



## The Road to Justice Starts Here



# Prolonged Recovery from Your Car Accident? Getting the Insurance Company to Pay Gets Tricky...

If you've been in a car accident, you likely experienced back and neck pain. Even insurance companies will agree, having your body thrashed around in a violent crash causes pain, stiffness, and often requires some medical treatment.

However, if you're experiencing a prolonged recovery, insurance companies are quick to deny your treatment. Generally, they will *first* argue that your prolonged treatment wasn't necessary and that you are malingering (a fancy way to say that you're faking it).

*Next*, they may claim that you had some type of pre-existing issue that is really the cause of the pain. Remember that back twinge you had three years ago while helping your brother move? Well, if you got some physical therapy for it, the insurance will claim that's really why you got all of that treatment after your accident.

If for some reason you had delayed receiving care after your accident, the insurance company will *also* argue that the treatment simply was unrelated to the accident. For example, if you didn't go to the ER after your accident because you didn't have health insurance, that may be held against you.

That said, if you've been in a car accident, and your recovery is more complicated than you had hoped, give us a call. We can either help you by representing you, or give you ammunition you can use when dealing with the insurance company.

At our firm one of our core values is "empowerment through education." Since our consultations are free, you're only hurting yourself if you don't make the call! •



September 2015 News



# Caution Urged with NSAIDs

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are commonly utilized over-the-counter and prescription pain relievers that many people may want to take a second look at, depending on their circumstances. Mounting evidence suggests that these pharmaceuticals increase a person's risk of heart attack and stroke.

The Food and Drug Administration thinks the evidence is noteworthy, as they recently ordered drug manufacturers to toughen the warning labels on these medications. Aspirin was not included on the new warning labels, since it has been found to lower cardiovascular risks in some patients.

Taking an occasional NSAID here and there should not be a problem for someone who has a healthy heart if they follow the correct dosages. However, chronic users or those who already have heart issues elevate their risk of heart attack or stroke anywhere from 10–50 percent, depending on the drug and the dosage being used.

Researchers believe that NSAIDs alter the lining of blood vessels, opening the door to blood-clot formation. Common NSAIDs include Advil and Motrin (ibuprofen); Aleve (naproxen); and the prescription drug Celebrex. Multi-symptom cold medications, many of which contain NSAIDs, often fly under the radar, catching people unaware.

For people whom NSAIDs have brought relief from severe arthritis pain, the best course of action is to consult with their doctor. In some cases, the risks of NSAID use are outweighed by the benefits of diminished pain.

Awareness of the issue, good doctor-patient communication, and exploring the options to NSAID use are the keys to successfully navigating the potential NSAID minefield. ●



## Legal Question of the Month



**My son no longer wants to use his father's last name. His father hasn't really been in the picture for at least the last five years. How do I go about changing his last name to mine?**

The Family Court has the jurisdiction to change your child's last name. Because it is technically a lawsuit, the father must be served in advance. In order to do so the court must find that the name change is in your son's best interest. A lawyer must also be appointed to represent your son in this case (called a guardian *ad litem*). If both parents agree then typically the guardian *ad litem* and the judge will go along with the request. If the father doesn't consent you will have to go through the process of a contested trial. Once your son turns 18 he can change his

name to nearly anything he wants, without having to involve either parent (so it would be faster and less expensive). Because a minor name change is relatively complex you will want a lawyer to help.

*Do you have a legal question that you'd like to see answered here? E-mail it to [jamesnell@snelllaw.com](mailto:jamesnell@snelllaw.com). If your question is used you will receive a \$25 Starbucks gift certificate. This month's question comes from Anna in West Columbia. ●*

# Pelion Peanut Party

Our own Shannon Williamson recently visited her hometown to attend the 34th Annual South Carolina Peanut Party on Saturday, August 8, 2015. This annual festival, held next door to the famous Shumpert's IGA, is featured every year in August in the small town of Pelion, South Carolina, and includes music, rides, food vendors, a parade featuring various groups from the Pelion Schools and Lexington County officials, and most importantly, an abundance of boiled peanuts for attendees to purchase and enjoy. Proceeds from the festivities provide support to many needs in the community, including school scholarships, the local community center, the Pelion Branch Public Library, and many other programs and clubs within the Pelion schools. ●



September 2015 - Events and Observations

**September 7**  
Labor Day

**September 11**  
Patriot Day

**September 13-15**  
Rosh Hashanah

**September 23**  
Yom Kippur

**September 23**  
Fall begins

## Charitable Contribution of the Month:

Heartworm Project – a West Columbia based non-profit helping provide medical care for shelter animals.

## Meet Vicki Koutsogiannis, Attorney at Law

### Can you tell us about your background growing up?

My parents are originally from Sparta, Greece. They moved to upstate South Carolina a few years before I was born and have always been in the restaurant business. However, they always encouraged me and my brother to go to school instead of getting into the family business. When we were younger, my family would take summer trips to Greece and I fell in love with the place. I am very fortunate to have learned the language at a young age and look forward to visiting again.

### Where did you go to school?

I graduated from Mauldin High School and from Stony Brook University in New York. I majored in political science because I wanted a liberal arts education, and I was always interested in the study of government and social order. After graduation from college I enrolled in law school. I graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 2014.

### What are your favorite types of cases?

I enjoy helping people charged with crimes. Since coming on board with the office I have been able to represent clients in criminal jury and non-jury trials. I recently got a not-guilty ruling on behalf of a client who I think really deserved it. That was a rewarding outcome, to know that I was able to help someone who had been unfairly accused. In addition to criminal cases, I also enjoy working on meritorious civil cases as well as school disciplinary cases.

### What can you tell us about your non-legal life?

I am very family-oriented and try to spend time with my family several times a month. My boyfriend (also a lawyer) operates a popular YouTube channel discussing the television show and fiction novels, Game of Thrones. I am also an avid reader and have read all five books in the series. My favorite type of food is Italian, especially eggplant parmesan! I enjoy cooking at home, and hanging out with friends. I also love to travel when there's an opportunity. Occasionally, my boyfriend and I will go to the various exhibits at the Columbia Museum of Art, and we also like to check out as many museums as possible when visiting other cities. I love music, taking pictures of my cat, and believe that laughter is the best medicine. ●





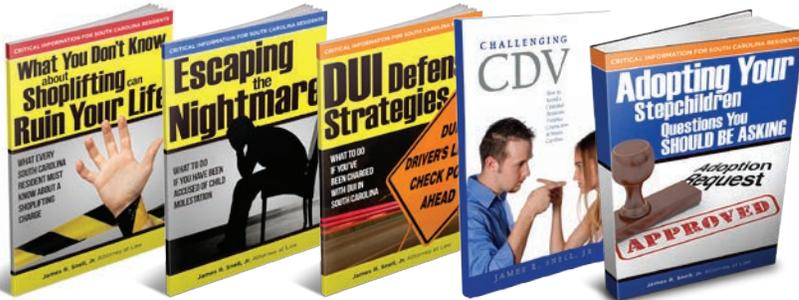
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## Want to Live on the Moon (or Eventually Mars)?

A new study suggests that NASA and private companies could partner together to put humans on the moon again (it's been 46 years since man first landed on the moon) within five to seven years and at a projected cost of about \$10 billion. Once there, the U.S. could help build a lunar colony that might well serve as a "dry run" for building a colony on Mars someday. One tricky hurdle to overcome: the moon is just 239,000 miles from the Earth, while Mars sits a whopping 140 *million* miles away. Despite the obstacles, President Obama has said that he believes that by the mid-2030s the U.S. could send humans to orbit Mars and return safely to Earth. ●