*



# 4 FITNESS GOAL MISTAKES TO AVOID

## Set the Right Goals This New Year



Choosing the right goal is perhaps the most important part of achievement. Be brave and challenge yourself this year, but increase your chances of success by avoiding these four common pitfalls.

**1. GETTING 'TONED,' 'BUFF,' OR 'IN SHAPE'** Do yourself a favor and delete vague fitness terms like these from your vocabulary; they don't mean anything, and there's no way to achieve them without a concrete definition. For instance, once you understand that "toned" really means "lean and muscular," you can create a workout plan that helps you shed fat and reveal muscle. And "in shape" can have different meanings depending on your current fitness level. To you, does it mean completing a difficult WOD, losing weight, or reducing your blood pressure? Be as specific as possible when creating your goal.

### 2. LOSING A LARGE AMOUNT OF WEIGHT

Losing lots of weight is fine as a long-term goal, but it will take a while. To prevent feelings of discouragement and failure, it's best to create smaller milestones to hit along the way. Decide what you can *realistically* achieve during a manageable period of time — perhaps 3–6 months — and make that your first goal. While the scale is a handy tool to evaluate your progress, don't rely on these numbers alone. Use multiple techniques, such as progress photos, measurements, and the way your clothes fit.

### 3. SETTING UNREALISTIC GOALS

Challenging yourself is one thing; setting yourself up for failure is another. If you spent three years putting on weight, it's not going to come off in three weeks. If you're juggling a 50-hour work week with a family and chores, you're probably kidding yourself by swearing to hit the gym every night after work for an hour. If you're a

hardgainer, trying to look like Arnold will be an exercise in futility. Don't be afraid to push yourself, but set goals you stand a chance of achieving. Once you hit those successfully, set some new ones!

### 4. LETTING INSTAGRAM INFLUENCE YOUR GOALS

Your favorite fitness Instagrammers may look like gods and goddesses online, but keep in mind that they're only showing you their best selves on their best days with the best angles and lighting. Instead of trying to be someone else, focus on yourself! Just because they're hitting PRs or rocking bikinis or eating a vegan diet doesn't mean you have to. Decide what you really care about, then choose goals that will make your life better every day — even when the camera isn't around.

Don't wait to get started. Decide what you want to achieve, make a plan now, and set yourself up for success!

## TEAM MEMBER FEATURE

### From a Football Mother's Eyes ...

By Teri Penniston

I'm a football mom. 15 years ago, my son, Kyle, begged me to let him sign up for tackle football when he was just 7 years old. Today, Kyle is in his third year of playing Division 1 football at the University of Wisconsin.

I have seen so much good during my son's football playing years. I've watched Kyle go from being a shy kid to being an outgoing and confident young man. His GPA improved, and his life changed, as he felt he truly belonged to an organization in which there is no "I" in team. Football turns boys into men.

In my view, football contributes to the forging of caring, thoughtful, confident, and most importantly, selfless young men. No

single player is more special than another. Every position is important. So much of what Kyle has learned on the field will be the foundation for his future, once he steps off the gridiron for the final time.

Watching Kyle grow and become brothers with his teammates makes me proud of him and reinforces my decision to "let" him play football all those years ago.

This year, my family was able to spend Christmas in New York City and see Kyle in action as the Badgers played (and WON!) in the Pinstripe Bowl at Yankee Stadium. (Photo Below)



No matter where life takes my son after his football playing days are over, I know we made the right decision. Sports change people for the better — and not just players, but families too.



# CASE STUDY

## A Favorable Result for a Deserving Client

Our firm recently won a four-week jury trial for one of our clients, which involved an assault and battery claim against a major grocery store chain.

As our client was shopping, non-uniformed store employees started to shout at him. Thinking they were going to do him harm, our client started to run. The poorly trained employees chased him down and tackled him to the ground. This caused our client's collarbone to snap. He had to be taken away in an ambulance.

Later, he had to have shoulder surgery involving a lengthy recovery and was unable to provide for his family. In the wake of this incident, the store originally wanted to press

charges against our client for shoplifting, but then quickly decided against it when it became clear he hadn't taken anything.

Russell & Lazarus filed a lawsuit against the store, and after four long years of litigation, the store's best offer was only \$65,000 for all of our client's medical bills (over \$100,000) and his pain and suffering.

We later discovered the store was relying heavily on the fact that jurors tend to be very conservative within the jurisdiction where the lawsuit was filed. Our client is Hispanic, and it appears they were leaning on the ugly crutch of potential prejudice. The store was hoping the jury would only give our client a bit more than half of his medical bills and nothing for pain and suffering. In their view, our client's pain and suffering meant nothing, but in the end, the jury thought differently.

The jury came back with a \$400,000 verdict for past and future medical bills, and

past and future pain and suffering. They also found the store and their employees were guilty of conduct that allowed for an additional award of punitive damages (a very rare and hard to obtain finding).

Soon after the verdict, the store increased their settlement offer to \$515,000 in order to avoid the public embarrassment of a punitive damages award. Our client accepted the offer.

Trial attorneys Fenja Klaus and Jorge Ramirez devoted four weeks of their lives to fighting a highly successful and well-funded defense law firm with a seemingly unlimited budget.

Our firm spent \$110,000 in out-of-pocket costs over those four years to help our client, with no assurance we would get it back. However, the time and money was worth the fight to the significant benefit of our client.



### NEW TEAM MEMBERS

A warm welcome to four dedicated, amazing, and very fun new team members! From left to right:

**Pre-Lit Clerk: Roxy Medina**

**Clerk: Marcus Harkins**

**Receptionist: Cindy Lopez**

**Pre-Lit Clerk: Mitzi Flores**

## KELSEY'S FAVORITE RECIPES

From Kelsey Krueger, our Litigation Clerk

### INGREDIENTS

- 50 vanilla wafer cookies
- 1/2 cup pecans
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves

### DIRECTIONS

1. Place vanilla wafers in a food processor and process into fine crumbs. Pour into a large bowl and set aside.
2. Place pecans in food processor and pulse until finely diced. Add to bowl with wafer crumbs.
3. Add powdered sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and ground cloves. Stir until combined.
4. In a small bowl, mix Sailor Jerry Rum and pumpkin purée. Pour into dry ingredients and stir until combined.
5. Place granulated sugar in a small bowl and line a large cookie sheet with wax paper.
6. Using a tablespoon, scoop out even portions of the mixture and roll between your hands to form balls. Roll balls in sugar and place on wax-paper-lined cookie sheet. Repeat with remaining mixture. When finished, place cookie sheet in refrigerator to chill rum balls for 1 hour. Serve cold or at room temperature.

### PUMPKIN SPICE RUM BALLS



- 1/4 cup Sailor Jerry Rum
- 2 tablespoons pumpkin purée
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar, for rolling



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# INSIDE this issue



## Super Lawyers

**PG**

**1**

A New Year's Resolution We Can Keep

**PG**

**2**

4 Fitness Goal Mistakes to Avoid

From a Football Mother's Eyes:  
Introducing Teri Penniston

**PG**

**3**

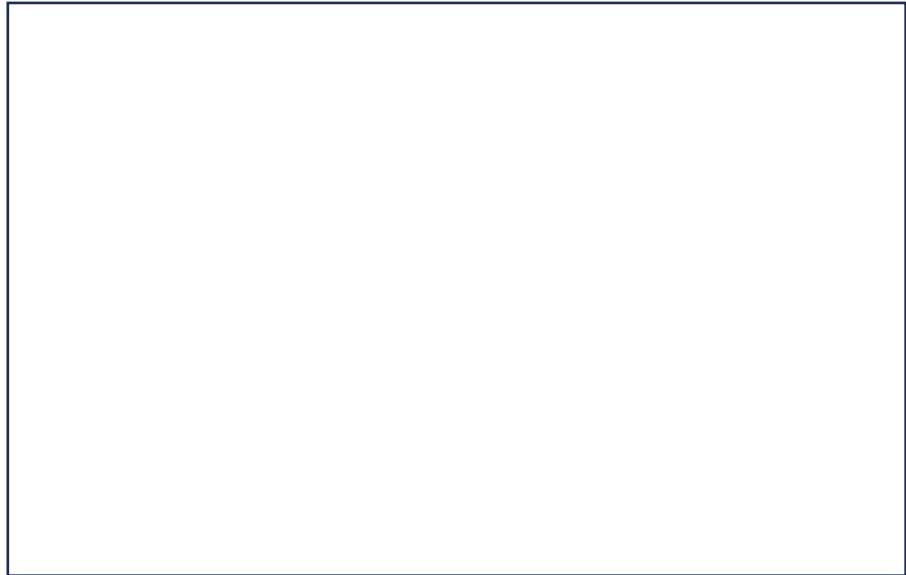
A Favorable Result for a Deserving Client

Pumpkin Spice Rum Balls

**PG**

**4**

My Favorite Podcast



# LISTEN TO SOMETHING NEW

## The Best Podcasts to Start in 2019

Though podcasts have been around for over a decade, they have only recently found their stride in popular culture. And they don't all feature nerds talking about "Game of Thrones." In this form of audio entertainment, there really is something for everyone. A number of podcasts have broken into mainstream pop culture, like "My Favorite Murder," "This American Life," and NPR's "Planet Money." But these are only the tip of the iceberg. Here are a few lesser-known podcasts that are seriously worth your time.

### Start Something Fun: 'Spirits'

The title "Spirits" is a play on the stories told and drinks enjoyed on this podcast. Co-hosts Amanda McLoughlin and Julia Schifini offer a fresh take on myths, legends, and folklore. From Greek classics to the tale of the Javanese Mermaid Queen, these lifelong friends and mythology enthusiasts examine what the stories we tell say about our culture, traditions, and values. If you're eager to fill

your year with something kinda creepy and kinda cool, you can't go wrong with "Spirits." Start listening at [SpiritsPodcast.com](http://SpiritsPodcast.com).

### Go on an Adventure: 'The Far Meridian'

Audio dramas are back and thriving in the world of podcasts. "The Far Meridian" explores the story of Peri, a lighthouse keeper whose brother disappeared long ago. Peri is terrified of leaving her home, so she's never discovered what happened to him. That changes when her lighthouse begins to appear in a new location every morning, initiating her search for her brother. Fantastically fun and painfully real, this is a story about the courage it takes to leave home behind. Join the girl in the lighthouse at [TheFarMeridian.com](http://TheFarMeridian.com).

### Tackle Your New Year's Resolutions: 'The Marie Forleo Podcast'

We all need some advice. Why not get it from someone who knows what they're talking about? Marie Forleo is an entrepreneur, writer,



and philanthropist. And according to Oprah, she's a thought leader for the next generation. Her mission is to help you become the person you most want to be. On the podcast, Marie and her guests discuss business, relationships, fear, love, and so much more. Get inspired at [MarieForleo.com/marietv](http://MarieForleo.com/marietv).

This list is just a start to the wealth of amazing, diverse podcasts out there. News recaps, sports history, true crime, pop-culture throwbacks, and plenty more fantastic audio entertainment awaits on your phone's podcast app. Start listening to your new obsession today!