



JOHN J. SNYDER

PARTNER

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

DIRECT DIAL (215) 575-4220

FAX (215) 563-2583

EMAIL jsnyder@rawle.com



John J. Snyder is a partner with Rawle & Henderson LLP in its Philadelphia, Pennsylvania office. He is Chair of the Catastrophic Loss Group. He and his practice group are regularly retained in high exposure cases (demands commonly in the \$30 million - \$100 million range), often just weeks or months before trial, to try a case to verdict. In addition, Jack is Chair of the firm's Medical Professional Liability Group. He focuses his trial practice on the defense of catastrophic losses with particular emphasis on construction, industrial, pharmaceutical, product liability, fire & explosion, and medical malpractice matters. Jack is a very experienced litigator, having successfully tried hundreds of cases to verdict in a number of state and federal jurisdictions, including those with known high verdict potential such as Philadelphia County.



Jack is a native of Philadelphia and was a Scholar-Athlete at St. Joseph's University and the captain of the basketball team in 1971. He graduated from Temple University Law School in 1975.

Jack's extensive litigation experience began as a Deputy City Solicitor for the City of Philadelphia. While retaining his own case load and trying a significant number of cases to verdict, he also supervised 27 other trial attorneys while managing an active case load of over 3,000 files. He soon succeeded to the position of Special Deputy to the Solicitor where he was responsible for defending high exposure cases on behalf of the City. Those cases involved general liability, premises liability, vehicle accidents and the defense of the Police Department in Civil Rights cases. Since 1984, he has been in private practice primarily defending catastrophic loss claims.

Jack is a past president of the St. Joseph's University Law Alumni Association and a member of the Defense Research Institute. He is also a member of the prestigious American Board of Trial Advocates. For six years he was a Hearing Committee member of the Disciplinary Board of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. He was also liaison counsel to the Medical Care Availability & Reduction of Error Fund (M-Care), formerly CAT Fund, on behalf of physicians in the Philadelphia Phen-Fen litigation.

Jack received the Honorable Francis X. McClanaghan '27 Award in 2015 from St. Joseph's University. The award is given to honor an alumnus for accomplishments in the field of law, as well as the distinction that the alumnus has brought to St. Joseph's University throughout a distinguished career.



Jack was selected by the *Philadelphia Business Journal* as one of the 2017 “Best of the Bar: Philadelphia’s Top Lawyers” based on the business and legal significance of the recent legal matters he handled.

Jack has been rated AV Preeminent by Martindale-Hubbell from 2003 to 2019. He was selected as a 2013 Top Rated Lawyer in Construction by Martindale-Hubbell. He has been selected as a **Pennsylvania Super Lawyer** from 2004 to 2019.



PRACTICE AREAS

Catastrophic Loss
Product Liability
Construction
Casualty and Premises Liability
Medical Professional Liability
Maritime

BAR ADMISSIONS

Pennsylvania, 1976
New Jersey, 1996
New York, 2001

COURT ADMISSIONS

U.S. Court of Appeals, for the Third Circuit
U.S. District Court, Eastern, Middle and Western Districts of Pennsylvania
New York State Supreme Court, Third Judicial Department

EDUCATION

Temple University School of Law (J.D., 1975)
St. Joseph’s University (B.A., 1971)

PRESENTATIONS

Medical Malpractice Defense: Correlating Clinical, Laboratory, Brain- Imaging and Placental Findings To Determine How and When Hypoxic/Ischemic Cerebral Palsy Developed; Cross Examination Of The Expert, Medical Professional Liability Catastrophe Loss Fund, Harrisburg, PA, November 1997.

Defensive Posturing Through The Legal Process: Cross-Examination Of The Defendant Obstetrician In A Brain-Damaged Baby Case, The New Jersey Obstetrical & Gynecological Society, Atlantic City, NJ, June 1998.



The Cross-Examination Of The Obstetrician Defendant: A Case Study, Zurich-American Insurance Co., The New Jersey Society For Medical Assistants, Piscataway, NJ, November 1998.

Medical Malpractice: How To Defend A Brain-Damaged Baby Case, AIG Insurance Co., New York, NY, March 1999.

Medical Malpractice: How To Successfully Build A Winning Defense; Cross Examination Of The Defendant Orthopedic Surgeon, The Academy of Medicine of New Jersey, New Jersey Orthopedic Society/The New York State Of Orthopedic Surgeons, Nevis, West Indies, April 1999.

Medical Malpractice: The Use Of The Doubling Time Theory In The Defense Of Breast Cancer Cases; Cross-Examination Of The Expert, The Medical Professional Liability Catastrophe Loss Fund, Harrisburg, PA, November 1999.

General Jurisdiction/Civil Procedure, National Judicial College, American Bar Assn., Reno, NV, Oct. 2000; Nov. 2001.

The Psychologist As An Expert Witness: The Construction Of An Effective Presentation of Testimony, The Pennsylvania Psychological Association, Lancaster, PA, June 2002.

Nuclear Verdicts: Reality, Predicting & Preventing, AIG Transportation Education Conference, Philadelphia, PA, June 2019.

SELECTED REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

The largest and most significant case that Jack Snyder handled since January 2016 was the *In re: Market Street Collapse Litigation*, which included 19 plaintiffs and 7 defendants. Jack and his trial team represented The Salvation Army in this civil matter resulting from the June 5, 2013 collapse of a vacant building attached to The Salvation Army Thrift Store located at 22nd and Market Streets in Philadelphia. The collapse, brought on during the demolition, crushed The Salvation Army building, killing seven people and severely injuring 13 more, including one woman who was trapped in the rubble for more than 13 hours and lost the entire lower half of her body.

Jack and his trial team took the lead in discovery for the defendants and spent more than two years reviewing and analyzing hundreds of thousands of documents, conducting hundreds of hours of research, preparing critical fact witnesses, and conducting nearly 100 video depositions, many of which lasted several days, and a few that lasted more than a week. He also oversaw the retention and preparation of approximately 18 expert witnesses to assist in defending the case, and preparation of several dispositive motions and dozens of motions in limine. He and his team spent more than six months in preparation for the civil trial, including the breakdown of voluminous deposition testimony and exhibits, analysis and preparation of thousands of exhibits, video presentations and animated recreations, preparation of key witnesses for their testimony at trial and, most importantly, preparation for the cross examination of the opponents' witnesses.



The trial began on August 29, 2016 with oral argument on more than 125 motions in limine, followed by nearly two weeks of jury selection. During trial, Jack's relentless cross examination of plaintiffs' key witnesses, including experts in structural engineering, architecture, construction management, demolition, occupational safety, and retail operations, was critical to the defense of The Salvation Army. The trial ended with a global settlement on February 8, 2017 after nearly 21 weeks and a verdict in the liability phase of the proceedings. The case was contentious, highly publicized and received national media attention.

According to the judge who presided over the trial, this was the longest civil trial in Philadelphia court history, and was reportedly the second-longest civil trial in Pennsylvania history.

Karla M. Turner, Plaintiff v. Safeway Trucking Corporation, et al., Court of Common Pleas, Philadelphia County.

On January 12, 2016, the Superior Court of Pennsylvania affirmed the defense verdict obtained by John J. Snyder and his partner, Tara Gill Nalencz, in an eight day trial before the Honorable Paul P. Panepinto in the Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas. Jack was retained only eight weeks prior to trial. At trial, Plaintiff claimed that she sustained injuries to her wrists and neck which led to her total disability when the school bus she was operating collided with two other vehicles on the westbound side of I-78. The other vehicles involved were a cargo van operated by Co-Defendant (Collision #1) and a tractor trailer operated by Jack's client, Leoncio Castillo on behalf of Safeway Trucking Corp. (Collision #2). Prior to trial, the plaintiff's settlement demand was \$5 million. At trial, the plaintiff's boardable economic damages were in excess of \$2.5 million. On appeal, the Superior Court found that the determination that the sudden emergency jury instruction given as to Mr. Castillo had been proper.

Zimmerman v. Pocono International Raceway, Inc., and National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, Inc., Court of Common Pleas, First Judicial District of Pennsylvania, Civil Division, Lackawanna County.

Jack Snyder and his partner Michael Sabo were retained on behalf of NASCAR after the close of discovery in a consolidated action involving three plaintiffs, two of whom were injured and one of whom was killed as a result of a lightning strike at Pocono Raceway in Long Pond, Pennsylvania. Plaintiffs were standing next to their vehicle in the parking lot behind the grandstands when it was struck by lightning. Plaintiffs sought damages from Pocono Raceway and NASCAR claiming officials were negligent in not warning fans of dangerous weather approaching the race. Prior to trial, the plaintiffs' demand was \$32,150,000.

Though he was already on trial in the Salvation Army matter, referenced above, which would continue for another seven months, Jack was actively involved in the case, including helping to prepare witnesses for trial, providing critical feedback and suggestions about arguments to the jury and weighing in on strategic decisions throughout the trial. On July 11, 2016, the jury found in favor of NASCAR, determining that it was not negligent.



Jack and his partner William Carr were also selected as lead trial counsel to defend the *Tropicana Hotel and Casino* in Atlantic City, NJ in the wrongful death and personal injury actions arising out of the collapse of a parking garage during construction. The Catastrophic Loss Group was retained almost a year after the litigation commenced. In a condensed timeframe, the trial team monitored several OSHA trials involving the various contractors on the project, reviewed and analyzed nearly two million pages of documents, retained a dozen expert consultants, took and defended more than 250 party, fact witness and expert witness depositions, prepared scores of motions and legal briefs, and prepared for a trial which was expected to last more than a year. Despite a \$140 million settlement demand, it was ultimately determined that Tropicana's role in the accident was minimal and the cases successfully resolved for Tropicana.

Jack and his partner William Carr were also selected to defend *Ride The Ducks International (RTDI)* and *Herschend Family Entertainment Corporation (HFEC)* in both personal injury and maritime/admiralty litigation arising from the allision of a tug driven barge and a tourist duck boat on the Delaware River on July 7, 2010. The allision resulted in the deaths of two Hungarian students and numerous injury claims from other passengers onboard the amphibious vessel. Following an unsuccessful mediation and in a condensed court-ordered case management schedule, the team conducted months of intense discovery which included more than 50 video depositions, review of nearly half a million pages of documents, and consultation with more than a dozen expert witnesses and consultants. Ultimately, the case favorably resolved for RTDI and HFEC during the third day of trial in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania before the Honorable Thomas O'Neill.

Very recently, and less than 4 weeks before the start of trial, Jack and his partner William Carr were selected to defend *Ride The Ducks International* in the September 24, 2015 Aurora Bridge Collision Litigation venued in the Superior Court of Washington for King County. The accident between the amphibious duck boat and a tour bus resulted in five deaths and catastrophic injuries to more than 60 others. This trial involved 44 Plaintiffs. In preparation for trial, the trial team reviewed and analyzed approximately 150 depositions and more than 1 million pages of documents in a very limited timeframe. The trial lasted more than four months and required Jack and members of his team to move across the country and set-up shop in a Seattle. This extremely difficult liability case with undisputed catastrophic injuries resulted in a verdict of just 1/3 of the amount demanded by the plaintiffs. The case is currently on appeal.



Prescription drug, pharmaceutical liability, birth defects (Philadelphia County, PA) – Jack and his team were retained only six weeks prior to trial to defend a national pharmacy chain in a case where the infant plaintiff had allegedly suffered brain damage and birth malformations and boarded \$92 million in past, present and future damages. Plaintiff alleged that the pharmacist’s failure to counsel and identify the contraindicated drug caused his mother to ingest heart medication which caused injury to her unborn child. After a 2 ½ week trial, a Philadelphia jury returned a defense verdict.

Aerosol cleaner, electric shock, severe burns (Philadelphia County, PA) – Retained only four weeks before the trial, Jack and his team defended an aerosol cleaner manufacturer in a products liability action with a demand of \$12 million. Plaintiff claimed he had been shocked with 7,620 volts of electricity and severely burned because of the aerosol product. After eleven days of trial and one and a half hours of deliberation, the jury returned a unanimous verdict in favor of defendant. The case was featured as Verdict of the Month in the October 2009 issue of “VerdictSearch Pennsylvania.”

Trash truck, products liability, wrongful death (Philadelphia County, PA) – Lead counsel in the defense of an international trash truck manufacturer in a jury trial where a 42-year-old man jumped off the back of an allegedly defective truck and sustained head injuries resulting in death. Retained less than 90 days before trial with a demand of \$7.5 million. After an 8-day trial, a Philadelphia jury returned a defense verdict.

Automobile accident, bicyclist, paraplegia (Philadelphia County, PA) – A 53-year-old bicyclist was rendered a paraplegic when struck by a truck during a left turn collision allegedly caused by client's employee. Plaintiff demanded \$22.5 million and on the 10th trial day before a Philadelphia jury, settled for \$6 million.

Explosion, phosphorous, hazardous materials, severe burns (Middlesex County, NJ) – Lead counsel in trial involving a 43-year-old man who was severely burned while unloading a railcar of phosphorus that spontaneously ignited. Plaintiff alleged that he was injured due to his lack of training and inadequate personal protective equipment. The trial team was retained shortly before the trial with a demand of \$25 million. On the 15th trial day, during plaintiff’s case in chief, plaintiff settled with the client for \$4.4 million.

Construction, crane, wrongful death (Philadelphia County, PA) – Lead counsel in defense of heavy equipment rental company in a case involving a truck driver that was crushed to death when a crane operator dropped his cargo on the cab of the truck in which he was seated. Plaintiff demanded \$15 million and during jury selection in Philadelphia, the case settled for \$2.25 million.



Industrial machinery, wrongful death, severe burns (Philadelphia County, PA) – 32-year-old plaintiff fell into a paper mill pulper and died from second and third degree burns allegedly due to inadequate safeguards around the pulper. Plaintiff demanded \$70 million and the court allowed a jury charge for punitive damages. After a 2 ½ week trial and while a Philadelphia jury deliberated, plaintiff accepted a \$6 million settlement.

Industrial machinery, amputation (United States District Court, the Eastern District of Pennsylvania) – A 46-year-old man lost his left arm and right leg when his arm was crushed between two industrial rollers in a paper mill. The plaintiff's demand was \$15 million and after a 3 week trial a District Court jury, in Philadelphia, returned a defense verdict.

Construction, paraplegia, total disability (Philadelphia County, PA) – 37-year-old plaintiff fell from a residential construction site and was rendered a paraplegic with chronic, unremitting pain. Plaintiff demanded \$37.5 million but, during the defendant's case-in-chief, the case settled before a Philadelphia jury in the amount of \$8 million.

Medical malpractice, wrongful death (Philadelphia County, PA) – A 51-year-old woman died from alleged complications of a kidney stone removal procedure. After an eight day trial in which the defense team effectively used demonstrative technology, including an animated recreation of the actual surgical kidney stone removal, a Philadelphia jury returned a verdict in favor of the defendants.

Medical malpractice, dermatologist, misdiagnosis (Philadelphia County, PA) – The defendants, a dermatologist and dermatopathologist were accused of misdiagnosing the plaintiff's melanoma. A Philadelphia jury returned a verdict in favor of Mr. Snyder's client, the dermatopathologist.

Medical malpractice, brain damage, ob/gyn (Philadelphia County, PA) – A minor suffered severe brain damage allegedly due to the late performance of a Cesarean section. In Philadelphia, a jury verdict in favor of the defendant obstetrician.



Medical malpractice, ob/gyn (Philadelphia County, PA) – The defendant ob/gyn physician was accused of mismanaging plaintiff’s labor and delivery resulting in the minor-plaintiff’s brain damage. A Philadelphia jury verdict in favor of the defendant.

Medical malpractice, nephrologist, transplant (Philadelphia County, PA) – A failed kidney transplant between a Roman Catholic nun and her brother, resulting in permanent dialysis for both. The nephrologists were accused of not understanding the nature of the disease, wrongfully suggesting the brother as a candidate for transplant and not following his blood studies appropriately. A jury verdict in Philadelphia for the defendant nephrologists.

Medical malpractice, ob/gyn, brain damage (Philadelphia County, PA) – The defendant ob/gyn physician was accused of mismanaging the plaintiff’s labor by delivering the child too soon, causing his brain damage, mental retardation and cerebral palsy. A jury in verdict in Philadelphia for the defendant.

Medical malpractice, hernia (Philadelphia County, PA) – Eleven-year-old plaintiff had been on a feeding tube all his life due to complications from a hernia surgery which resulted in the loss of 90% of his small intestines. After the case was transferred to Mr. Snyder, a Philadelphia jury returned a verdict in favor of the defendants.

Medical malpractice, radiologist, cancer (Philadelphia County, PA) – A radiologist allegedly failed to diagnose lung cancer, resulting in the plaintiff’s death. A Philadelphia jury verdict in favor of defendants.

Civil rights, brain injury, amputation (United States District Court, the Eastern District of Pennsylvania) – Plaintiff allegedly sustained brain damage and lost a thumb due to the wrongful use of force by the Philadelphia Police Department. Jury verdict in favor of defendants.
