

# Michael J. Connolly

Shareholder

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Scranton – 570.496.4613



A member of the firm's Casualty Department, Mike primarily handles matters involving premises liability, automobile, and general liability. Mike regularly defends commercial motor vehicle and trucking cases including transportation fleets engaged in interstate trucking, waste hauling, shuttle and bus operators, and rental vehicle fleets. In addition to commercial motor vehicle cases, he also defends commercial businesses and properties on their liability claims, including hotels, resorts and others within the hospitality industry. Mike also represents various public utility organizations within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Mike has handled wrongful death and catastrophic injury cases, surface mining accidents, motor vehicle, product liability and underinsured/uninsured (UIM/UM) motorists claims. He routinely serves as monitoring counsel for insurance carriers on excess casualty claims and has presented seminars on the subject of risk management and best practices associated with safety.

An honors graduate of the University of Scranton, Mike then received his juris doctor from Drexel University with distinction in the field of Insurance Law. Mike worked for the Honorable Chester T. Harhut, former President Judge of Lackawanna County and the Lackawanna County District Attorney. Admitted to practice in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, Mike is also a member of the American Bar Association, Pennsylvania Bar Association and Lackawanna County Bar Association. Mike previously worked with the Law School Admission Council as an administrator of the Law School Admission Test for prospective law students, as well as with the Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners on the Multi-state Professional Responsibility Exam.

Within the firm, Mike serves as a member of the Executive Committee Advisory Council, whose purpose is to enhance the communication between the Executive Committee and younger members of the firm's professional ranks, including associates, special counsel

## Practices

- Automobile Liability
- Premises & Retail Liability
- Trucking & Transportation Liability
- General Liability
- Miscellaneous Professional Liability

and junior shareholders.

Mike was selected as a Pennsylvania Super Lawyer Rising Star for six consecutive years between 2015 and 2020, and since 2024 has been recognized by the Best Lawyers in America® for Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants.

## Education

- Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law (J.D., 2010)
- University of Scranton
  - B.A., B.S., cum laude, 2007

## Admissions

- Pennsylvania, 2010
- U.S. District Court Middle District of Pennsylvania, 2010

## Honors & Awards

- The Best Lawyers in America®, Personal Injury Litigation – Defendants (2024-2026)
- The Best Lawyers in America®, Professional Malpractice Law - Defendants (2025-2026)
- Pennsylvania Super Lawyers Rising Star (2015-2020)

## Associations & Memberships

- American Bar Association
- Lackawanna County Bar Association
- Pennsylvania Bar Association

## Published Works

- "Expert Medical Evidence Mandatory on Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress Claims," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 22, No. 4, December 2016

## Significant Representative Matters

- Obtained a compulsory nonsuit at the close of the plaintiff's case during a jury trial in Luzerne County. The case stemmed from a fall that occurred in a grocery store. It was undisputed that the plaintiff experienced a hard fall after stepping on a bottle containing an energy drink while shopping. Plaintiff suffered several injuries including serious nerve damage to both legs as a result of the fall. Although the plaintiff had alleged both actual and constructive notice of the allegedly dangerous condition created by the bottle on the floor, she failed to introduce any evidence beyond mere speculation of that notice, and the court granted the nonsuit.
- Successfully obtained summary judgment on behalf of commercial property owners under the immunity available to owners who hire independent contractors to perform work on the owners' property. Plaintiff was operating an electric saw as part of a building demolition project when he lost his footing and fell from a roof sustaining serious injuries. We demonstrated why none of the available exceptions to the immunity rule applied to the subject property owners. Summary judgment was granted under Pennsylvania's recognition of immunity for property owners who hire competent independent contractors to complete a project, when the owners retain no

control over project details, supervision, or safety.

- Successfully obtained summary judgment on behalf of a real estate company in a property destruction case in which a moving company was hired to enter, clean, and winterize a property prior to the real estate company's listing the property for sale. Instead, the moving company went to the wrong house and emptied and destroyed all of the Plaintiff's belongings and contents. Plaintiff sued various defendants, including the real estate company which had no role in hiring the moving company, nor any knowledge of the wrongfully destroyed property. Plaintiff attempted to connect all of the defendants involved through various theories of agency, conspiracy and identity theft. Summary judgment was granted in favor of the real estate company after it was shown that Plaintiff failed to establish the requisite burden of proof for the claims under Pennsylvania's agency laws, as well as the laws on identity theft and conspiracy.

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## Results

### **Summary Judgment Won in NASCAR Slip and Fall Case**

We secured summary judgment in a case where the plaintiff fell down a flight of stairs at a NASCAR race in Monroe County, Pennsylvania, sustaining multiple fractures. The plaintiff alleged that she fell on water that had accumulated from patrons' coolers dripping through the bleachers onto the staircase below. The court dismissed the plaintiff's claims in their entirety due to her failure to adequately establish actual or constructive notice of a dangerous condition.

### **Defense Prevails in Construction Defect Case**

We obtained summary judgment on a construction defect claim in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania. The court dismissed the plaintiffs' claims against the defendant, a homebuilder, in their entirety for the plaintiffs' failure to adequately prove breach of contract, breach of express and implied warranties, fraud in the inducement, wrongful conversion and various alleged violations of the Pennsylvania Unfair Trade Practices Act.

### **Summary Judgment for Marshall Dennehey Client Only, in Multi-defendant Action.**

We obtained summary judgment in a general liability case in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. The plaintiff was an employee of a recently-renovated resort when a solid wooden panel fell down and struck her in the head, causing serious injuries. The plaintiff alleged improper design, manufacture, and installation of the panel against a number of the defendant contractors and subcontractors. It was unclear as to which defendant actually installed the panel. However, there was testimony that the panel had fallen down after the renovations were completed and that the resort's maintenance employees had possibly re-installed the panel before it fell the second time, striking the plaintiff. There was no evidence of record that our client had any role in the design of the panel. The judge granted summary judgment as to our client only on a case where the plaintiff will be putting over \$2 million on the board at trial.

