

CONNECTICUT
CHILD
JUSTICE
FOUNDATION

STANDING UP FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

For more than 35 years, attorney Ernie Teitell has practiced both criminal and civil trial law. Throughout his career, he has worked hard to give back to his community and state – primarily by assisting those who lack the money or resources to get legal help when they need it.

Now, in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF), he is furthering his passion for assisting others by co-founding the Connecticut Child Justice Foundation (CCJF).

Teitell said the CCJF, a nonprofit foundation, is “dedicated to serving Connecticut children,

including disabled and mentally challenged children, who are without resources and who are deprived of essential educational services and other support services.”

He explained that Connecticut is home to many such children, and federal and state laws require school districts to provide the services these kids need in order to get an education.

For example, a physically challenged student may require an aide to navigate the school, or an academically challenged student might need help to manage the schoolwork.





Because of the additional costs involved, school districts often won't provide these services unless a parent forces their hand by taking the case to court, he said. Sadly, many parents don't have the necessary financial resources to hire a lawyer to represent them.

To solve this problem, "We've recruited approximately 30 top-flight trial lawyers, from across the state, who agreed to represent DCF kids in different educational capacities who need legal assistance," Teitell said.

"We're going to have one lawyer represent one client, a child who needs services. We're going to rely on DCF's staff to tell us what cases they need us to handle." He said many DCF children live in poorer school districts, such as Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven.

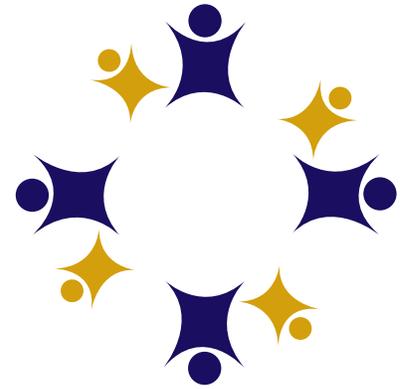
The first mission of the foundation was to train the attorneys to deal with these cases, something that took place over the summer. Now, they are ready to take on the school districts that are not complying with the law.

Teitell said the CCJF initiative "is almost unprecedented. We have some impressive people involved." The roster of legal professionals who will be working on these cases pro bono include Elaine Gordon and Robert Holzberg, former judges of Connecticut Superior Court.

He said oftentimes, children in need of special services don't receive them "because there's no resistance from the parents. We're hoping to change that by representing them for free."

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-FOUNDERS OF CCJF



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THE REASON FOR FOUNDING CCJF

An extraordinary number of children who are under the custody and care of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) are in need of special education services.

In many cases, the schools they attend fail to provide the support services needed to accommodate their physical handicaps, intellectual disabilities, comprehension deficiencies, speech and language impairments, and emotional and behavioral issues.

Without educational services that are essential to their ability to process and understand the information presented to them in the classroom, these children are more apt to never achieve their potential and drop out of school.

When we realized that the educational rights of these children were not being protected, we felt it was essential that we create a charitable foundation dedicated to changing this injustice.

THE MISSION OF CCJF

The Connecticut Child Justice Foundation (CCJF) is committed to providing a force of caring legal professionals who will champion the cause of children with educational needs who fall under the protection of the DCF and who otherwise lack the financial resources and/or parental support to fulfill this role.

The CCJF team of volunteer lawyers and retired judges will intervene on each child's behalf to obtain the educational services to which these children are legally entitled. These legal professionals will actively advocate for these children at the school district level and in the courts, if necessary, in order to protect our young clients' full educational rights. CCJF will provide this service pro bono.



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*Principal,
Silver Golub & Teitell LLP*



JOETTE KATZ

*Commissioner,
Connecticut Department
of Children & Families*



RICHARD BIEDER

*Principal,
Koskoff, Koskoff & Beider*



THE GOALS OF CCJF

CCJF is determined to ensure that those children who do not have resources – or a support network – have the same access to educational services afforded to other children who come from homes with financial resources and the capability to advocate for the special needs of their children.

CCJF’s goal is to ensure that school districts provide all of the essential and mandated special services for each child under the custody and/or care of the DCF.

The Foundation is committed to ensuring that the educational rights of these children are fully protected and enforced.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CCJF

Children are shaped by their experiences and circumstances. With the aid of caring adults, children can feel empowered by their educational experience and achieve positive results.

This, in turn, would serve to boost their confidence in their abilities and thus provide a springboard for future success.

We trial lawyers and former judges believe that we have a responsibility to give back to the community and feel a moral obligation to use our skills and abilities to help these children who have no one else to legally advocate for them.

Although most of us are not educational lawyers by trade or training, we believe that our professional skills are transferrable to educational law advocacy. With proper training, study and research, we firmly believe we can provide quality representation to these children.

CCJF CO-FOUNDER

ERNIE TEITELL

*Dedicated to practicing
compassionate law*

Ernie Teitell has practiced both criminal and civil trial law during his professional career, which has spanned more than 35 years.

The kinds of cases he has been involved in – which include medical malpractice, defective products, catastrophic collisions, and most poignantly, sexual abuse – have made him a fierce advocate for those whose lives have been irretrievably altered.

He takes a humanistic approach with every single case he handles. Teitell insists that the role of compassion and the ability to truly listen remain foremost when dealing with family, friends and colleagues, as well as the victims involved in traumatic situations. He believes it is crucial that the legal profession elevate its image and the practice of law to greater heights.

For more than 23 years, Teitell was an adjunct professor of trial advocacy at Quinnipiac University School of Law. He donated his entire salary to fund a scholarship for first year law students who expressed the goal and exemplified the ideals of pursuing the practice of law to benefit the community.



His advocacy for more compassionate and concerned participation on the part of all lawyers is something he practices and teaches. Teitell’s most recent presentation, titled, “Lessons from the Porch,” focused on lawyers using their compassion, integrity and humanism in the zealous pursuit of advocacy.

In addition to the professional seminars he presents across the country, Teitell teaches internationally and writes articles for legal journals and magazines on the subject of humanistic and ethical best practices.

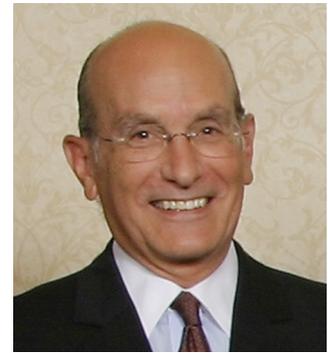
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PARTICIPATING ATTORNEYS

RICHARD BIEDER, a co-founder of CCJF, has been involved in several nationally significant cases, serving as lead counsel in the Oklahoma City Bombing Federal Tort Claims Act efforts and the L'Ambiance Plaza Building Collapse case. He has won numerous honors and awards, including the Distinguished Service Award from the Association of Trial Lawyers of America and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association. Bieder graduated from New York University Law School, later serving as a commissioned lieutenant and lawyer in the Judge Advocate General Corps, U.S. Navy. He has worked at Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder since 1969. He was president of the National Board of Trial Advocacy and the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association, and is currently president of Trial Lawyers Care, a lawyer volunteer organization. He has authored numerous journal articles and has made legal presentations around the world.



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JAMES L. BRAWLEY is a partner in the Hartford office of Morrison Mahoney LLP. Since joining the firm, his practice has concentrated in the trial of third-party litigation, with particular emphasis on the defense of General Liability, Products Liability, Employment and Business Actions. His practice areas include: Commercial and Business, Employment, Products Liability, Tort & Liability Defense and Transportation. He is admitted to the bar of the State of Connecticut, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the United States District Courts of Massachusetts and Connecticut, and the United States Court of Appeals, First Circuit. He received his law degree with honors from Suffolk University Law School and is a graduate of Union College.



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JOYCE CHEN practices in the areas of medical malpractice, product liability, and catastrophic injury at Silver Golub & Teitell LLP, a law firm located in Stamford. Previously, she practiced in patent litigation, white-collar crime, and commercial litigation at an international law firm located in New York City. During the course of her career, she has represented various nonprofit organizations, including Project Reach Youth and Coalition for the Homeless, in pro bono matters. She served on the New Haven Board of Aldermen from 2002 to 2007.



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LEWIS CHIMES

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LEWIS CHIMES recently opened his own practice in Stamford after 15 years as a partner in the law firm of Garrison, Levin-Epstein, Chimes, Richardson, & Fitzgerald in New Haven. He represents individuals in employment, civil rights, personal injury, medical malpractice, and criminal defense. He has tried approximately 60 cases to verdict in both state and federal court, and has argued cases in the Connecticut Supreme Court and the United States Second Circuit Court of Appeals. He is co-chairperson of the Employment Law Section of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association and sits on its Board of Governors. Chimes graduated from Tufts University and Columbia Law School. He also sits on the board of Connecticut Special Olympics, and has been its legal advisor for 15 years.



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KEVIN A. COLES practices primarily in the areas of insurance litigation, personal injury and business litigation, and has focused on insurance defense issues for more than 20 years. He has also frequently represented carriers' interests in insurance fraud cases. He has undertaken crucial roles in mediation, major complex multiparty litigation; ERISA litigation; declaratory judgment actions; and bad faith actions involving insurance carriers. He was lead defense counsel in the L'Ambiance Plaza Disaster litigation. Coles received his law degree from the University of Houston in 1974. He is the recipient of the Order of the Barons Award and American Jurisprudence Awards in Torts and Federal Civil Procedure. He is a principal in the law firm of Coles, Baldwin & Kaiser in Fairfield.



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DAVID W. COONEY has practiced law in Hartford since 1978, after earning his law degree at the University of Connecticut School of Law. He joined RisCassi & Davis, P.C. in 1985. He is certified as a Civil Trial Advocate by the National Board of Trial Advocacy and is a Life Fellow of the James W. Cooper Fellows Program of the Connecticut Bar Foundation. Cooney has served the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association and the Connecticut and Hartford County bar associations in various capacities. From 2001 to 2010, he taught a Trial Advocacy course at UConn Law School. He was appointed to serve as a Special Master by the United States District Court and serves as an arbitrator/fact finder for the State Superior Court.





BRIAN C. FOURNIER is the managing member of the Fournier Law Firm located in New Haven, with a second office in Waterbury. He is a graduate of Boston College and the Columbus School of Law. His experience includes juvenile cases, product liability law, consumer class actions, complex commercial and personal injury litigation, criminal defense cases, and real estate and commercial transactions. Fournier is admitted to the bars of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, California and New York. He is a member of the Federal District Courts for the District of Connecticut, the District of Rhode Island and the Northern District of California. He enjoys serving the community in both elected and appointed capacities in town government, as well as community organizations.



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HON. ELAINE GORDON retired from the bench after serving as a Connecticut Superior Court Trial Judge for 23 years. Upon retirement, she founded the alternative dispute resolution firm of Gordon ADR, providing full-time services as a skilled mediator, arbitrator, and legal consultant. She has taught numerous courses on mediation and settlement skills to judges for over 20 years and was an instructor at the Yale Law School. She has decided, mediated or assisted in the settlement of virtually every type of dispute. The disputes over which she presided included complex, highly contentious matters, as well as multi-party litigation. She is an honors graduate of The University of Connecticut School of Law and Northwestern University.



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HON. ROBERT J. HOLZBERG retired from the bench after more than 20 years of service as a Superior Court judge. He joined Pullman & Comley LLC as a member, where he leads the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) practice, serving as a mediator, arbitrator and private judge in a wide range of complex civil matters. He has skillfully crafted settlements in some of Connecticut's highest profile and most complex cases, and is one of the state's most sought-after mediators. He has received several awards, including the 2011 Connecticut Bar Association's Henry J. Naruk Award. Before his appointment to the bench, he was on the faculty of the University of Connecticut School of Law and also served as an Assistant Public Defender. He received his law degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 1978.



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RICHARD KENNY is a partner in the firm Kenny, O’Keefe & Usseglio PC. He is a summa cum laude graduate from the College of the Holy Cross after which he obtained his law degree, with honors, from the University of Connecticut. He is board certified as a civil trial specialist by the National Board of Trial Advocacy and an Advocate member of the American Board of Trial Advocates. He is an active member of the Medical Malpractice Committee of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association and lectures regularly on trial practice. Kenny is also a member of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association, and is a member of the American Association for Justice.



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ARTHUR C. LASKE III is a principal of Laske Law Firm LLC in Fairfield, and serves as Deputy City Attorney for the City of Bridgeport. His practice is focused on trial work, including the representation of injured individuals, municipalities and municipal employees. He is admitted to practice in Connecticut State Courts, the United States District Court of Connecticut, and the United States Second Circuit Court of Appeals. In addition to trying many cases in state and federal court, he has argued before the Connecticut Appellate Court, Connecticut Supreme Court, and the United States Second Circuit Court of Appeals. He received his law degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 1988.



SEAN MCELLIGOTT

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SEAN MCELLIGOTT is an experienced litigator with emphasis on complex litigation, class action and personal injury. He recently won a \$10 million verdict for a woman who was in a coma for nearly a month due to improperly administered anesthesia care during routine surgery. McElligott also maintains an active civil rights and pro bono practice. He tried a recent pro bono civil rights case to verdict in federal court on behalf of a Connecticut citizen who was beaten by the police. He has also successfully represented the families of mentally ill inmates who died in the custody of the state Department of Correction. He currently represents the Guardians Black Police Officers Association against the Bridgeport Police Department in the longest-running employment discrimination case in Connecticut.





JOSEPH A. MENGACCI has served as trial counsel for over 25 years, representing plaintiffs and defendants in complex multiparty litigation involving substantial damages claims. His practice has concentrated on medical malpractice and negligence claims, including products liability, business and partnership disputes, construction claims and insurance defense. Mengacci is currently self-employed as a mediator and arbitrator. He has served as a judge in the Superior Court of the State of Connecticut and as a partner and attorney in several Connecticut law firms. He received his law degree from the Loyola University School of Law. He has served on the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut State University System and is former chairman of the State of Connecticut Judicial Selection Commission.



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JOSEPH MIRRIONE is a graduate of Marist College and Vermont Law School. He is board certified as a Civil Trial Lawyer by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. His practice is limited to litigation, predominantly in the fields of medical malpractice and personal injury law. A past president of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association (2008), he is currently chairman of CTLA's Ethics Committee. In 2008, the CTLA presented Mirrione with the T. Paul Tremont award for "dedication, experience, and commitment to teaching the next generation of trial lawyers." He is an Instructor of Law at the University of Connecticut School of Law, teaching Advanced Trial Advocacy. He co-edited a book entitled *A Collection of Final Arguments - Lessons Learned/ Lessons Shared*.



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KATHLEEN L. NASTRI is a partner with Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder, in Bridgeport. She works exclusively on behalf of plaintiffs, and focuses her work on medical malpractice for injured patients. She was the first woman president of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers' Association, is a co-chair of its Continuing Legal Education Committee, and serves on its Board of Governors, and Executive and Nominating committees. Nastri also sits on the Board of Governors of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America (now American Association for Justice), and is a fellow of the Connecticut Bar Foundation. In September, 2008, Nastri was inducted into the American College of Trial Lawyers. She has lectured extensively on personal injury and medical malpractice at local and national seminars. She received her law degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law, graduating cum laude, in 1986.



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MARILYN J. RAMOS is a partner in the law firm of Silver Golub & Teitell, which she joined in 1992. She received her Juris Doctorate degree from Pace University School of Law. Ramos has a diverse civil litigation practice, focusing on personal injury claims. She was a member of a three-attorney team that recently obtained a \$28 million judgment for a former smoker against R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company in the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut. Prior to attending law school, Ramos taught for many years, working with foreign-born children and adults, and was employed at the City of Stamford's Human Rights Commission. She is a member of the Connecticut and Fairfield County bar associations and the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association, and is a board member of the Fairfield County Bar Foundation.



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PAUL SLAGER is a partner in the law firm of Silver Golub & Teitell. He represents plaintiffs in catastrophic cases involving medical malpractice, serious crimes and accidents, and defective consumer products. He also represents claimants in whistleblower actions and has handled significant litigation between businesses. Some of his notable current cases include representing an infant who suffered severe brain damage at two Connecticut hospitals because his newborn screening tests were not completed as required by state law, and the family of a 6-year-old boy who drowned after becoming entrapped in the defective drain of the family swimming pool. Since 2008, he has served as president of the Board of Directors of the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut, Inc. He is editor-in-chief of The Forum, a quarterly online publication highlighting important trial bar issues in Connecticut. Slager graduated from the University of Michigan Law School.



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ERIC J. STOCKMAN has extensive experience in professional and general liability defense matters. He regularly represents hospitals, doctors and local practice groups, as well as individual and corporate defendants, in all aspects of litigation, including medical malpractice, commercial liability, premises liability, trade secrets, and products liability. He has tried dozens of cases to successful conclusions, including medical malpractice, wrongful death, wrongful imprisonment, assault, sexual assault, fraud, wrongful termination, employment discrimination and premises liability. He also handles appellate work. Stockman earned his law degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 1994, and joined Neubert, Pepe & Monteith in 1998 after practicing at Wiggin & Dana in New Haven. He was recently inducted into the American Board of Trial Advocates.





WILLIAM J. SWEENEY is a partner in the New Britain law firm of Sweeney & Griffen. He is a graduate of Fairfield University and Suffolk University Law School. He has been in private practice since 1975. He is a past president of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association and a member of the American Board Trial Advocates. In his 37 years of practice, Sweeney has represented individual clients before boards, agencies and courts of Connecticut. He has tried numerous cases to verdict or judgment in both state and federal court. He also has appeared regularly before the Connecticut Supreme and Appellate Courts.



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FREDERIC S. URY, a board certified civil trial lawyer, is a founding partner of the law firm of Ury & Moskow LLC. For 35 years, he has concentrated his practice in criminal and civil trial practice. He is a past president of the Connecticut Bar Association, and was chairman of its Litigation Section from 1993 to 1996. He is a frequent lecturer to various bar associations and lawyer groups around the country on professionalism, ethics, and the Future of the Legal Profession. In 2010, he was appointed by the Judicial Branch to the Bar Examining Committee. Ury is chair of the Standing Committee on Professionalism for the American Bar Association, and was most recently named by ABA President Carolyn Lamm to the Ethics 20/20 Commission. Ury earned his JD degree from Suffolk University Law School in Boston in 1977.



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MICHAEL J. WALSH is a founder and principal of the law firm Moukawsher & Walsh. He has extensive trial experience handling plaintiffs' personal injury actions. His practice focuses primarily on complex matters involving catastrophic loss and injury, including medical malpractice and wrongful death lawsuits. He has served as an adjunct professor at the University of Connecticut School of Law and is frequently asked to testify before the Connecticut Legislature on issues pertaining to personal injury law. He is president of the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association. He is board certified as a Civil Trial Advocate. In 2010, he was inducted as a Fellow of the prestigious American College of Trial Lawyers. He received his law degree from the University of Connecticut in 1987.



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