



Joseph R. Swift

Principal

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Joseph R. Swift is a partner and shareholder with Brown & James, P.C., practicing in the firm's St. Louis office. He became a principal partner of the firm in 1994 and member of the firm's Executive Committee in 2003. Joe serves as the chair to the Marketing and Associate Review Committees and sits on the Pension/Profit Sharing Trustees Committee.

Mr. Swift is the chair of the firm's Transportation practice. He regularly represents several of the largest for-hire and private carriers in the United States. An Iowa native, Joe especially enjoys this, having driven a truck while in college and law school. In addition to advising transportation clients, Joe regularly handles premises liability and product liability matters for companies and insurers. With more than 28 years of experience in the industry, Joe has tried countless matters to jury verdict and is routinely called upon by clients and industry groups to speak on transportation and product liability matters.

Joe has spent his entire career with Brown & James and recently completed a term as a board member for ALFA International, a global legal network. He is on ALFA International's Product Liability Steering Committee and serves as the chair emeritus of ALFA's Transportation Practice Group. Additionally, he is active within the Trucking Industry Defense Association, Trucking Lawyers Association, the Transportation Committee of the Claims & Litigation Management Alliance, and is a regular participant in the Arkansas Trucking Seminar.

Favorable Jury Verdicts

Blankenship v. Heyl Truck Lines (2017)

Straube v. Marten Transportation (2016)

Villines v. Steak n Shake (2015)

Donald Handley v. Jacobson Transportation (2015)

Mehrlenbach v. Evans Enterprises (2014)

Mayes v. Steak 'n Shake (2013)

Gambino v. Steak 'n Shake (2013)
Conley v. D&G Transportation (2013)
Green v. The Plaza Condominiums (2012)
Valadez v. Watkins Motor Lines (2012)
Heard v. Fudge (November 2011)
Norman v. Marten Transport (2011)
Breaux v. Old Dominion (2011)
Curran v. Marriott (2011)
Edwards and Slay Transportation v. Millstadt Rendering (2010)
Munoz v., R&L Carriers (2010)
Fattah v. Tran (2009)
Hirner, Jennifer v. DayDreamers (2009)
Ruben, Raymond v. Village Market (2008)
Watkins, Aubrey v. City of St. Louis Missouri (2007)
Bockman, Miranda v. O & S Carriers (2007)
Michael, Christy v. Cracker Barrel (2006)
Stoughton v. Alexander Richardson (2006)

Published Appellate Opinions

Huggins, Walter v. Teton Transportation, Inc., represented defendant
Staple Cotton Cooperative Association, et al. v. D G & G., Inc., et al., represented defendant

Community Activities

Soccer and T-ball coach
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri Historical Society

Practice Areas

Insurance Law
Premises and Retail Liability
Product Liability
Transportation

More About Joe

Education & Bar Admissions

Education

- Creighton University (J.D., cum laude, 1987)
- Luther College (B.A., cum laude, 1984)

Bar Admissions

- Missouri
- Illinois
- Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri

Recent Achievements

- Best Lawyers - Personal Injury Litigation - Defendants, The Best Lawyers in America (2019-2020)
- Best Lawyers - Product Liability Litigation - Defendants, The Best Lawyers in America (2019-2020)
- Faculty Member, Missouri Organization of Defense Lawyers' Trial Academy (2019)
- Super Lawyers - Transportation/Maritime, Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers (2005, 2007-2019)
- Chair, Transportation Practice Group, ALFA International (2012-2013)
- Program Chair, Transportation Seminar, ALFA International (2011)
- Awarded Top Defense Verdict in Missouri, Missouri Lawyers Weekly (2009)
- Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent

Professional Affiliations

- ALFA International - International Client Seminar Committee Chair; Transportation Practice Group
- Past Chair; Product Liability Steering Committee; Strategic Planning Committee
- Transportation Committee - Claims & Litigation Management Alliance
- Defense Research Institute
- Missouri Organization of Defense Lawyers
- Transportation Lawyers Association
- Trucking Industry Defense Association

Publications

- 2019 Transportation Law Compendium: Missouri, ALFA International
- 2018 Transportation Law Compendium: Missouri, ALFA International
- Social Media Research and the Jury, 2017 ALFA International International Client Seminar
- Deposing Corporate Witnesses or the Safety Representative Witness: A Primer in the Era of "The Reptile." 2016 ALFA International Transportation Seminar. Materials prepared and edited by Mary Beth White of Lewis, Thomason, King, Krieg & Waldrop, Nashville, Tenn.
- Deposing Corporate Witnesses: A Primer in the Era of 'The Reptile.' 2016 ALFA International International Client Seminar
- "Keep Your Friends Close and Your Enemies Closer, An Update on the Plaintiff Bar's Attack On the Trucking Industry," 2012 ALFA International Transportation Group Course Book
- The Ultimate Boot Strap: Missouri's Heeding Presumption Requires Warning When Product Is Found Safe
- The "Rules of the Road" Approach - An Examination of a Plaintiff's Strategy for Proving Liability in Trucking Cases
- The New Frontier of Discovery: Applying the Amended Rules of Electronic Discovery
- Meniscal Tear: Already There?
- Aggravating Circumstances Awarded And Upheld On Appeal
- Missouri Supreme Court Limits Discovery In Product Liability Suit
- Evidence Of Substantially Similar Acts Are Not Limited To The Specific Model However, The Trial Court
- Must Prevent The "Side Show From Taking Over The Circus"
- The Eighth Circuit Upholds The Use Of Defense Instruction In Product Liability Action

- Missouri Tort Reform 2005
- The Eighth Circuit Strikes Experts Again (And Again)
- Missouri Court Further Limits The Definition Of "Manufacturer" and "Designer"
- Eight Million Dollar Judgment Reversed And Remanded Because Adverse Inference Improperly Given For Destruction Of Evidence
- Common Carrier Required To Provide Worker's Compensation Benefits
- "Owner/Operator" May Be An "Employee" Pursuant To Missouri Workers' Compensation Law
- Satellite Information Part of Rule 26 Disclosure?
- Workers' Compensation Bars Claim By Passenger Against Driver
- Spoliation Or Destruction Of Evidence
- When a Seller is not a "Seller"
- Cross Examination of the Accident Reconstructionist
- Underinsured and Uninsured Coverage Issues In Missouri

Speaking

- Presenter, "Three Sticks of Dynamite in the Road: Don't Blow Up Verdicts," ALFA International Transportation Practice Group Seminar, April 2019
- Presenter, "Revisiting the Reptile Theory: The Importance of Deposition Preparation," West Michigan Council of Safety Management, April 2019
- Presenter, "The Prepared Witness," Lytx User Group Conference, February 2019
- Presenter, "Turning Lemons into Lemonade," ALFA International Transportation St. Louis Regional Seminar, February 2019
- Presenter, "Understanding and Reducing Your Digital Footprint," Leggett & Platt Company Seminar, with Jack Nevins of Semke Forensics, October 2018
- Presenter, "To Settle or Try: The Most Important Question!" TIDA 26th Annual Seminar, October 2018
- Presenter, "How to Take Control, Keep Control and Not Lose Control of Your Big Case," Arkansas Trucking Seminar, September 2018
- Presenter, "Revisiting the Reptile Theory: The Importance of Deposition Preparation," 2018 ATTIC RRG Safety Conference, September 2018
- Moderator, "Winners and Losers," ALFA International 2018 Transportation Practice Group Seminar, May 2018
- Presenter, "Interactive Case Evaluation: What is This Claim Really Worth?" Regional Milwaukee Seminar on Product Liability and Complex Torts, ALFA International, April 2018
- Moderator, St. Louis Regional Seminar on Legal Issues Impacting the Transportation Industry, ALFA International, February 2018
- Presenter, "Case Evaluation Roundtable: Dissecting the Claim – Reality Depends on Where You Are," Brown & James General Defense & Insurance Law Symposium, January 2018
- Presenter, "Competitive Network Environment," ALFA International Annual Business Meeting, October 2017
- Presenter, "I Hear You Knocking, But You Can't Come In," ALFA International 2017 Product Liability & Complex Torts Practice Group Seminar, October 2017
- Presenter, "Reptile Dysfunction: Defeating the Reptile in the Safety Director Deposition," 2017 ATTIC RRG Annual

Member Safety Conference, September 2017

- Presenter, "Throwing 'Junk Science' Away: Missouri Adopts New Standard for Expert Testimony," 2017 Brown & James Tort Reform Seminar: A New Day in Missouri, September 2017
- Presenter, "The Pendulum Swings Back: Bringing Suit in Missouri Just Got Tougher," Brown & James Webinar, August 2017
- Presenter, "Anatomy of a Claim," Great West Casualty National Symposium, 2017
- Presenter, "Throwing 'Junk Science' Away: Missouri Adopts New Standard for Expert Testimony," Brown & James Webinar, June 2017
- Presenter, "Closing Arguments: Technology Takes the Stage" and "Breaking It Down: Analysis of the Jurors' Thoughts and Conclusions From the Closing Arguments," ALFA International 2017 Transportation Practice Group Seminar, May 2017
- Program Chair, ALFA International Transportation Practice Group Regional Seminar, February 2017
- Presenter, "The Good, The Bad and the Ugly: Social Media and Jury Selection," ALFA International International Client Seminar, 2017
- Presenter, "Rapid Response in a Video World," Brown & James General Defense & Insurance Law Symposium, January 2017
- Presenter, "Circling the Wagons: Preparing for the Showdown," an interactive activity with two corporate representatives, one ill-prepared, one adequately prepared. A focus group then evaluated each one to help prepare for the challenge of their companies next corporate representative's deposition, 2016 ALFA International Client Seminar, March 2016
- Host, ALFA Regional Transportation Mini-Seminar, 2016
- Presenter, "Diffuse Tensor Imaging (DTI) - The New Mild Traumatic Brain Injury," Brown & James Law Symposium, January 2016
- Presenter, "Insightful Jury Selection in the Wake of Ferguson, Missouri, and Charleston, South Carolina," Arkansas Trucking Seminar, September 2015
- Presenter, "Product Liability - Building the Defense Case," Brown & James Law Symposium, January 2015
- Presenter, "Seeing the Forest through the Trees - A Look at How the Mock Trial or Focus Group can Assist in Narrowing the Issues of Your Case for Trial," Brown & James Law Symposium, January 2014
- Presenter, "How significant was the Impact and Accident? A look at common personal devices and vehicle components that may provide valuable information about vehicle accidents and impacts." Brown & James Law Symposium, January 2014
- Presenter, "Is Talking About It Getting It Done?" ALFA International Transportation Practice Group Seminar, May 2013
- Presenter, "Behind Closed Doors," Brown & James Law Symposium, January 2013
- Presenter, "An Update From the Front Lines-A Look at the Latest Efforts and Methods the Plaintiff's Bar Discusses and Encourages," ALFA International Transportation Practice Group Seminar, 2012
- Speaker, 19th Annual TIDA Industry Seminar "Double Jeopardy-CSA and the New Hours of Service Proposal," 2011
- Speaker, 2011 Traffic Insurance Risk Control Workshop, 2011
- Speaker, "Rules of the Road," Brown & James Law Symposium, 2011

- Presenter, "BASICS Training, Dealing with the Roadside Inspection," Arkansas Trucking Association, 2010
- Moderator, "Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010," ALFA International Transportation Practice Group Seminar, 2010
- Moderator, "Product Recalls in a Global Economy," ALFA International Client Seminar. The expert panel included representatives from Schneider Electric North America, W.W. Grainger, Inc., and Cracker Barrel Old Country Stores, 2010
- Presenter, "Product Liability 101, the Consumer Products Safety Commission and Product Recalls," American Ladder Institute, 2010
- Presenter, "The 800 lb. Gorilla in the Room - Medicare Set Asides," Brown & James Law Symposium, 2010
- Speaker, Green Marketing Claims at the 2009 Product Safety and Liability Conference (sponsored by the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers in conjunction with the Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute and the Consumer Electronic Association), 2009
- Speaker, National plaintiff's groups targeting the trucking industry, 2009 National Safety & Operations Conference for the American Moving & Storage Association. The conference was attended by member companies' executives and safety directors, 2009
- Presenter, "Watch Out, It May be Gaining on You- A Report from the Front Lines; Plaintiff's Groups Targeting the Trucking Industry," ALFA International Transportation Seminar, 2009
- Presenter, "2008: A Discovery Odyssey," ALFA International Product Liability Seminar, 2008
- Presenter, "Defending Against Allegations of Criminal Conduct," ALFA International Transportation Seminar, 2008
- Presenter, "Mediation with the Aggressive Approach," ALFA International Transportation Seminar, 2007
- Presenter, "Divide and Conquer! Does In-Fighting Between Co-defendants Over Liability Drive up the Value of the Verdict?" ALFA International Transportation Seminar, 2006
- Presenter, "Life Care/Medical," ALFA International Transportation Seminar, 2005
- Presenter, "Direct/Cross of Defense Accident Reconstructionist," ALFA International Transportation Seminar, 2004