



# The People's Voice

Winter 2022 Newsletter

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## Client Testimonial

I am very happy with the results that Keith Williams and his group of attorneys and paralegals obtained for me in my case. I also appreciated how well the office communicated with me to let me know what was happening and what I could expect and when. It went a long way towards helping me through a stressful time. I wouldn't hesitate to refer someone to Keith Williams Law Group, they deliver good results.

DUDLEY

## Why It's Easy For Me To Ask A Jury For Money Damages

I often have friends and family members ask me if it's hard for me to get up in front of a jury to ask them to award money damages for an injury caused to my client. After all, they say, the money won't make the injury go away.

When I'm asked that question, I like to give a reminder of what money damages is about and how important a part of our system it is to have a jury of one's peers decide damages.

First, there's the U.S. Constitution. The 7th Amendment gave us all the right to have disputes involving damages of more than \$20 decided by a jury of our peers. Our American forefathers did not make that up, though...a jury of one's peers

deciding damages goes all the way back to the Magna Carta in the year 1215 and its provision requiring a "lawful judgment of his peers" before punishing a free man.

While the Magna Carta was signed long ago, the concept of money damages itself goes back much further and is scriptural in its base. In Exodus 21:33-34, for example, if a person kills another person's ox, he or she is required to pay money to the ox's owner. In other words, the person who injured another must pay damages for the value of the injury they caused.

Money damages, or "restitution" as it's sometimes called, is all about "restoring"

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## Watch Your Speed Out There!

Speeding is an issue that gets a lot of attention, but many people do not understand why it is such a big deal, especially in connection with automobile accidents.

Legally speaking, speeding is when someone drives a vehicle in excess of the speed limit that is posted. This is far and away the most common type of traffic violation, and approximately 42 million speeding citations are issued every year in

this country. If there is a wreck, evidence that a driver was speeding can result in automatic fault on the part of that driver if the excessive speed was part of what caused the wreck.

The chances of being in an automobile wreck increase when someone speeds, and the faster the speed, the higher the chances of serious injury or death resulting from a wreck. In fact, approximately one-

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**Have You Been Injured? We Will Maximize Your Compensation!**

**We truly appreciate you referring your friends and family to us.  
We promise to always take good care of them!**



## A Little Local History: Tennessee Music

As most every Tennessean knows, our state is famous for its music. From the Grand Ole Opry and Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, to the blues clubs on Beale Street in Memphis, not to mention Elvis' Graceland, Tennessee has a deep relationship with music.

As is the case with so many aspects of Tennessee's history, its musical history is also one that is intertwined with slavery and the irreplaceable, but often unacknowledged, contributions of African-Americans both before and after the end of slavery.

Of course, Memphis is known worldwide for its connection with the blues. It was only in the 1900s that the term "the blues" became associated with a musical style, and two Tennessee musicians were central in that process. One was W.C. Handy, a composer and band leader who was the son of slaves. His music was deeply rooted in African-American folk traditions. After settling in Memphis in the early 1900s, he started translating Black folk music into written form, and his work "St. Louis Blues" would come to define the blues for many and became one of the most performed songs in American music history. Today, a park on Beale Street is named after him, where performers on stage treat visitors to free blues performances.

Bessie Smith was an African-American

singer who grew up in Chattanooga and is referred to by many as the world's greatest blues singer. She began performing on stage at nine years of age, started recording for Columbia Records in 1923, and, by 1929, was so famous nationally that she was featured in a Hollywood short film, "St. Louis Blues." Her recordings of blues songs, including W.C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues," sold thousands of copies to both white and African-American musical audiences.



**There would be no Graceland without the impact of so many African-American musicians in creating rock & roll.**

While African-Americans' role in creating the blues is hardly a secret and is known by most people around the world, their connection to the development of "country" music is far less known. However, the instrumental traditions of fiddle and banjo, which are often associated with country music, are deeply entwined with African-American musical traditions here in Tennessee. Although the fiddle was brought here from Europe, in the 1800s, as many African-Americans played the instrument as did whites. In fact, in the years before the Civil War, historical figures such as Andrew Jackson were known to have danced to fiddling performed by slaves.

Even more deeply tied to African-American musical traditions, the banjo was actually brought here from Africa and was frequently played by slaves, later to gain popularity in

minstrel shows. The impact of the banjo and African-American music and performers on country music can be seen in the Grand Ole Opry's first superstar, "Uncle Dave" Macon. He was a renowned banjoist who diligently studied Black music of the Middle Tennessee area and sang many comic songs from African-American sources.

And, as Elvis himself told us, there would be no Graceland without the impact of so many African-American musicians in creating rock & roll. While some still think of Elvis as the man who created rock & roll, Elvis made clear that that honor goes to African-American musicians: "A lot of people seem to think I started this business. But rock & roll was here a long time before I came along. Nobody can sing that kind of music like [African-Americans]. Let's face it: I can't sing like Fats Domino can. I know that."

So, let's all celebrate Tennessee's rich musical history, especially with February being African-American History Month, by learning more about and appreciating the vital role so many African-Americans have played in creating the wide range of music we all love here in Tennessee.



— Jim Stocks

## Why It's Easy For Me To Ask A Jury For Money Damages

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balance to the two sides. If a person injures someone, money damages are our way of restoring the balance for the harm that was done to the other person. In that way, I take pride in my role in our system to help maintain a fair, balanced, just society where those who are harmed by others are restored through an award of the value of the harm done to them, and the persons causing that harm are not allowed to avoid responsibility for that harm.

I also remind those friends and family members that, as a practical matter, it is often necessary for me to go to trial and ask a jury for damages. This is the only power an injured person has to force insurance companies to pay for damages. They are in no hurry to settle an injured party's claim quickly, and instead time is on their side—they are more than happy to hang on to the money they should be paying for the damage and let it sit in their stock market account.

So no, it is not hard for me to ask a jury for money damages. It is an important part of what I do both for my injured clients and for our system of justice as a whole.



— B. Keith Williams

# Recalls – Consumer Safety Alert

**FRIGG Silicone Baby Pacifiers.** Classic and Daisy design baby pacifiers, sold nationwide at SpearmintLOVE, TJ Maxx, Lil' Tulips, Olivia & Jade Company stores, as well as online at Amazon and [www.mushie.com](http://www.mushie.com) between April 2021 and December 2021, due to danger of the nipple detaching from the shield and posing a choking hazard.

**HulovoX Children's Robes.** Children's robes sold by HulovoX on Amazon between January 2021 and May 2021 in sizes 3T through 12, due to the failure to meet flammability standards and risk of burn injuries to children.

**Karmas Far Infant Bath Seats.** Sold online at Walmart, Amazon, Ebay, Wish, and Bosonshop between August 2017 and October 2021, due to the failure to meet federal safety standards for infant bath seats, including stability and leg opening

requirements, causing a danger of the seat tipping over during use and posing a drowning hazard.

**Gas and Electric Free-Standing and Slide-In Ranges.** Various models sold under the brand names GE, GE Profile, Café, Haier, Hotpoint, Crosley, and Conservator. The recalled ranges were sold online and nationwide at Lowe's, Home Depot, Best Buy, and other home improvement or appliance stores between May 2021 and July 2021, and are being recalled due to the risk of tipping over when a heavy object is placed on an open oven door when the anti-tip bracket is not properly installed, creating a tip-over hazard and risk of burn injuries.

**Carex Brand Adult Portable Bed Rails.** Sold online and at medical supply stores nationwide between November 2012 and December 2021, due to the risk of users becoming entrapped within the bed rail or

between the rail and the side of the mattress, posing a serious entrapment hazard and risk of death by asphyxiation. The CDC has received reports of the entrapment deaths of three adults over the age of 80 associated with the bed rails.

**Endurance Hand Bed Rails.** Sold online and at medical supply stores nationwide between October 2006 through December 2021, due to the risk of users becoming entrapped within the bed rail or between the rail and the side of the mattress, posing a serious entrapment hazard and risk of death by asphyxiation. One entrapment death, involving an 86-year-old man, has been reported.

You can visit [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) for more specific information about these and other recalled items.



## Why is Asbestos Such A Problem In Old Buildings?

In decades past, it was common for construction companies to build houses and other structures with materials that are no longer considered safe for use in construction. Among all these sorts of materials, none are more infamous than asbestos, which is a shockingly common hazard in many older buildings. But what exactly is asbestos, and why is it considered such a problem in old buildings?

Asbestos is a type of mineral that can be found all around the world, and was once used as a common material in all sorts of industries, including construction. It was highly valued because it was relatively cheap to obtain, and has the distinction of being naturally resistant to fire and extreme heat. This made it especially valuable as a form of insulation, and it was used for that purpose for decades throughout the United States.

Sounds like a great product, so what's the problem? Well, unfortunately, it was found that asbestos could cause serious health problems to people who spend time around it. Asbestos crystals can break off into fibers that are small enough to be inhaled, where they settle inside the lungs of the people who breathe them in. Anyone who inhales these fibers can suffer from serious lung conditions, including asbestosis, mesothelioma, and lung cancer.

So, why is asbestos considered a problem in old buildings? The United States first began to impose restrictions on the use of asbestos in construction in the late 1970s, and it is thankfully almost never found in any buildings constructed after 1980. However, any building from before that time has a high likelihood of containing asbestos building materials, including insulation and cement. This means that inhabiting any of these

older buildings without first inspecting them for potential contamination is seriously risky.

If you have discovered asbestos in your home or business, the first thing you should do is contact an asbestos abatement provider. While their services are often expensive, it is the only way to make sure your building is safe for habitation. And if you or anyone you know begins to show the signs of asbestosis, mesothelioma, or lung cancer, you should immediately contact a doctor for examination and treatment.

However, you should also speak to a personal injury lawyer with experience handling issues related to asbestos exposure. They can help you obtain compensation for the harm that you and your loved ones have experienced.

— B. Keith Williams

## Watch Your Speed Out There!

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third of all automobile fatalities involve a wreck with at least one driver who was speeding.

There are three major ways that speed affects the chance of being in a car wreck. First, as a matter of physics, the faster a vehicle is traveling, the greater its momentum at the time of a wreck and, therefore, the greater the impact and chance of damaging anyone or anything it hits. Second, the faster someone is driving, the more difficult it is to react in time to avoid a hazard, person, or other vehicle. And third, even once the driver does react, the faster the vehicle is traveling, the longer it takes to slow down.

So, watch your speed and do your best

to stay within the legal speed limit when driving. Also, stay alert for other drivers who are driving over the speed limit, especially those driving erratically, and be sure to leave sufficient space between the vehicle in front of you to allow you to safely slow down and stop if they have to suddenly brake.

Watch your speed and stay safe out there, friends!



— Troy Jones

## Practice Areas:

- Auto Accidents
- Big Truck Accidents
- Motorcycle Accidents
- Aviation Accidents
- Construction Accidents
- Personal Injury
- Wrongful Death
- Dangerous Products
- Social Security Disability
- Business Litigation

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**We promise to always take good care of the friends and family you refer to us!**