

Ralph P. Bocchino

**Chair, Social Services & Human Services Liability
Practice**

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Philadelphia – 215.575.2634



A member of the firm since 1980, Ralph P. Bocchino is a senior shareholder and the chair of Casualty Group I in Philadelphia. In this role he oversees the workflow and administration of files for 15 attorneys and support staff.

Ralph has litigated a plethora of civil defense matters in the areas of product liability, premises liability, construction law and defect litigation, and motor vehicle liability including truck and bus accidents. Ralph was formerly the chair of the firm's Amusement, Sports & Entertainment Litigation Practice and, as such, represents amusement parks and entertainment venues.

In addition to his many achievements in the Casualty Department, Ralph has also litigated defamation and legal malpractice cases. He has represented universities, special needs schools, and institutions in claims alleging sexual, physical, and emotional abuse on behalf of the Elwyn Institute and a number of 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations, individual schools and entities in all types of liability, including but not limited to child molestation and abuse. He has also counseled nursing homes in elopement and sepsis cases.

When Ralph started at the firm, he was assigned to handle asbestos matters. At the time, the firm represented Johns Mansville Corporation, the largest producer of asbestos, and Ralph was the youngest attorney in the nation to successfully defend the company. His work earned him the "Order of the Salamander Award" for litigation excellence from Johns Mansville. (*Coger v. Johns Mansville Corporation, et al.*)

Ralph frequently lectures for the Pennsylvania Bar Institute and the Young Lawyers Association of Philadelphia on current civil procedure and legal issues. Ralph has also lectured at LaSalle University where he taught Real Estate, Business Law and Corporation courses. He has been recognized as a Pennsylvania Super Lawyer consecutively since 2006 and holds an AV® Preeminent™ by Martindale-Hubbell rating

Practices

- First-Party Property
- Amusements, Sports & Recreation Liability
- Product Liability
- Automobile Liability
- Architectural, Engineering & Construction Defect Litigation
- Social Services & Human Services Liability
- Catastrophic Claims Litigation

for more than 25 years.

If Ralph is not in the office or in a courtroom, he can be found coaching various youth sports teams. Ralph is a licensed soccer coach and licensed referee. He has been coaching soccer for more than 25 years. He is the President of the Hunter Soccer Club, a non-profit youth organization in Glenside, Pennsylvania. Ralph and all of the volunteers at Hunter were honored by the Abington Community Task Force for Hunter's service to youth since 1962. Ralph was elected to the Bishop McDevitt High School "Hall of Fame" for more than 30 years of coaching, refereeing and umpiring youth sports in the community.

Education

- Temple University Beasley School of Law (J.D., 1979)
- La Salle University (B.A., 1976)

Admissions

- Pennsylvania, 1979
- U.S. District Court Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1979
- U.S. Court of Appeals 3rd Circuit, 1981
- Supreme Court of the United States, 1984

Honors & Awards

- AV® Preeminent™ by Martindale-Hubbell®
- Pennsylvania Super Lawyer (2006-2022)
- Honored Member of Who's Who in Practicing Attorneys (1990)
- "Order of the Salamander Award," 1990

Associations & Memberships

- American Bar Association
- Justinian Society
- Lawyers Club of Philadelphia
- Pennsylvania Bar Association
- Pennsylvania Defense Institute
- Philadelphia Bar Association

Representative Cases & Matters

- Obtained summary judgment in a premises liability slip and fall case after their initial Rule 1036 motion had been denied. The plaintiff alleged that a metal protrusion from our clients' property created a dangerous condition on a Philadelphia street. We first moved to dismiss on April 24, 2025, arguing that our clients had no affiliation with the property, but the court denied the motion as outside the scope of Pa.R.C.P. 1036. After efforts to secure a stipulation of dismissal were unsuccessful, we filed a second motion on December 10, 2025, asserting prejudice following the close of discovery. The Court ultimately granted the motion, resulting in summary judgment for our clients.
- Successfully secured reconsideration following the denial of summary judgment

motion in a construction accident case. The plaintiff, represented by a prominent personal injury firm, demanded \$35 million. Though the court initially denied summary judgment, the team argued for reconsideration following the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's decision in Yoder. Two weeks before jury selection, the Court of Common Pleas granted our motion—an outcome that is highly uncommon in Philadelphia—providing a decisive victory for our clients.

- Defense verdict for manufacturer of concrete mixers in a suit claiming defective design in a truck roll-over matter.
- Defense verdict for a garbage truck manufacturer for alleged defective design and failure to warn a truck driver who fell from the truck and required multiple surgeries.
- Represented a personal care home in an elopement case where a resident left the premises and was found three weeks later drowned in the Delaware River. The court granted a compulsory non-suit based on the law of Pennsylvania and personal care homes.
- Defense verdict on behalf of a manufacturer of a saw when a worker inadvertently sawed off part of his arm in a work-related accident.
- Was the first attorney in Philadelphia to have an Azzarello hearing granted in a product liability case. A hearing was conducted before trial and then after the motion was granted, trial was commenced with product liability removed from the case, and a defense verdict was rendered thereafter by the empanelled jury. [Azzarello deals with having a court decide if a product is defective before trial, as a matter of law and fact.]
- Received a defense verdict representing a 'mom and pop' hair salon when one of the customers claimed that they had a severe fall down the salon steps and required a hip replacement and knee replacement surgery.
- Defense verdict received in representing an amusement park where a teenager drowned.
- Defense verdict in a ski death case in upstate Pennsylvania.
- Defense verdict in an asbestos case representing Johns Mansville Corporation, the largest manufacturer of asbestos products in the world in Philadelphia County, in 1980.
- Defense verdict for an amusement park where a young child had severe lacerations and fractures from being injured in a sliding board accident.
- Defense verdict in a gymnastics accident involving allegations of torn hamstrings, ruptured piriformus muscle and low back surgery following alleged improper stretching and warm-up exercises by a gymnastics instructor and coach.
- Argued before the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in an elevator accident case trying to maintain a Rule 50(A) Motion, which was granted at trial by the trial court, involving multiple back surgeries following an elevator accident.
- Two defense verdicts in fraud matters involving staged automobile accidents.

Classes & Seminars Taught

- *Hills and Ridges Doctrine* and discussion of *Collins v. Philadelphia Suburban Development Co.*, Client Seminar, May 2018
- *Lights, Camera, Evidence!*, Pennsylvania Bar Institute (PBI), Philadelphia PA, December 5, 2017
- *Accident Prevention and Investigation: Strategies for Risk Mitigation*, Client Presentation, April 2017
- *Risk Shifting and Indemnity and Additional Insured Status*, Ohio Casualty, April 2013
- *Nuances of the Political Subdivision Torts Claims Act*, Ohio Casualty, April 2013
- *Dram Shop Liquor Liability*, Markel Insurance Co. and Markel International Insurance,

August 2011

- *The New Fair Share Act*, Markel Insurance Co. and Markel International Insurance, August 2011
- *Comparative Negligence Act of Pennsylvania; Alternatives in Discovery; Jury Verdicts and Jury Issues in Philadelphia and Outlying Counties*, Ohio Casualty, April 2010
- *Potpourri*, "The Black Box," discuss varying topics including computer chips and information, equipment in various vehicles, automobiles, and trucks (2005/2007).
- *Discovery, Rules of Civil Procedure and Bad Faith in Pennsylvania*, Pennsylvania Bar Institute
- *Releases and Uniform Contribution Among Joint Tortfeasors Act*, LaSalle Alumni Law Luncheon
- *Discovery Techniques and Trial Techniques*, Young Lawyers Association of Philadelphia

Published Works

- *Risk Shifting and Indemnity and Additional Insured Status*, Ohio Casualty, April 2013
- "MAP-21 and the Role of Black-Box Recorders in Discovery," *The Legal Intelligencer*, June 5, 2012
- "When Pucks and Foul Balls Fly No Duty Rule of Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Law Weekly*, 2002
- "Punitive Damages and Deceased Defendants," *Pennsylvania Law Weekly*, March 8, 1999 and, *Defense Digest*, Vol 4, No. 6, 1998
- "The Blizzard's Backlash: A Symposium on Issues Confronting Pennsylvania and New Jersey Property Owners," Co-Author, *Defense Digest*, March, 1996
- "Challenges to Venue Produce Positive Result," *Defense Digest*, Fall, 1992

Significant Representative Matters

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- Successfully secured reconsideration following the denial of summary judgment motion in a construction accident case. The plaintiff, represented by a prominent personal injury firm, demanded \$35 million. Though the court initially denied summary judgment, the team argued for reconsideration following the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's decision in Yoder. Two weeks before jury selection, the Court of Common Pleas granted our motion—an outcome that is highly uncommon in Philadelphia—providing a decisive victory for our clients.
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Certification

- OSHA 10-Hour Construction Certification
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Results

Dismissal Secured in Food Poisoning and Hepatitis A Case

We successfully obtained dismissal of their client in a death-from-food-poisoning and hepatitis A case. The plaintiff, Joyce Neeld, executrix of the Estate of Alfred Neeld, alleged that Mr. Neeld passed away due to an outbreak of hepatitis A in southeast Pennsylvania, which was widely covered by the news at the time. The plaintiff, who claimed that Mr. Neeld passed away after eating at Gino's Pizzeria and Ristorante, was seeking several million dollars from every food provider that served the restaurant, including our client. Fortunately, the plaintiff stipulated to our dismissal.

Summary Judgment Granted in Major Jury Case Involving Serious Injuries

We successfully argued a motion for summary judgment on a major jury case where we represented a tenant shop owner. The plaintiff opposed our motion, alleging, inter alia, serious injuries to a shoulder and surgery. There were many moving pieces in this case, including indemnity issues, an alleged triple net lease and joinder after the statute of

limitations. The plaintiff tripped and fell on a sidewalk that was under repair outside of our client's store. We were joined by the original defendant, the landlord. We argued the plaintiff had no direct cause of action against us as we were joined after the statute of limitations; there was no evidence of record of our involvement as plaintiff did not visit our store; we were not responsible for the sidewalk repair; and the original defendant landlord was responsible for the sidewalk in question as the lease was ambiguous as to who was responsible for external repairs.

Volatile Sexual Assault Case Successfully Moved Out of Philadelphia

We successfully obtained an order to move a sexual assault case to Chester County, Pennsylvania. At first, the venue appeared *prima facie* good for Philadelphia until our attorneys more closely investigated and found the one defendant holding the case in the city was never served and could not be found.

Summary Judgment in a Construction Accident Case in Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas

Our client was the roofing contractor on a project in Philadelphia. The plaintiff was an employee of a subcontractor of our client. The plaintiff was injured when he fell through a skylight cutout in the roof. He fell approximately 15 feet and sustained injuries, including a broken hip (requiring ORIF) and fractured vertebra. The plaintiff was hospitalized for one month. The last settlement demand was \$2.5 million. We moved for summary judgment based upon arguments that our client, the roofing contractor who did not occupy the site nor control the work, breached no duty of care to the plaintiff. The court granted summary judgment.