

Paul W. Lanza

Co-Chair, Trucking & Transportation Practice

PWLanza@mdwcg.com

Roseland – 973.618.4157



As an experienced member of the Casualty Department, Paul concentrates his practice primarily on trucking/transportation liability, premises/retail liability, and construction injury litigation. Additionally, he handles cases in the fields of condominium/community association law, automobile liability, products liability and malpractice claims against real estate professionals. Paul is frequently retained by clients to handle the pre-suit investigation of high exposure cases involving complex issues of fact and law, including fatal commercial vehicle accidents.

Paul handles all aspects of civil litigation up to trial, including pleadings, depositions, expert discovery, dispositive motion practice, mediation and non-binding arbitration. He has obtained numerous favorable results for his clients, which range from individuals and small businesses to large-sized insurance companies. He has appeared on behalf of his clients in both New Jersey and New York state and federal courts. Paul has also argued before the New Jersey Appellate Division, where he successfully defended an appeal to affirm an order entering summary judgment on behalf of his client. Additionally, prior to joining Marshall Dennehey, Paul worked at a defense firm where he specialized as regional counsel for a Fortune 50 transportation company.

Paul attended Seton Hall University School of Law where he was a recipient of the Chancellor's Scholarship. While in law school, he completed over 200 hours of pro bono work in the Immigrants' Rights/International Human Right Clinic. Paul also worked as a judicial extern in the Superior Court of Essex County, Civil Division for the Hon. Paul J. Vichness, J.S.C. (Ret.) and as an intern in the Newark Public Defender's Office.

Prior to law school, Paul graduated from the University of Notre Dame, with a B.A. in Political Science and Spanish. He was a member of the Dean's List and Sigma Delta Pi (National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society).

Practices

- Trucking & Transportation Liability
- Premises & Retail Liability
- Construction Injury Litigation
- Automobile Liability
- Product Liability
- Miscellaneous Professional Liability
- Real Estate E&O Liability

Education

- Seton Hall University School of Law (J.D., 2014)
- University of Notre Dame (B.A., 2011)

Admissions

- New Jersey, 2014
- New York, 2015
- U.S. District Court District of New Jersey, 2015
- U.S. District Court Eastern District of New York, 2015
- U.S. District Court Southern District of New York, 2015

Honors & Awards

- The Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch®, Product Liability Litigation - Defendants; Transportation Law (2021-2024)
The Best Lawyers list is issued by Woodward & White. A description of the selection methodology can be found [here](#). No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.
- New Jersey Super Lawyers Rising Star (2022-2024)
The Super Lawyers list is issued by Thomson Reuters. A description of the selection methodology can be found [here](#). No aspect of this advertisement has been approved by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.

Associations & Memberships

- Trucking Industry Defense Association (TIDA)

Classes/Seminars Taught

- Dude Where's My Driver? Regulatory Concerns of the Automated Delivery Vehicle and Unmanned Aircraft Systems, Client Event, June 2017
- Cyber Liability, Client Event, August 2016

Published Works

- "Guide to Expert Testimony in Malpractice Cases Against Real Estate Professionals," *New Jersey Law Journal*, October 21, 2019
- "The Implementation of Cyber Security Legislation: An Overview of the NYFDS and NAIC Model Laws," *Claims Litigation Management*, November 2017
- "How Secure Is Your Vendor? Protecting Yourself from Third-party Cyber Risks," *Claims Litigation Management*, July 2017
- "Preventative Cyber Defenses: Laying the Foundation to Minimize the Risk of Breach," *Claims Litigation Management*, April 2017
- "The Evolution of Cyber Insurance: How Did We Get Here and Where Are We Headed?," *Claims Litigation Management*, January 2017

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 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 plaintiff's appeal in the New Jersey Appellate Division of an order granting summary judgment in favor of the client by arguing that plaintiff's claims were barred pursuant to the Workers' Compensation Act because plaintiff was a "special employee" of the client. *Holmes v. Zayas*, No. A-0591-15T2, 2017 N.J. Super. Unpub. LEXIS 2568 (App. Div. Oct. 13, 2017).
- Obtained summary judgment in favor of the client, a non-profit charitable organization, by arguing that it was immune from liability under the New Jersey Charitable Immunity Act and there was no evidence of gross negligence against the client.
- Obtained summary judgment in favor of our clients, a residential real estate agent and company, by arguing that expert testimony was required because a jury could not be reasonably expected to discern the nuances of the standard of care owed by the clients to the plaintiff on its own. Therefore, because plaintiff did not produce a liability expert report during discovery, he could not satisfy his burden of proof and the Court granted summary judgment in favor of our clients.
- Obtained a defense verdict in favor of the client in a case involving plaintiff's allegations of negligent automobile repairs by proving that our client's repairs were performed in accordance with the industry's customs and standards.
- Negotiated a stipulation of dismissal with prejudice, without any monetary contribution, in favor of a local college in a premises liability matter. Plaintiff claimed that, as a result of her fall on snow and ice on the sidewalk, she sustained severe injuries including a fractured ankle and she underwent open reduction internal fixation. However, using video surveillance, we were able to dispute the location of the accident and the condition of the sidewalk and obtain this favorable result for the client.

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 Obtained in Three Consolidated Cases Involving Multi-vehicle Accident

We secured summary judgment for our client, a tow truck company, in three consolidated cases venued in Essex County Superior Court arising out of a fatal motor vehicle accident caused by an illegal left-hand turn by a tow truck driver. The plaintiffs alleged that our client was liable under a theory of *respondeat superior* as the tow truck driver's employer. The plaintiffs further alleged that our client negligently hired, trained, supervised and entrusted the vehicle to the driver. However, we established that our client sold the subject tow truck to a co-defendant tow truck company two weeks before the accident. The court found that the co-defendant's deposition testimony did not suffice to create a genuine issue of material fact and granted our motion, dismissing all claims against our client.

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 repelling 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

July 1, 2025

Florida Court Affirms Summary Judgment Based on Unrebutted Testimony of Phantom Vehicle in Rear-End Collision

July 1, 2025

NY Appellate Division Reverses Trial Court, Grants Summary Judgment to Middle Vehicle in Rear-End Collision

July 1, 2025

Defendants Waived Right to Arbitration by Litigating for 17 Months Before Filing Motion