



TREMONT & SHELDON P.C.

Personal Injury Trial Lawyers Serving Connecticut for Over 40 Years

Fall 2008

Injury & Compensation Report

Specialty Areas:

- Auto & Motorcycle Injuries
- Catastrophic Injuries
- Defective Products
- Legal Malpractice
- Medical Malpractice
- Premises Liability
- Sexual Abuse
- Workplace Injuries
- Wrongful Death

All materials in this newsletter are for purposes of general information only – nothing in the newsletter should be considered legal advice. Individuals are urged to seek the advice of an attorney before taking any action on matters reviewed in this newsletter.

APPROXIMATELY 50 MILLION DOLLARS COLLECTED FOR CHILDHOOD VICTIMS OF SEX ABUSE

It is December of 1992 and T. Paul Tremont, a veteran trial attorney for over 35 years, and his law partner Cindy Robinson are meeting with new clients late one evening. It is a lengthy meeting and is followed by an intense investigation. The claims being made by the clients are startling and controversial. This meeting marks the beginning of **Tremont & Sheldon's** representation of victims of childhood sexual abuse. It is a fight that has spanned well over a decade and uniformly involves a betrayal of the worst kind: a child is horribly deceived and forever harmed by a person in a position of power, authority, and trust.

At first, most of the survivors of sex abuse whom **Tremont & Sheldon** represent were molested as children by their local parish priest. As time goes on, **Tremont & Sheldon** investigates and represents individuals who were molested by biological parents, stepparents, teachers, coaches, and family friends. Early on, Attorney Douglas Mahoney becomes part of the team of **Tremont & Sheldon** lawyers fighting for these victims and Attorney Jason Tremont also joins the team. In a small firm of six attorneys, more than half of the attorneys have always been involved in this cause.

In 1993, **Tremont & Sheldon** brings one of the first Connecticut clergy

abuse lawsuits. Thereafter, additional lawsuits are filed on behalf of other survivors. All of the victims come from families with strong ties with the Church. At that time, T. Paul Tremont states, *"The astounding fact is that what appeared to be an isolated complaint, now appears to be a sexual epidemic which has run the gauntlet of the Catholic Dioceses from Greenwich through Shelton and from Norwalk through New Canaan which is being covered up by Bishop Curtis, Bishop Egan and other leaders of the Church."* Sadly, Attorney T. Paul Tremont passes away during his crusade against clergy sexual abuse.

To date, **Tremont & Sheldon** has represented well over 100 victims of childhood sexual abuse against area dioceses. In August 1999, a claim that occurs on Bishop Egan's watch is brought against the Diocese of Bridgeport and Bishop Egan, involving the offenses of another priest. Cardinal Egan is deposed twice in connection with these claims. In March of 2001, **Tremont & Sheldon** reaches a *confidential global settlement* with the Diocese of Bridgeport and its predecessor bishop, Cardinal Edward Egan. In October of 2003, **Tremont & Sheldon** reaches a *21 million dollar global settlement* with the Diocese of Bridgeport on behalf of another group of victims. In October of 2005, **Tremont & Sheldon** reaches its first global settlement with the Archdiocese of Hartford. This is a *22 million dollar*



settlement where **Tremont & Sheldon** represents 15 of the 43 victims. To date, **Tremont & Sheldon** has collected approximately *50 million dollars* on behalf of victims of child molestation.

In its initial response, the Diocese of Bridgeport files gag orders in court preventing public access to information relating to the sexual abuses by its priests. Attorneys for the diocese threaten Attorney T. Paul Tremont regarding the claims that are being made and at that time, the community as a whole is not ready to accept them. This skepticism changes dramatically over the next several years as additional survivors of childhood clergy sex abuse come forward.

From the beginning, **Tremont & Sheldon** claims that there is an ongoing cover-up regarding clergy sex abuse in this diocese. Instead of removing the perpetrator from the priesthood, he would be summarily transferred to another parish. **Tremont & Sheldon** believes that the Diocese of Bridgeport, including Cardinal Egan,

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HEART & HYPERTENSION ACT – FIREFIGHTERS & POLICE OFFICERS TAKE NOTE

If you are a uniformed member of a paid municipal **fire department** or a regular member of a paid municipal **police department** who was hired before July 1, 1996, you may qualify for benefits under Connecticut's Heart & Hypertension Act (C.G.S. Sec. 7-433c).

Under this Act, firefighters or police officers who successfully pass a pre-employment physical examination which fails to reveal any evidence of hypertension (high blood pressure) or heart disease and later become disabled by one of these conditions, are presumed to have suffered that condition in the performance of their duties, whether or not it happened on the job.

Once these eligibility requirements are met, you are entitled to two separate and distinct benefits:

1. Compensation benefits and medical care in the same amount and manner as that provided under the Workers' Compensation Act; and
2. Retirement or survivor benefits from the municipal or state retirement system.

You must file a claim for benefits under the Heart & Hypertension Act within *one year*. Claims for heart disease usually have a clear date from which to file, i.e., a heart attack. Claims for hypertension, however, are not as clear as there is not a specific event that triggers the onset of that condition. Generally, if you are diagnosed by your physician with hypertension, or are placed on medication for hypertension, or have repeated high blood pressure readings, you should file a claim as soon as possible.

Tremont & Sheldon has a proven track record of successfully representing firefighters and police officers on Heart & Hypertension Act claims and has collected millions of dollars for them. Please do not hesitate to contact **Attorney Robert Sheldon** with questions or concerns about whether you qualify for benefits under this law.



Is there a topic you would like to see covered in our next newsletter or do you have comments/questions?

Please call or email:

Felecia Tremont at
335-5145 or
ftremont@tremont-sheldon.com

We look forward to hearing from you!

APPROXIMATELY 50 MILLION DOLLARS (continued from page 1)

allowed known sex abusers to continue on as active priests, enabling these offenders to have contact with children.

"In connection with our cases, we have situations where the diocese is informed of the priest's sexual misconduct and merely transfers him to another parish. This conduct is not only shocking but reckless," says Attorney Cindy Robinson.

All of the global settlements are reached following lengthy mediations where United States Magistrate Judge William I. Garfinkel of

the United States District Court agrees to serve as the mediator.

During this time, attorneys at **Tremont & Sheldon** and several of their clients travel to Hartford to persuade Connecticut legislators to extend the statute of limitations. In May of 2002, the legislators agree and give victims until their 48th birthday in which to file civil claims. **Tremont & Sheldon** is also one of the first firms in the state to establish a comprehensive website where it carefully catalogs complaints against priests and the parishes with which they were affiliated. *"We have given victims a voice and in doing so we can help change the behavior of the Church and finally force religious*

organizations to acknowledge responsibility for the past," says Attorney Jason Tremont.

It has been a privilege to represent the sexual abuse survivors, who have shown incredible courage during this process. *"We hope that our settlements will in some way assist our clients in their ongoing healing process,"* says Attorney Douglas Mahoney.

The effect of being sexually exploited, abused, or assaulted as a child will leave permanent scars on all of these clients. However, we are confident that in

coming forward and speaking out about the terrible things that happened to them as children, they have undoubtedly raised the public's awareness of these abuses, resulting in the formation and implementation of sexual abuse prevention policies. Hopefully, vigilant enforcement of these policies will prevent future assaults upon children.

In connection with all of our settlements, **Tremont & Sheldon** asks area dioceses to take whatever steps are necessary in order to laicize (permanent removal from the priesthood) any priest who has sexually exploited, abused, or assaulted a child. Suspension from the priesthood is not enough.

Congratulations Jason Tremont and Douglas Mahoney!



Attorney Jason Tremont



Tremont & Sheldon, P.C. is pleased to announce that Attorney Jason Tremont and Attorney Douglas Mahoney have recently been recognized for their

outstanding work in personal injury trial law. Attorney Tremont has been recognized by *The Best Lawyers in America*® and Attorney Mahoney has been recognized by *The American Board of Trial Advocates* (ABOTA), some of the highest honors attorneys can receive from their peers.

Both organizations are highly selective. Because lawyers are not required or allowed to pay a fee to be included, a listing in *Best Lawyers* is widely regarded within the legal profession as a high honor conferred on a lawyer by his or her peers. For 25 years, *Best Lawyers* lists have earned the respect of the profession, the media, and the public, as the most

reliable, unbiased source of legal referrals anywhere. *The American Board of Trial Advocates* only gives accreditation to less than one percent of all licensed lawyers in the United States.

Congratulations to Attorneys Jason Tremont and Douglas Mahoney on your recent accomplishments. For over 10 years, Attorneys Robert Sheldon and Cindy Robinson have been recognized by and are members of *The Best Lawyers in America*®. They are also members of *The American Board of Trial Advocates* for their outstanding work in personal injury law. It is unprecedented that a small



Attorney Douglas Mahoney



firm would have so many attorneys in these prestigious organizations.

Congratulations to all our attorneys on their achievements in their field and their unfaltering dedication for protecting and serving the injured.

TREMONT & SHELDON WELCOMES 2 NEW MEMBERS OF THE FIRM

Meet Lauren Vasil & Sharon Lawler



Attorney Lauren Vasil

Please join us in welcoming two new members of the Tremont & Sheldon family.

We would like to introduce Lauren A. Vasil who was born and raised in Fairfield County. She received her undergraduate degree from

the University of Connecticut and her Juris Doctorate from the University of Connecticut School of Law.

Prior to joining the firm, Ms. Vasil worked full time as a law clerk and interned for the Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel, assisting in attorney disciplinary matters.

Since joining the firm, Ms. Vasil has been involved in all aspects of personal injury law.

Ms. Vasil is admitted to practice before all state courts in the State of Connecticut. She is a member of the Greater Bridgeport Bar Association, Connecticut Bar Association, and the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association.



Legal Asst. Sharon Lawler

We are also pleased to introduce Sharon Lawler. Ms. Lawler joined Tremont & Sheldon in April 2008 as a legal assistant.

She has extensive experience in personal injury work and received her Associates degree from Stone School of Business.

Giving back to the community....

Tremont & Sheldon is proud to support the community. We not only give back to the community by the cases we represent, but also by the many charitable organizations that we support through donations and volunteerism.

Through the years we have been the proud supporter of many organizations including MADD, The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services (CONN SACS), American Brain Tumor Association, The Greater Bridgeport Old-timers Athletic Association, Appalachia Service Project, and The Center for Women and Families, to name a few. Our attorneys and staff have collected food for the less fortunate, distributed bike helmets to children, and volunteered with Boy Scouts of America.

TREMONT & SHELDON P.C.

64 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Tel: 203-335-5145

In State Toll Free:
877-335-5145

Fax: 203-366-8503

Email:

info@Tremont-Sheldon.com

Attorneys:

Robert R. Sheldon
Cindy L. Robinson
Frank A. Bailey
Jason E. Tremont
Douglas P. Mahoney
Lauren A. Vasil

Legal Assistant:

Sharon L. Lawler

Please visit us at:

www.tremont-sheldon.com

Free parking directly on our premises across from City Hall.

To be placed on our mailing list, contact us via phone or email.

Unsafe products, foods, and medicines cause thousands of injuries a year

With the holidays approaching, it is hard to know what toys are safe. Several of our attorneys and staff took part in the Thomas the Tank Engine toy recall and found a great online resource: www.recalls.gov.

This website covers consumer products, car

safety seats, motor vehicles, boats, foods, medicine, cosmetics, and environmental products.

It has links to all major governmental agencies that provide this information and is continually updated.

If you believe that you were injured by a defective product,

food, or medicine, please contact Jason Tremont at 203-335-5145 for a consultation.



Tremont & Sheldon Thanks Its Interns

Tremont & Sheldon would like to extend a big thank you to our interns: Douglas Henrici and Julia Mazzeo.

Douglas and Julia were a wonderful addition to the Tremont & Sheldon team.

Douglas is a recent graduate from Quinnipiac University and plans to study law. Julia is a junior at Marist College and plans to study abroad in Spain.



About Our Organization...

Tremont & Sheldon has represented thousands of injured persons. A number of our attorneys are recognized by **The Best Lawyers in America®** and have the highest possible rating from **Martindale-Hubbell®**.



Super Lawyers



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64 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, CT 06604