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Important Legal Information for
Consumers



"Three Good Ways to Find a GREAT Lawyer"

Finding the "Right" lawyer can make a HUGE difference in the outcome of your case

JacksonandWilson.com
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Part of our Legal Series...

"Legal Tips for Consumers"

Questions or Comments?

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Introduction

*"Information is the currency of democracy."
- Thomas Jefferson, Third US President, Architect and Author*



The reason we wrote this book is to help people just like you. We wanted to take our more than two decades of experience and show you exactly what you need to do to protect your legal rights and find, hire, and interview the best lawyer for you and your family.

The fact of the matter is that it can be extremely challenging for people who need a lawyer to know how to find an experienced lawyer they can trust. With more than 1,000,000 lawyers in the United States (20% of them are located in California), it can be an overwhelming task to know where to start. After all, some lawyers write contracts and others practice bankruptcy law. Others handle nothing but criminal defense while some focus on estate planning. Lawyers are people and some are very good. Most make smart and good decisions. Unfortunately, like all people, others abuse alcohol, drugs, or even have criminal records.

We help victims of catastrophic injury and wrongful death. Having said that, the information and tools in this book can be used to find an excellent lawyer in your home town regardless of the type of law you need help with. That being said, we may refer to personal injury lawyers in the book but know that you can probably insert “criminal”, “estate planning”, “corporate” and almost every other kind of lawyer in place of the words “personal injury”.

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Special Note: Some of the information in this short ebook has been taken from our popular 98+ ebook entitled, “The Truth About Your California Personal Injury and Wrongful Death Case”. For more details or to read the complete ebook for free, simply go to <http://jacksonandwilson.com/books>

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OK. Let’s get started...

Although many personal injury victims, just like you, try to seek justice, most are not aware of the great myth that there is actually “liberty and justice” for all. The truth of the matter is that most people simply do not know how to protect their legal rights or can’t afford to protect themselves. Because of this, they are denied justice.

That's unfortunate because it doesn't have to be that way. Now here's some good news. Under the right circumstances and with a skilled lawyer, it is still possible to force the system to deliver justice.

We feel the "insider information" found in our books, including this one, will help you make smart decisions so that you can get all of the justice you and your family deserve in your personal injury or wrongful death case.

So where do you start? How can you find the right lawyer?

The tough part for most consumers is trying to figure out which lawyers are the good ones. Lawyers come in all shapes and sizes. As with any profession, you get the good with the bad. That's what makes the information in this book so useful.

Look, back in the early 1980's when we first started law school, we thought most lawyers were the same and basically did the same thing. We were under the general impression that once you graduated from law school and passed the bar, you'd be trained well enough to provide clients with quality representation and successfully take cases to trial.

Nothing could be further from the truth!

As law school progressed and while gaining experience clerking for many different attorneys, we eventually realized that as with doctors and other professionals, smart lawyers specialized in specific areas of law. Only with a great deal of effort and over a long period of time is a lawyer able to perfect his or her skill, ability, reputation, and success rate. We learned that a good tax attorney was not necessarily an effective trial attorney and also noticed that an attorney's ability to draft an air-tight contract for the sale of a business did not also mean that same attorney had strong negotiating skills in the conference room when handling a possible settlement in a complicated products liability case.

Out of all the different areas of law, what grabbed our attention and touched us emotionally was helping victims of personal injury and wrongful death. This is called personal injury law. An area of law that's all about helping people harmed because of the wrongful conduct of others. The idea of "championing the right to equal justice for all" really hit home for us in both our heart and soul.

Helping clients find peace in their devastated lives makes us feel good and for the past two decades, has kept us passionate about practicing personal injury law. We like helping others and we like putting our legal talents hard to work to make a difference in the lives of our clients.

As far as we know, this type of book has never before been written and so we hope you find its content useful and enlightening. When it's all said and done, we believe you'll find the advice found in this book as being brutally frank and straightforward. We're not going to sugarcoat our message or any of the information we pass along to you in these pages.

The truth of the matter is that the information in this book is so unique and honest that some lawyers may not agree with our philosophy of sharing this information with the general public. But no worries, these lawyers are probably the same guys and gals that you would never want to hire in the first place.

Most people have never had to hire a lawyer. They don't know where to start, how to find a good lawyer and once located, what questions to ask or qualifications to look for. This book was written to help solve these problems and to show personal injury victims how to find, interview and hire the "perfect" lawyer to help them win their case!

For example, here's a statistic most people are not aware of. Did you know that out of all of the lawyers in the U.S., less than 5% have obtained the highest "AV" rating in ethics and ability by the 140+ year old independent company of Martindale-Hubbell? Furthermore, most consumers are also not aware that less than 5% of all U.S. law firms are listed in the Martindale-Hubbell Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers.

Both of these independent ratings are conducted without the lawyer or law firm knowing that they are being reviewed by their peers (other lawyers and judges in the local community). And here's something every consumer should know-- lawyers are not allowed to spend money to "purchase" a positive rating. The Martindale-Hubbell ratings are truly an independent system consumers can and should use and trust when researching and selecting a lawyer.

Regardless of where you live, this book will help you find, interview and hire a legal stud and even more important, will help you avoid the legal duds. The further you drill down into and read this book (and our related books), the more you'll understand why we truly believe that hiring the "wrong" attorney to handle your personal injury case (or any other case for that matter) will get you the same kind of results as putting a screen door on a submarine. The end result is extremely predictable and probably disastrous!

One fact many injury victims are not aware of is that most lawyers who practice law simply do not know how to protect your interest and maximize the value of your personal injury case. One reason is that a majority of lawyers don't practice plaintiff personal injury or wrongful death law. They handle contracts, criminal defense, estate planning, bankruptcy, and other worthwhile and needed legal services.

Of those lawyers who do promote themselves as personal injury lawyers, truth be told, many have never settled a big case or even taken a case to trial. Worse yet, some personal injury lawyers have never even set foot inside a courtroom door!

The challenge for most personal injury victims is how to find an experienced and highly rated personal injury lawyer. The two questions we hear most is, "How can I find the right lawyer for me?" and "How do I know the lawyer I'm thinking about hiring is an experienced personal injury lawyer?"

Because you only have one chance to investigate, prepare, negotiate and eventually settle or try your personal injury or wrongful death case, it's critically important that you "get it right" the first time. There are no second chances!

The purpose of this book is to give you valuable information which will allow you to make smart decisions when finding and hiring a personal injury and wrongful death lawyer.

We've tried to write this book in a way that is easy to read and understand. The truth of the matter is that we wrote this book so that you would have good information and know exactly what questions you need to ask any attorney you are interviewing with the intention of possibly hiring for your personal injury case. We also wanted to give you important information you need to know before you ever discuss the facts of your case with an insurance company claims adjuster.

Please be advised and understand that it is not the purpose of this book to try and get you to hire our law firm. Frankly, we're glad to say that because of the hard work and effort we've put in to building our firm and strengthening our client and referral relationships, we have a very successful and busy law practice.

While the primary reason we wrote this book is to help a person or family find a good lawyer in their home town, another reason is to save us both valuable time.

You see, until this book was written, we were always required to try and explain all of this important information to a potential new client during an office meeting or short telephone call which, because of the vast amount of material involved, is similar to trying to give someone a haircut over the telephone... it just can't be done. By presenting this information in the form of a book, we do not need to have to worry about forgetting to tell you something during a rushed office meeting or phone call. You can take your time and read all this information on your own schedule.

Additionally, this book also allows us to share valuable information with people who have minor cases that we simply don't handle. It truly is a win-win tool providing the injured consumer with valuable information you may not be able to get anyplace else.

After you've read this book, get a highlighter and read it again marking up all the sentences and paragraphs you find useful. Share this powerful material with your family and friends so that they can make smart legal decisions too. After all, remember what Thomas Jefferson once said, "Information is the currency of democracy." When it comes to finding, interviewing and hiring a good lawyer, we think you can take all the information in this book to the bank!

As we mentioned above, we have to make sure our time is spent wisely with serving our existing clients. We limit our practice to helping victims of major catastrophic injury and

wrongful death cases. We do not and cannot represent people involved in minor accident cases.

This is not to imply that minor accident victims are not hurt and do not have rights. They do and they should take steps to protect their rights. Just as a surgeon makes a decision to limit his or her practice to heart or brain surgery (rather than knee or ankle), we too made a professional decision, many years ago, to focus our attention and efforts to help people and their families in matters involving major catastrophic injury and wrongful death cases.

Please keep in mind that although we don't handle small accident cases, we know many very good lawyers who do. Lawyers who are well respected and who have set up their offices in a slightly different fashion so that they can accommodate minor injury victims. If you've been involved in a minor accident and don't know what to do next, simply give us a call and we'll be happy to share their names and numbers with you.

That being said, we do want to help as many people as we can and honestly believe this book is the best way to accomplish our goal. Most of the information we would discuss and go over with you in our office is referenced in this book.

Read this book from cover to cover and you'll know more about your rights than most people who have already been through the entire personal injury or wrongful death claim, litigation, and trial process. You may even know more about personal injury or wrongful death law than a new attorney taking on his first personal injury case. This book is just that good!

We've written this book to answer these questions and many more. To give you information you can put to use right away to help protect your legal rights and to help you find a well respected and experienced personal injury and wrongful death lawyer to help you with your important case.

We trust you will find this information valuable and useful. Call us with any questions or needs. Also visit our web site (JacksonandWilson.com) for more good consumer tips and information.

TIPS

1. Use these information, resources and tools in this book to find a good lawyer. Information is "power" so use the power in this book to protect your legal rights!
2. If you need help finding a good lawyer in your city or state, give us a call. We'd be glad to help!

Three Good Ways to Find a GREAT Lawyer

Finding the "Right" lawyer can make a HUGE difference in the outcome of your case

Chapter

1

Most consumers don't have a clue about how to find a good lawyer. Hint- it's probably not the guy advertising on late night television or on the back of city buses and park benches.

When you select a lawyer who has the ability, expertise and good reputation to help you with your case, you will be maximizing your chances of a successful outcome. In personal injury and wrongful death cases, choosing an experienced lawyer who has an excellent reputation will make the other side's insurance company and defense attorney think twice about how they handle your claim.



In business, criminal defense, and family law cases, having the right lawyer on your side can be the difference of a win or loss. It really is as simple as that!

Because we focus on helping consumers who are seriously injured as a result of the wrongdoing of others, we've written this ebook with this fact in mind. Having said that, all three methods can and should be used to find a lawyer in your town to help you with almost any kind of legal matter.

In personal injury cases, injured consumers need an experienced attorney who has a strong passion for your case, your legal rights, and who specializes in representing people and families involved in personal injury and wrongful death cases. This means the attorney who is good at what he or she does and is passionate about helping victims. We're talking about a trial attorney who enjoys practicing law and enjoys taking cases to trial.

Why is this so important? Because skill, ability and reputation for trying cases are all important when it comes to investigating, litigating, settling or trying a personal injury case. Successful trial attorneys carefully balance and implement focus, expertise, perseverance, native ability and an affinity for negotiation and litigation that frankly, not every lawyer can muster.

The other side knows who these lawyers are. You probably don't. He are our favorite three ways you can level the playing field and find the very best lawyer in your city and state.

Approach No. 1- Personal Referrals From Qualified Sources

First of all, keep in mind that the right lawyer for you is someone who not only can provide you with the correct answers to all 9 questions outlined in our popular FREE ebook (instant online access or download) entitled, [“The Truth About Your California Personal Injury and Wrongful Death Case”](#), but is also someone you are comfortable with and who you can trust. If the attorney has made a good first impression with you, there’s a pretty good chance that he or she will also make a good first impression with the other side (insurance companies and defense attorneys) and if necessary, also to a judge and jury.

But how do you find this attorney? What resources are available?

The first thing we recommend that you do is look for an attorney who is recognized as being one of the “experts” in your town or area. Someone who meets all of the qualifications described in this ebook, and then some.

If you have friends or family who you respect and who were very satisfied with experiences they had with a personal injury attorney, you may want to start there. If you know and trust a good lawyer who handles other types of legal matters (for example, estate planning or criminal defense), ask him or her for the names and numbers of the top 2 or 3 lawyers in town who handle the type of law that you need help with. In personal injury and wrongful death cases, good lawyers know who they would hire if they needed the “best” personal injury lawyer in their area and most lawyers are happy to share these names with you.

Friends at work and even company supervisors or bosses may also be able to provide you with one or more names. Personal referrals are a great way to go. We have an excellent database with the names of highly rated personal injury attorneys all across the United States. Feel free to contact us if you would like the names of a couple of lawyers in your area to interview.

Approach No. 2- Martindale-Hubbell, AAJ, NTL or AVVO

If you are unable to get a personal referral from a trusted friend or professional acquaintance, go to Martindale-Hubbell (martindale.com), American Association for Justice (justice.org), The National Trial Lawyers (thenationaltriallawyers.com) or AVVO (avvo.com) web sites and do a search for the type of lawyer you need. The above sites primarily are focused on personal injury and wrongful death lawyers and cases. Hint- at the Martindale site, limit your search to “AV” rated lawyers. A top “AV” rating is an excellent indicator of the lawyer’s ability, reputation and ethics. It identifies a lawyer and firm as having (1) very

high to preeminent legal ability and (2) the highest level of expertise, experience, integrity and overall professional excellence.

Did someone you trust in Approach No. 1 give you a couple of names? If so, then you may also want to use the above web sites to research each lawyer and find out what their independent ratings are.

Approach No. 3- Contact Your Local Attorney Organization (Bar)

Another good way to find an experienced lawyer is to contact your local bar association (your local lawyer organization) and ask them for the names and numbers of the past two presidents of that organization. Next, contact the law offices of these individuals and ask the question, “Do you handle personal injury cases (or whatever type of legal matter you need help with)?” If not ask, “Who would you hire to represent your family in a personal injury case?”

These lawyers are in high demand and extremely busy. While you may not be able to speak with the attorney directly, his or her secretary or assistant should be able to share the names and numbers of outstanding personal injury lawyers with you who practice in your home town.

TIPS

1. Just because someone “knows” and shares the name of a lawyer with you doesn’t mean that lawyer is any good at practicing law or trying cases. Use the above steps to investigate further.
2. Regardless of who is recommended to you, make sure you are comfortable with the lawyer and able to “connect” with him or her. Some lawyers have dynamic personalities and are exciting to be around. Others have the personality of a wet dish rag. Following these tips to make sure you find the right lawyer who will make you proud!

For More Information...

We've been helping victims of personal injury and wrongful death since 1986. Chances are, we can help you too. If you have any questions, please give us a call (800-661-7044). We'll answer your questions and help if we can.

To learn more, please feel free to review all of the client resources (blog posts, ebooks, reports, videos, audios...) at our website 24/7. [Visit JacksonandWilson.com](http://www.JacksonandWilson.com)

Our Senior Partners

Experience, passion and honesty.

Chapter

2

Our senior partners are experienced and well respected. They enjoy what helping people and treasure the opportunity to practice law.

Mitch and Lisa each have more than two decades of individual experience helping injured consumers, just like you, with their personal injury and wrongful death cases. Their clients receive excellent service and consistent solid results because of the experience, reputation, and resources Mitch and Lisa bring to each and every case.

It's difficult to get to know someone from simply reading about them in a book or on a web site. We think the best way to get a good feeling or idea about whether or not they are the right lawyers for you is to simply give them a call and talk to them on the phone. Usually in the first couple of minutes you can tell if there's a "connection" and whether or not you'd like them to take a closer look at your case.

With this in mind, here's a bit more information about our Senior Partners, Mitch Jackson and Lisa Wilson.



Lisa M. Wilson



Lisa is a true "California girl" who was born and raised in the high desert town of Lancaster, California. She is one of three daughters and while growing up, her parents owned and operated a well known dairy distributorship servicing many Southern California cities and towns.

The Wilson family was very active in the local Lancaster community participating each year in numerous community service activities and all the big fundraisers. In high school, Lisa was a multi-sport scholar athlete and to this day her jersey still hangs in her high school gym.

Lisa started her college career playing volleyball at Long Beach State and then transferred to the University of Southern California. At USC, Lisa developed an interest in the law and studied journalism and sports information. She also pledged the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority. In 1982, she graduated with a major in journalism and minor in sports information.

Before law school, Lisa worked with a prominent sports agent believing she would eventually enjoy a career representing professional athletes. While in law school, Lisa won the prestigious mock trial championship and also had the opportunity to study law abroad at Cambridge University in England.

Lisa graduated from Western State School of Law in 1986 and worked for several years at large and prestigious law firm practicing insurance defense. Overtime, Lisa realized that her interest in the law focused more on helping victims of personal injury and wrongful death rather than representing and defending insurance companies and big business. She also had a keen interest in owning her own business and law firm.

Eventually, Lisa made the jump to the “other side of the fence” and in 1988, she and Mitch joined forces and became partners in the firm of Jackson & Wilson, Inc. That year, she and Mitch were also married and today, she remains an active and full time senior partner in the nationally recognized firm.

Past and present activities, organizations, and recognitions include the following:

- “AV” Rated by Martindale-Hubbell (highest rating in ethics and ability)
- Martindale-Hubbell Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers (only 5% of all law firms)
- The National Trial Lawyers (the Top 100 Trial Lawyers from each state)
- Private Arbitrator and Mediator
- Orange County Bar Association (OCBA Masters Division)
- Orange County Trial Lawyers Association
- American Association for Justice
- California State Bar
- American Bar Association
- Consumer Attorneys of California
- Multiple time member of the Million Dollar Advocates Forum (obtained one or more verdicts or settlements in excess of \$1,000,000)
- Past President of Monarch Beach Rotary Club and Paul Harris Fellow
- Lisa has also litigated and resolved numerous seven figure cases including one of Orange County’s largest first party insurance bad faith cases.

Jon Mitchell “Mitch” Jackson



Mitch was born in Tucson, Arizona. For almost 30 years his parents and family owned and operated the Saddle and Surrey Guest Ranch, an internationally known resort destination.

At the ranch, Mitch's parents entertained guest from around the globe which included Walt Disney, John Wayne, 60 Minutes commentator, Morley Safer, and tennis stars Poncho Gonzales and Rod Laver.

Mitch's family was active in promoting tourism in Arizona. His mother was featured on the cover of Newsweek magazine and his father served the community by being involved with numerous local and national organizations such as Rotary, the Chamber of Commerce, and most of the major Travel Associations.

Mitch grew up riding horses, hunting and fishing. In high school, he played football and baseball but his true interest gravitated to motocross, scuba diving in the Sea of Cortez, and competing as a ranked tennis player throughout Arizona and California.

After high school, Mitch attended the University of Arizona and studied civil engineering for two years. His internal passion for business, marketing, and the law, eventually led to Mitch transferring over to the business school and graduating with a degree in business administration. During college, Mitch paid the bills by waiting tables and tending bar at the ranch. On the weekends, he earned his expert hang gliding pilot rating and spent most of his time flying high above most of the mountains in Southern Arizona.

After graduating in 1980, Mitch took a front desk management position at Caesars in Lake Tahoe, California. After meeting and getting to know several local lawyers on the ski slopes, Mitch's interest began to change and soon law school became his calling.

Mitch attended and put himself through Western State School of Law and during this time, he clerked for many different lawyers and firms. He found his calling and passion when he started working as a law clerk for a personal injury lawyer. It was then that Mitch knew that he wanted to use the law to help and protect injured consumers and their families for the remainder of his legal career.

Mitch was admitted to the California Bar in 1986 and immediately opened up his own practice representing victims of personal injury and wrongful death. As mentioned above, Mitch and Lisa combined forces in 1988 and since then, have never looked back. Twenty five years later they have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of thousands of people and their families.

Today Mitch and Lisa continue to practice law on a full time basis. They enjoy mentoring new lawyers on litigation and trial practice. In their spare time, both Lisa and Mitch are

actively involved in Rotary International and enjoy supporting their two children in school, community service and athletics.

Past and present activities, organizations, and recognitions include the following:

- Orange County 2009 Trial Lawyer of the Year [nominated again in 2011]
- Southern California Super Lawyer
- “AV” Rated by Martindale-Hubbell (top rating in ethics and ability)
- Martindale-Hubbell Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers (less than 5% of all firms)
- AVVO “Superb” 10.0/10 rating
- Nominated CAOC 2011 "Street Fighter of the Year"
- Nominated CAOC 2012 “Street Fighter of the Year”
- Nominated FOR 2013 CLAY Award (CA Lawyer of the Year)
- Law Dragon- “Top Rating”
- Judge Pro Tempore- Orange County Superior Court
- Appointed Arbitrator- Orange County Bar Association
- Appointed Arbitrator- Orange County Superior Court
- Private Arbitrator and Mediator
- Orange County Bar Association
- Orange County Trial Lawyers Association
- American Association for Justice
- The National Trial Lawyers (The Top 100 Trial Lawyers from each state)
- California State Bar Association
- American Bar Association
- Consumer Attorneys of California
- Multiple time member of the Million Dollar Advocates Forum (obtained multiple verdicts and settlements in excess of \$1,000,000)
- Successfully passed written exam offered by the National Board of Trial Advocacy (NBTA) for Trial Attorney Certification (qualifications- extensive trial experience, formal recommendation by numerous opposing trial counsel and trial judges)
- Past President of Monarch Beach Rotary Club and Paul Harris Fellow. Mitch has also served as an Assistant District Rotary Governor for Rotary District 5320. In 2010, he was nominated by his club for the award of “Business Rotarian of the Year”
- Daily Journal Profile- Mr. Jackson’s litigation talents, techniques and wrongful death trial verdict profiled in the July 28, 1995, edition of the California Daily Journal

TIPS

1. There is no substitute for experience. Make sure any lawyer you hire is extremely experienced in the area of law that you need help with.

Contact Info, Web Sites, Blogs, and Social Media



We've been helping victims of personal injury and wrongful death since 1986. Chances are, we can help you too. Give us a call, visit our other web sites and blogs and make sure to "connect" with us online!

We enjoy answering helping people and answering legal questions. We also like staying in touch using email and social media. Please feel free to use the following resources to "connect" with us and to also stay current on important legal issues.

Jackson & Wilson, Inc. (Since 1986)

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Let's Stay Connected!



Consider this our personal invitation for us to get to know each other better. Please visit our [web site](#) and also connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Google+](#). Read our free [books](#), [reports](#), watch [videos](#) or listen to [audios](#).

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