



Brandon B. Copeland

Principal

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Brandon Copeland joined Brown & James in 2006 and practices in the firm's St. Louis office. Prior to joining Brown & James, he worked for a national insurance company as a field claims adjuster for five years. During that time, he gained valuable experience in the proper handling of property and liability insurance claims. Mr. Copeland puts his field experience to work focusing his practice in the area of insurance law, including coverage disputes and arson-fraud litigation. He also practices in the areas of construction law and premises liability.

Academic Honors and Activities

Academic Excellence Award – Civil Procedure

Recent Trials

Spearman v. McNeill – The Plaintiff was a pedestrian crossing the street when she was struck by Defendant who was making a left turn onto that street. Plaintiff sought treatment that evening at a local emergency room and was eventually referred to an orthopedic specialist as well as two rounds of physical therapy. She also claimed that, as a result of her injuries, she was forced to withdraw from a semester of school at McKendree University. After a three-day trial in St. Clair County, the jury returned a verdict that awarded Plaintiff no compensation for her pain and suffering and \$10,000 for her lost tuition. This verdict was reduced by 50 percent as a result of Plaintiff's comparative fault. During closing arguments, Plaintiff asked the jury to award her \$500,000 in total compensation.

Alex Express v. Safety International – Plaintiffs alleged personal injuries sustained as a result of being rear-ended by the Defendant's semi truck. The Defendants sued several third-parties, including our client Safety International. The original suit was settled for an amount in excess of \$1.8 million. The Defendants pursued their third-party complaint against Safety, seeking contribution. The Defendant's theory was that our client was negligent in performing his duties as the safety director for the highway construction project where the accident took place. We tried the case over the course of three days in the district court. At the close of their case, they asked the jury to apportion fault against Safety at 85 percent, meaning we would have been responsible for that percentage of the total settlement.

paid to the Roberts. The jury returned a verdict assessing our client with only 10 percent fault.

Henderson v. United Presbyterian Church – The plaintiff was working as a caregiver for an elderly church member when she alleges she slipped and fell on a set of stairs leading from the street to the entrance of the church. She sustained a broken ankle, torn tendon, and nerve damage that required two surgeries to repair. We argued that plaintiff was responsible for her injuries due to her failure to keep a careful lookout for ice on the stairs when she was aware of ice on other parts of the property and freezing rain earlier in the day. Plaintiff asked the jury to award her \$200,000. The jury returned a unanimous verdict finding plaintiff's damages totaled \$10,000 and assessing her 90 percent at fault for the accident—resulting in a \$1,000 net verdict that was reduced to zero by a setoff in favor of defendant.

Bacon v. OJ Laughlin – The plaintiffs alleged that defendants failed to construct a large addition to their home in a workmanlike manner, resulting in damage and mold throughout the home. As a result, the plaintiffs vacated the home for six months while remediation and repairs took place and discarded much of their personal property. After eight days of trial, and almost three days of deliberations, the jury returned with a full defense verdict for the client.

Collins v. Rader – Plaintiff was injured as he exited from the emergency exit of a school bus used for transportation from defendant's restaurant to University of Missouri home football games when the front door of the bus "jammed" causing passengers to exit from the back. He alleged the defendant was responsible for the bus driver's negligent actions and the defendant's failure to hire a competent transportation company to operate the shuttle. Plaintiff sustained \$153,000 in medical bills (\$51,000 after adjustments) as a result of treatment for his injury. The jury returned an 11-1 verdict in favor of the defendant.

Meyer v. Rehnquist Design and Build – Plaintiff alleged that our client, a builder of large homes, unreasonably diverted storm water on to their property. Plaintiff's claimed \$350,000.00 in damages. After a week-long jury trial, the jury awarded plaintiffs 10 percent of their claimed damages.

Cima v. Heartland Credit Union – Plaintiff alleged that our client withheld a portion of her checking account withdrawal. The court found for our client and against plaintiff on all claims.

Recent Appeals

Eisenmann v. Podhorn (Mo. App. E.D. 2017) – The court granted our cross-appeal and request for a new trial on damages based on the court's prejudicial jury instruction that directed the jury to consider the original plaintiffs' failure to mitigate against our client. Our client was a contractor with a third-party claim against the soils engineer it hired to ensure the lot our client was building on was suitable. We also tried the case in the circuit court where the jury returned a verdict in favor of our client with a finding of 100 percent fault on the part of the soils engineer.

Practice Areas

Arson-Fraud Litigation
Construction Law
Insurance Law
Premises and Retail Liability

More About Brandon

Education & Bar Admissions

Education

- Saint Louis University School of Law (J.D., 2006)

- Murray State University (MBA, 2000)
- Murray State University (B.S., 1998)

Bar Admissions

- Missouri
- Illinois
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas

Recent Achievements

- Best Lawyers - Insurance Law, The Best Lawyers in America (2019-2021)
- Rising Stars - Civil Litigation Defense, Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers (2014-2016)

Professional Affiliations

- Illinois State Bar Association
- Missouri Organization of Defense Lawyers
- Springfield Claims Association

Publications

- Author, "The Missouri Court Appeals Further Limits First-Party Tort Claims Against Insurers: Overcast v. Billings, Revisited," The Firm Inquiry (Winter 2008)
- Author, "Don't Rock the Boat: (But if You Do, You Might Not Have Liability Coverage under Your Homeowner's Policy)," The Firm Inquiry (Summer 2008)

Speaking

- Presenter, "Can I Get a Lyft? Is Your Side-Hustle Covered?" Brown & James General Defense and Insurance Law Symposium, January 2019
- Presenter, "Evaluating Additional Insured Coverage and Contractual Indemnity Issues," Brown & James General Defense and Insurance Law Symposium, January 2018
- Presenter, "Stacking the Deck: Changes to Missouri's Collateral Source Rule," 2017 Brown & James Tort Reform Seminar: A New Day in Missouri, September 2017
- Presenter, "Is It High Noon? Premises Liability Claims Involving Conceal-Carry and Gun Rights," Brown & James General Defense & Insurance Law Symposium (January 2017)
- Presenter, "Are Condominium Claims the New Mold?" Brown & James Law Symposium (January 2016)
- Presenter, "Advanced Trial Tactics," National Business Institute (September 2015)
- Presenter, "The Ever-Evolving UM and UIM Law in Missouri - Where are We Now?" Brown & James Law Symposium (January 2014)

- Presenter, NBI Insurance Law Update Seminar (2012)

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