



From the President
Whit D. Bertch
 THE BERTCH FIRM



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Top Gun Awards gala

HONORING OUTSTANDING LEGAL ACHIEVEMENT IN 2024: ARASH HOMAMPOUR, JOHN MANLY, RICARDO ECHEVERRIA, JASON ARGOS AND GARRETT CHAMBERS

Next month, on Saturday, November 2, 2024, at the Pendry Hotel in Newport Beach, OCTLA will hold its annual Top Gun Awards gala, where we will honor attorneys demonstrating this year's most outstanding and exemplary results for their clients. This year, OCTLA will recognize five attorneys for their exceptional results: John Manly (distinguished achievement), Arash Homampour (personal injury), Ricardo Echeverria (insurance bad faith), Jason Argos (medical malpractice) and Garrett Chambers (young gun). Each of these attorneys not only obtained an outstanding result as lead trial attorney, but also demonstrated civility, ethics and fair play in the process. Their exemplary work serves as an inspiration to all trial lawyers who fight for justice on behalf of their clients.

In the category of distinguished achievement, John Manly of Manly Stewart Finaldi LLP has fought tirelessly for over 25 years, representing survivors of sexual abuse. For example, Manly and his firm have secured more than 10 *nine-figure* settlements for survivors, including a landmark \$880M settlement against USA Gymnastics for the long-term abuse committed by team doctor Larry Nassar. Later, he secured an \$852M settlement for survivors of abuse by USC gynecologist George Tyndall, the largest sexual abuse settlement against any university in history. He has also achieved significant results for sexual abuse survivors arising from clergy, sports organizations, youth groups, summer camps, nursing homes, doctors and other healthcare professionals and rideshare companies including Uber and Lyft. Manly and his team have an unparalleled decades-long track record of success.

In the category of personal injury, Arash Homampour of The Homampour Law Firm represented Priscilla O'Malley in *O'Malley v. Diamond Resorts Management, Inc.*, Orange County Superior Court case no. 30-2015-00771021. Priscilla, a 59-year-old woman suffered a ruptured brain aneurism and other life-altering injuries when hotel staff at the Diamond Resorts Hotel in Dana Point, failed to properly perform a wellness check on her in her hotel room after her husband, Michael, had called the hotel concerned about his wife's wellbeing. On the night of the incident, the hotel claimed it had entered Ms. O'Malley's room but did not find her inside. During litigation, however, it was learned that the hotel did *not* enter the hotel room and had they entered, they would have found Ms. O'Malley lying on the ground, unresponsive. At trial, a jury awarded \$60M to the O'Malleys. Thirty million dollars in pre-judgment interest was also awarded. Defendant appealed. On appeal, Defendant argued it did not breach its duty, did not cause harm to Ms. O'Malley. The verdict was upheld and with post-judgment interest, the judgment totaled \$100M.

In the category of insurance bad faith, Ricardo Echeverria of Shernoff Bidart Echeverria LLP secured a \$6.9M verdict for Malte Selck in *Selck, et al. v. GEICO Casualty Company*, Santa Clara Superior Court case no. 18CV336755. In *Selck*, Malte Selck



Homampour Manly Echeverria Chambers Argos

suffered catastrophic injuries including spinal fractures, femoral neck fracture, and rib fractures, when he was rearended on his motorcycle by a vehicle on the 101 Highway on December 3, 2012. More than 10 years and two jury trials later, justice was secured for Selck arising from GEICO's failure to settle within its \$100,000 policy limits.

In the category of medical malpractice, Jason Argos of Argos Law represented a 54-year-old deputy sheriff working for the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department when he was involved in a significant motor vehicle collision on December 15, 2015. As a result of the crash, he suffered bilateral lis-franc fractures and bilateral calcaneus/talus fractures. After undergoing numerous surgeries and an extended hospital stay, the plaintiff was released to a rehab facility. Shortly thereafter he was released home. However, inexplicably, his anti-blood clotting medication (Lovenox) was stopped at the time of discharge. Tragically, the sheriff suffered a sudden pulmonary embolism merely 12 days later and died. After enduring scorched-earth litigation tactics, including more than 20 depositions, Argos tried the case *solo* against the formidable defense firm of La Follette Johnson DeHaas Fesler & Ames. The jury awarded the deputy sheriff's surviving wife \$2.15M.

Last, but not least, in the category of young gun, Garrett Chambers earned this year's title of Young Gun for his exemplary trial work. In less than 10 years of practice, Garrett has achieved what many would hope to accomplish in an entire career. He has tried more than a dozen jury trials to verdict as lead or co-lead trial counsel. He has won many trials, and perhaps more importantly, he has never let a loss discourage him from his next trial. He is one of the youngest members ever admitted to the Orange County chapter of ABOTA. He currently serves as secretary of the Orange County Trial Lawyers Association and will serve as president in 2028. Additionally, Garrett is admitted to practice in Hawai'i, North Dakota, Arizona, Washington, Colorado and Washington, D.C.

On behalf of OCTLA, we encourage all attorneys who wish to be inspired to attend this memorable event. This will be a sold-out event and tickets are selling fast! We look forward to celebrating with many of you next month. 🎉