



BACKING PAC, A TLABC TRADITION...

BY MEGAN EJACK
TLABC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
VANCOUVER BC

THE CLIENT

This issue of *the Verdict* has a focus on the client, and rightly so, because after all... where would you be without your clients?

These are the real people who come to you, in some of the worst times of their lives, for help... and for hope. These are not nameless, faceless people, listed in documents and filed away in paperwork. These are victims of circumstance, and of life. They are your clients. As trial lawyers, your job is not only to help them ‘win’ or ‘fight’ their unique battle, but to accompany them on the often long road towards justice, and to offer support and sometimes simply direction in what can be terrifying and confusing territory.

This special relationship can often continue long after the verdicts have been given and papers have been signed, because each individual case has the potential to leave an imprint on everyone involved. Success does not mean that the tragedy has disappeared; it simply means that it has been acknowledged. Whether it’s a criminal, estate, family or personal injury matter, there will always be victims, and there will always be lasting effects on lives. What matters most is not necessarily who ‘wins’ or ‘loses’, but perhaps, what effects take hold.

In the past year, we at TLABC have had the honour and pleasure of being introduced to a very special lawyer who exemplifies just that. Joel Feldman is a litigator from Philadelphia with whom we have been working on a very special campaign. Like many of you, Joel is also a father, a husband and a mentor and like many of his former clients, Joel recently went through one of the worst times of his life. On July 17th, 2009, Joel Feldman and his wife Dianne Anderson lost their daughter, Casey, in a horrific accident that instantly shifted Joel’s perspective from that of a lawyer to that of a client. One day, while crossing the street in a crosswalk, Casey was struck by a distracted driver, and killed. She was 21 and a senior at Fordham University in NYC. Beautiful and bright, Casey had her whole life ahead of her. The moment Casey was killed, the life that Joel had worked so hard to build came crashing down around him. What is truly poignant, however, is how he handled it.

Following this awful tragedy, Joel set to work on a special path to provide support for others who were enduring similar situations. He completed a counselling certification program and found a way to rise above his own heartbreak, to offer care and guidance to others. Through this process, Joel developed a unique campaign to create awareness about distracted driving

—a problem which has become epidemic in our society. In fact, distracted driving has overtaken driving under the influence, as a contributing cause of collisions and deaths, and by a shocking margin.

After meeting Joel and hearing him speak in San Francisco at the Annual Summer Conference for the National Association of Trial Lawyer Executives (NATLE) and the American Association for Justice (AAJ), we were so moved by his story, and the universality of his personal tragedy, that we were inspired to help.

This fall, our community-minded initiative, “TLABC Cares,” is proud to partner with Joel and his wife Dianne to bring the End Distracted Driving campaign to BC! TLABC members will be taking this unique presentation to schools around the province to begin to shed light on one of the most pervasive driving issues in the past decade. It is our hope, that in creating a dialogue about distracted driving, we can begin to put an end to these senseless tragedies.

We look forward to working on this very important campaign and we hope you will all support this project. For more information on this and other campaigns that are “Powered by PAC”, please follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Wordpress, and go to www.endddd.org. V

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