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Holding the Principle of People First Above All Else

Jassim & Associates: Plaintiff's Representation for

REAL PEOPLE with REAL PROBLEMS

by Jennifer Hadley

“IN our country, so much is controlled by money and power, including the power of the government. Lawyers who represent people in the courtroom, in jury trials, have the power to fight against enormous billion dollar companies and to achieve justice for real people who otherwise have no voice. In the end, this is what I love about being a lawyer—helping those people who do not have the power to help themselves,” says Pajman Jassim, Founder of Jassim & Associates located in Emerald Plaza in downtown San Diego.

“We serve our clients, not just the bottom line. We truly care about the outcomes for each and every client and case, and make sure the client is happy with the results,” he continues. To that end, the clients and cases that Jassim and his colleagues take on include injury cases, employment cases of all types, and general civil matters including construction litigation, real estate disputes, family law matters, professional negligence, trust and estate litigation, and others. However, Jassim is incredibly forthcoming when explaining that he adheres to a quality over quantity practice philosophy, and is therefore selective about the cases he and his team will take.

“I believe everyone deserves representation and legal counsel, but not every client is the right fit for every attorney, and vice versa. For that reason, just as prospective clients are selective about the lawyer they choose, we try to be selective about our clients as well. The goal is to be as certain as possible that we are the right firm for the case, and that the case fits within our

Pajman Jassim Holds the Principle of People First Above All Else.

ideals as attorneys.”

Bar none, those ideals that Jassim holds closest to his heart, and the principles that guide him in his practice is the belief that his primary responsibility is to be the best lawyer he can be. “As a plaintiff’s lawyer, I have been taught to first and foremost care about the client. To determine why the harms and losses suffered by a particular client are worthy of representation, and most importantly why their story should matter to a jury. After all, if I don’t care, why should a juror take time out of their life and care about my client, much less give them some justice?”

“No case is perfect and I believe that no client is perfect. Accidents and unfortunate things happen to regular people, with regular lives, with regular histories and life stories. I’ve been taught to embrace the entire story of a client’s life and to use their story as a tool to obtain justice for them.”

Roots of Passion for Plaintiff’s Work

Jassim’s desire to help others has been a part of who he is for as long as he can remember. Similarly, his dedication to ongoing educational opportunities—whether through attending the prestigious Gerry Spence Trial Lawyers College, learning from his peers through collaboration, or even learning from his opponents—is in his DNA.

“I was raised in a household that placed an enormous amount of importance on education. My parents were born and raised in Iran, and came to the United States in the early 1970s. My father worked his way up from being a busboy to



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a restaurant owner and entrepreneur. I believe that since my parents worked so hard to raise my brother, sister and I here in the United States, we were given opportunities to receive a great education,” Jassim says.

“My father, is and was a scholar in his own right, collecting books, writing many articles and now books. Ideas flowed freely and I was raised in an environment where no idea, paradigm, or point of view’s ‘truth’ was taken for granted. There was a lot of debating in our household. I had no interest in science, architecture, engineering or other careers besides law. As far as I can remember, I wanted to be an attorney. I embraced the fact that in law you must advocate for a position and your interpretation of how the facts and law may be favorable to your client,” he explains. “Growing up, some would say I was argumentative and tended to challenge some of the rules and guidelines that my childhood authority figures had in place. I was a bit of a loud-mouth,” he concedes sheepishly. “Law is a good career for that. If you aren’t afraid to challenge authority, you can do well.”

Tried and Tested Trial Techniques

After earning his degree in Economics from UC Berkeley, Jassim immediately entered the University of San Diego School of Law, graduating in 2003. He quickly earned a position as a litigation associate at a small firm, which he credits with getting him right into the action of the courtroom. “I was thrown to the wolves a little bit,” he laughs. Still, he wouldn’t change his early experiences for anything. “Working at smaller firms has a unique advantage. I was in court as soon as I passed the bar. My first cases were all throughout California including San Francisco, San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange County, Los Angeles and Federal Courts throughout the state.”

He is candid when saying, “It was overwhelming to try complicated civil matters in courtrooms so early in my career. But it taught me very early on about the pressures and the skills required to be a great litigation and trial attorney.”

In the years that followed he continued to represent business clients and individuals in injury and employment matters, and by 2009, he found himself invited to attend Gerry Spence’s Trial Lawyers College. From there his passion for plaintiff’s work multiplied exponentially.

By the next year, Jassim says there was no way that he could continue to practice law the way he felt driven to practice law, if he stayed with the firm he’d been with for five years. “I had great relationships with numerous clients at the firm where I was practicing, but after seven years in civil practice, I decided that the best way to serve clients and achieve my ideal practice was to establish my own firm. It would allow me the discretion to help any client I wanted in a manner that served the client. I would have the freedom and ability to accept cases that I believed in, and to decline those that I did not believe were well suited for me,” he says sincerely.

Emphasis on Education, Collaboration with Colleagues

“I didn’t advertise my new practice or try to take clients from my previous practice with me. I felt that would be unfair to the firm that I was a part of and helped build. So, when I started I had no clients and no employees. I had always believed that the best advertising for a lawyer is to be a great lawyer. That means being a compassionate attorney, an accessible attorney and taking the time to explain complicated legal issues in a clear and simple manner so your clients have the ability to understand and provide meaningful input into their case,” he explains.

Jassim found that the strategy worked. Successes in his first few cases led to referrals to many others. Today, more than five years later, Jassim is still focusing on injury cases, employment cases and consumer matters, and maintains his core conviction that “it is absolutely essential for clients to know their lawyer is a sincere advocate and protector of their interests. I don’t think there’s anything worse than a lawyer who is lukewarm towards their client. Most people don’t need a lawyer every day, so when they do, it means that something significant occurred in their life and they need your help. You have to give everything you’ve got to help that person. To me, that is a great lawyer.”

Jassim certainly gives everything he’s got to his clients, whether he is helping a person who has been injured or helping an employee who has been wronged. “As a civil litigator and business litigation attorney I’m not aware of any attorneys who also have a deep interest and desire to represent individuals in employment and injury matters. By the same token I’m not aware of any of my colleagues in the Plaintiff’s bar that handle the variety of business and general civil litigation cases that I do,” he says. Yet he sees striking similarities between the employment and injury cases in particular. “The most rewarding cases always involve representing an individual or family who’ve suffered some harm. Attorneys cannot undo the terrible things that our clients have endured, but we can fight to have life’s tough problems turned into something positive or at least make things more equitable or comfortable,” he says.

When it comes to that fight, Jassim is quick to give credit to his fellow attorneys in organizations such as CASD, CAOC, and fellow alumni from Gerry Spence’s Trial Lawyers College. “There have been a number of times that I’ve teamed up with another lawyer, from TLC. I know that they have been trained the same way and will handle the cases with the same level of commitment, creativity and dedication to the client. Last year for example, I teamed up with a mentor of mine, Benjamin Bunn, on a significant brain injury case, and I always reach out to fellow trial lawyer across the country to brainstorm and work on cases. In this day and age, if you want to give your client the best chance at justice, you have to use every resource at your disposal. Often that means picking up the phone and talking to other lawyers no matter where they are, and teaming up with them if the case calls for that,” he says.

“As trial lawyers, a lot of us are in small firms, but through Consumer Attorneys of San Diego, and Consumer Attorneys of California, we can band together, so it is as if you have huge firm backing you. We are out here protecting often single human beings, members of our community, and we are sending

a message to large corporations that it is not ok to be careless, or to break the rules because you put profits before the personal safety of the community,” he says.

But Jassim doesn’t single out his fellow trial lawyers in the Plaintiff’s bar for supporting him, and his clients. Instead he raves about the civility and general friendliness of the entire San Diego legal community citing opponents as an additional source of inspiration and support.

“I get a lot of referrals from fellow attorneys who practice in other areas. For example, many of my friends are criminal defense attorneys, and estate planning attorneys. Every year we happily pay out thousands of dollars to fellow lawyers who refer us cases. Throughout my years in practice, referrals have turned out to be a large part of our business, and we are happy about that. I don’t think there’s a higher compliment than a referral. It means other lawyers are confident in your abilities and that they would hire you themselves.”

Finally, Jassim also says that the ability to brainstorm with his wife, personal injury attorney Parisima Roshanzamir has been invaluable in seeking justice for his clients. “It is great to have



your life partner understand the nuances of being an attorney and sharing ideas about cases. We chose not to work together, because we wanted a divide between our law practices and our personal life, and neither of us wanted to wind up being the other's boss," he says with a laugh. "I can easily say however, that more than once her perspective has made me view a case in a different light."

Regarding the future for Jassim, and his growing team of attorneys, paralegals and office staff, suffice to say that all signs point to continued growth and victories. Jassim has already been named a 2015 *Super Lawyers Rising Star*, in addition to being selected as one of *San Diego's Best Attorneys 2015* by *San Diego Metro* magazine. He maintains a perfect 10.0 Avvo Rating and was named a 2015 Avvo Clients' Choice winner. With recent wins including a rear-end auto collision for \$2 million, an illegal and unfair practices by the nation's largest bank case surpassing \$700K in recovery, and construction defect cases, commercial real estate cases and medical malpractice cases with awards or settlements in the six figures; Jassim is not only optimistic about the future of his firm, he's excited about the opportunity to help more and more plaintiffs.

"We just moved into our new office at Emerald Plaza. I see the new courthouse being built every day and I'm truly excited to be literally at the center of all of the action. We have the experience and expertise to handle a variety of civil matters. We are focused on representing real people with real problems in their fight against insurance companies and large corporations. If I can advance a client's life somehow after a harm is done, it is a small silver lining for them. It is not my goal to operate a large firm for the sake of having a large firm or prestige. It is my goal to achieve great results for deserving clients." ■

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EXPERIENCE



» **EDUCATION**

- University of San Diego School of Law, Juris Doctor, Law 2000 – 2003
- UC Berkeley, Economics, 1998 – 2000

» **AWARDS**

- Rising Star, Super Lawyers - 2015
- Avvo Rating, 10.0 - 2015
- Winner, San Diego's Best Attorneys Awards, San Diego Metro magazine - 2015
- Finalist, Rising Star category, General Counsel Awards, San Diego Business Journal - 2015

» **ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS**

- Member, Consumer Attorneys of San Diego - 2015
- Member, Consumer Attorneys of California - 2015
- Member, American Association for Justice - 2015
- Member, State Bar of California - 2015
- Member, San Diego County Bar Association - 2015
- Los Angeles County Bar Association - 2015
- Member, Orange County Bar Association - 2015
- United States District Court: Southern, Eastern, Central and Northern Districts - 2015
- United States Circuit Court of Appeals: 9th Circuit - 2015