

Christopher B. Block

Co-Chair, Real Estate E&O Liability Practice

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Chris actively defends matters for a variety of clients from individuals to small businesspeople to medium sized and large insurance companies throughout New Jersey and New York. His practice includes matters involving premises liability, product liability, amusements, sports and recreation, construction accidents, automobile, condominium/community association law and dram shop/liquor liability. He also represents home inspectors and real estate agents involved in mold and other environmental claims. Chris defends professional malpractice matters brought against lawyers, real estate professionals, insurance agents and brokers, appraisers, architects and engineers. He has also defended a wide range of employment matters including the defense of gender and race claims.

Christopher has conducted over a dozen jury trials in state and federal venues in both New Jersey and New York, including most recently in Union and Morris counties in New Jersey. At trial he has litigated matters that range from complicated federally based legal malpractice claims to state court casualty cases.

In his career, Chris has defended product liability lawsuits brought against one of the nation's largest crane manufactures and freezer manufacturers. His representation extends to some the nation's largest insurance companies as well as a large brokerage firm.

Chris received his *juris doctor* from Widener University School of Law and a Bachelor of Science from the University of Pittsburgh. He is admitted to practice in New Jersey and New York.

Education

- Widener University Delaware Law School (J.D., 1996)
- University of Pittsburgh (B.S., 1993)

Practices

- General Liability
- Product Liability
- Miscellaneous Professional Liability
- Amusements, Sports & Recreation Liability
- Hospitality & Liquor Liability
- Insurance Agents & Brokers Liability
- Real Estate E&O Liability

Admissions

- New Jersey
- New York
- U.S. District Court District of New Jersey

Honors & Awards

- Litigation Management Institute, Graduate 2019 (CLMP)
- Certified Claims Professional (CCP), Claims and Litigation Management Alliance (CLM)

Associations & Memberships

- New Jersey Bar Association
- New York Bar Association
- Professional Liability Defense Federation (PLDF), Director of Membership Development
- Claims and Litigation Management Alliance (CLM)

Classes/Seminars Taught

- *Casualty Claims Investigation*, CLM Claims College School of Casualty Claims – Level 1, September 2025
- *Preparing A Claim for Trial*, Marshall Dennehey Client Presentation, April 2025
- *Preparing A Claim for Trial*, Marshall Dennehey Client Webinar, February 4, 2025
- *Casualty Claims Investigation*, CLM Claims College School of Casualty Claims – Level 1, September 2024
- *The Seven-Ten Split Mock Trial: Navigating Agent Errors & Omissions*, The Annual Professional Insurance Agents (PIA) Conference, Atlantic City, New Jersey, June 2, 2024
- *Emerging Claims Against Home Inspectors*, Marshall Dennehey Client Seminar, March 9, 2022
- *Casualty Claims Investigation*, CLM Claims College School of Casualty Claims – Level 1, Virtual, 2021
- *Civil Litigation State of Affairs – The Impact of COVID-19 in Pennsylvania and New Jersey & What's Next*, Marshall Dennehey Client Webinar, May 2021
- *Casualty Claims Evaluation*, CLM Claims College School of Casualty Claims – Level 1, Virtual, 2020
- *Anatomy of a Real Estate Transaction: How Actions of Participants Give Rise to Claims*, Client Presentation, July, 2019
- *Defending Real Estate Agents, Title Agents and Home Inspectors*, PLDF Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, October, 2018
- *Expert Witnesses - Using New Jersey Court Rules To Your Advantage*, National Business Institute, Newark, NJ, November 2015
- *Top Ten Ways to Keep Your PL Claims Professional Happy*, PLDF Annual Conference and CLE/CEU Presentation, Washington, DC, September, 2014
- *Ethical Claim Negotiations*, CEU Institute, Parsippany, NJ, January 2014
- *Primer on Claims and Risk Management Issues for Real Estate Agents and Home Inspectors*, PLDF Annual Conference and CLE/CEU Presentation, Chicago, IL,

October 2013

- *Liabilities and Obligations for Real Estate Professionals*, Lorman Education Services, September 2012

Publications

- "Guide To Expert Testimony in Malpractice Cases Against Real Estate Professionals," *New Jersey Law Journal*, October 21, 2019
- "Playing Outside: NJ Landowners' Liability Act Protects Personal Injury Defendants," *New Jersey Law Journal*, September 18, 2014

Significant Representative Matters

- Obtained a defense verdict in a trucking accident in New Jersey. The plaintiff claimed that our client merged into her lane at the George Washington Bridge toll plaza causing her to sustain neck and back injuries for which she underwent two spinal surgeries. Our client testified that both of their lanes ended and, because they were required to merge, he had the right-of-way since the front of his truck was ahead of the front of her vehicle. Our accident reconstruction expert confirmed that our driver had the right-of-way and opined that plaintiff was the sole cause of the accident. We also disputed the causation of plaintiff's alleged injuries based on the very limited property damage to her vehicle, as well as the fact that she had prior, similar injuries. After a little more than an hour of deliberations, the jury returned a verdict finding that our driver was not negligent.
- Obtained a defense verdict in a one week trial in Hudson County, New Jersey in a case where plaintiff alleged that the defendant insurance producer failed to alert plaintiff of a policy coming up for renewal and then failed to advise plaintiff that the policy had lapsed and that plaintiff had no insurance. The plaintiff claimed that defendant breached a duty of care in a claim for professional negligence. Due to the breadth of the insurance policy at issue, the claim against the defendant was for \$500,000. Christopher argued and was able to establish that any potential breach of contract or breach of a professional duty of care was not the proximate cause of plaintiff's damages. After an hour and fourteen minutes, the jury agreed and found that plaintiff could not establish a proximate cause between the alleged breach of a duty of care and plaintiff's damages.
- Obtained summary judgment in Hudson County in favor of a project manager in a serious bicycle accident lawsuit. Plaintiff was thrown off his bike after striking a significant pothole in front of a building where our client performed work several years earlier. We successfully argued that plaintiff's alleged attempts to connect our client with the existence of the pothole were far too attenuated to be of any assistance to a jury. Following oral argument, Judge agreed and granted summary judgment.
- Successfully won a motion to strike plaintiff's expert in a complicated New Jersey professional malpractice matter. In this case, following two rounds of briefing and two rounds of oral argument, the court agreed that plaintiff's expert's opinion was a net opinion and did not provide any substance or evidence of a lack of a duty of care.
- Obtained a summary judgment on behalf of our client. The plaintiff was injured when she fell from a 25-foot rock-climbing wall at our client's facility. After reaching the summit of the wall, plaintiff, a certified climber, pushed off to begin repelling down, only to realize that she forgot to connect to the auto-belay system. She proceeded to fall to the ground and fractured both ankles for which she underwent open reduction internal fixation surgery. Plaintiff had previously visited the client's facility approximately 35 times and had executed a liability waiver on each occasion, including the date of the accident. We moved for summary judgment to dismiss

plaintiff's Complaint based on the fact that the liability waiver was enforceable. Plaintiff argued that the liability waiver was only enforceable as to her claims of ordinary negligence and that the issue of whether the defendant was grossly negligent was a triable issue of fact. However, we successfully argued that no reasonable jury could find that the client was grossly negligent based on the client's testimony of the safety procedures, protocols and equipment in place at the rock-climbing gym. Accordingly, the Court granted our motion for summary judgment dismissing plaintiff's Complaint, in its entirety, against the client.

- Successfully defended the manufacturer of a manlift in a wrongful death product liability claim where the plaintiff, the lift operator, was crushed in the lift.
- Obtained a dismissal in a legal malpractice claim in federal district court of New York where fraud and damages in excess of \$8 million dollars were alleged.
- Represented a national broker dealer in a New York Labor law claim where serious multiple bodily injuries were alleged. All claims were favorably resolved.
- Negotiated stipulation of dismissal with prejudice without any monetary contribution in favor of large national crane company sued in a wrongful death matter. Plaintiff's widow claimed the crane malfunctioned causing a fatality.
- Successfully resolved a claim against a real estate agent for failure to disclose a known conflict during dual representation including allegations of consumer fraud and forgery.

Results

Defense Verdict Returned After Short Jury Deliberation in High-Exposure New Jersey Trucking Case

Christopher Block and **Paul Lanza** (both of Roseland) successfully obtained a defense verdict in a trucking accident in New Jersey. The plaintiff claimed that our client merged into her lane at the George Washington Bridge toll plaza causing her to sustain neck and back injuries for which she underwent two spinal surgeries. Our client testified that both of their lanes ended and, because they were required to merge, he had the right-of-way since the front of his truck was ahead of the front of her vehicle. Our accident reconstruction expert confirmed that our driver had the right-of-way and opined that plaintiff was the sole cause of the accident. We also disputed the causation of plaintiff's alleged injuries based on the very limited property damage to her vehicle, as well as the fact that she had prior, similar injuries. After a little more than an hour of deliberations, the jury returned a verdict finding that our driver was not negligent. The trial team was assisted by associate attorney **Haleigh Catalano** and paralegal **Kelly Dermody** who provided critical support with motions in limine and trial management.

Summary Judgment Secured in New Jersey Water Damage Case

We achieved summary judgment for our client, a commercial plumber, in the Cape May County Superior Court. The plaintiff alleged water leakage in the parking garage of a beach resort hotel resulted from defective plumbing work by the defendant. Specifically, the plaintiff argued that improper connections between the plumber's pipes and the drainage system caused the leaks. The defense motion for summary judgment demonstrated that the defendant's scope of work was limited to garage plumbing,

performed according to specifications and unrelated to the waterproofing membrane or drainage system design flaws identified as the cause of the leaks. The court granted summary judgment, holding that the defendant owed no duty to the plaintiff beyond the limited scope of their work and dismissed all claims. The court denied the plaintiff's motion for reconsideration.

Defense Verdict for Insurance Producer After One-Week Jury Trial

We obtained a defense verdict in a one-week trial in Hudson County, New Jersey, in a case where the plaintiff alleged the defendant insurance producer failed to alert the plaintiff of a policy renewal coming up and then failed to advise him that the policy had lapsed, and he had no insurance.

The plaintiff claimed the defendant breached a contract to provide the plaintiff with notices by email and that the defendant breached a duty of care in a claim for professional negligence. Due to the breadth of the insurance policy at issue, the claim against the defendant was for \$500,000.

At trial, the plaintiff relied upon his testimony that he did not receive the notices or any calls from the defendants regarding the lapse. We argued and established that any potential breach of contract or breach of a professional duty of care was not the proximate cause of the plaintiff's damages because he failed to take any steps to either calendar or diary his insurance renewal deadlines and also failed historically to timely renew his insurance policies in the eight years preceding this loss. After an hour and fourteen minutes of deliberation, the jury agreed with the defense and found that the plaintiff could not establish a proximate cause between the alleged breach of a duty of care and plaintiff's damages.

Summary Judgment for Bicycle Accident Defendant

We prevailed on a motion for summary judgment in favor of a project manager in a serious bicycle accident lawsuit. The plaintiff was thrown off his bike after striking a significant pothole in front of a building where our client performed work several years earlier. We successfully argued that the plaintiff's alleged attempts to connect our client with the existence of the pothole were far too attenuated to be of any assistance to a jury. Following oral argument the judge agreed and granted summary judgment.

Rock Climbing Liability Waiver Found Enforceable.

We obtained summary judgment on behalf of a rock climbing center. The plaintiff, a certified climber, was injured when she fell from a 25-foot rock-climbing wall at our client's facility. After reaching the summit of the wall, she pushed off to begin rappelling down, only to realize that she forgot to connect to the auto-belay system. She fell to the ground and fractured both ankles and underwent open reduction internal fixation surgery. She had previously visited the client's facility approximately 35 times and had executed a liability waiver on each occasion, including the date of the accident. We moved for

summary judgment to dismiss her complaint based upon the fact that the liability waiver was enforceable. The plaintiff argued that the liability waiver was only enforceable as to her claims of ordinary negligence, and that the issue of whether the defendant was grossly negligent was a triable issue of fact. However, we successfully argued that no reasonable jury could find that the client was grossly negligent based on the client's testimony of the safety procedures, protocols and equipment in place at the rock-climbing center. Accordingly, the court granted our motion for summary judgment and dismissed the plaintiff's complaint, in its entirety, against our client.

Thought Leadership

November 1, 2025

Protecting Real Estate Professionals with Renewed Strength and Expanded Reach

June 27, 2025

NJ Appellate Division Clarifies Consumer Fraud Act Exception for Insurance Producers, Upholds Plemmons