

Electronic Newsletter

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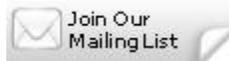
On May 29, 2008, Rev. Kathleen Crockford, former pastor of the Westerly-Pawcatuck Congregational Church, was rear-ended by an 80,000 lb. tractor-trailer truck while stopped at the intersection of Route 1 and 1A (Elm St.) in Stonington. The collision and resulting traumatic brain injury would forever change her life and leave her permanently disabled. On June 21, 2012, after an eight-day trial in Bridgeport federal court, a jury returned a verdict in her favor for \$2,523,500 (\$1,273,500 economic damages and \$1,250,000 non-economic damages). The case was tried by [Attorney Scott D. Camassar](#) and [Attorney Stephen M. Reck](#) (with assistance from [Attorney Mike McDonnell](#) and lots of back-in-the-office support from Kyle, Sarah, and Donna!).

The collision occurred while the defendant, Larry Spencer, was on his way to deliver a load of steel for his employer, Metals USA of Seekonk, MA. Witnesses did not see him slow down before he collided with the back of Rev. Crockford's VW Beetle and pushed it into a third vehicle. Mr. Spencer, who saw the stopped vehicles from as much as 1300' away prior to the collision, claimed his brakes failed and that he could not stop after applying his emergency brakes. Police determined the brakes were fully functional and found no evidence the emergency brakes had been applied. Mr. Spencer drove the vehicle away from the scene.



Rev. Crockford was flown by Life Star to Hartford Hospital on account of her life-threatening injuries. She was released after four days, after which she was followed by the Hartford Hospital Head Injury Program for two years. She continues to suffer headaches, vertigo, fatigue, lack of stamina, lack concentration and attention, memory loss, slow mental processing, difficulty finding words and speaking fluently, irritability and depression. A two-day defense neuropsychological exam confirmed that her traumatic brain injury is permanent and that she suffers all of the symptoms and problems of which she complains. She requires daily medication to help improve concentration and deal with depression and has to nap every day just to function.

At the time of the collision, Rev. Crockford typically worked 70-80 hours/week as the full-time solo pastor of her church and as a part-time book editor, earning an average of about \$65,000/year. She was planning to lead her church well into the future, for as long as she was healthy. As a result of the traumatic brain injury, this formerly high-functioning woman has been unable to return to any work, and has been trying to define a "new normal." She incurred about \$84,000 in



"Personal injury trial lawyers are in the rare position of being able to level the playing field to help people in the war against organized money: insurance companies, corporations, healthcare providers, common carriers, manufacturers, cities, states, and government."

-- Phil Corboy, Chicago trial attorney who died this month at the age of 87.

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Report: State Laws Could Do More to Prevent Injuries

"Millions of injuries could be prevented every year if states adopted and enforced a set of laws and health policies with proven track records for saving lives," says a report released last month, "but many states are reluctant to do so when personal freedoms are at stake and as revenue continues to decline." Linda Degutis, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Injury Center, which was not involved with the new report, stated, "We know injuries are preventable and we'd certainly rather prevent them than deal with the aftermath, which often results in death or long-term disability." Read [more](#).

Recall Central

To read about recent recalls and product safety news from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission,

medical bills, and still takes multiple medications costing an average of \$150/month. Multiple witnesses testified to the ways her quality of life has been severely diminished and how she is but "a shell" of her former self.

The defendants offered \$1.1 million prior to trial, which increased to \$1.4 million during the trial.

Driving Simulator Teaches Lessons of Distracted Driving

USA Today reported that advocacy groups around the country "are turning to a driving simulation program that focuses on the long-term consequences of distracted and drunken driving. One Simple Decision, created by Virtual Driver Interactive Inc. (VDI), one of the nation's largest driving simulator manufacturers, seeks to modify driver behavior by showing drivers what can happen if they have a crash while driving under the influence or texting while driving." Read [more](#).

2011 Motorcycle Deaths Stay Flat

A report by the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) found no progress was made in reducing motorcyclist deaths in 2011. Based upon preliminary data from 50 states and the District of Columbia, GHSA projected that motorcycle fatalities will remain at about 4,500 in 2011, the same level as 2010. Meanwhile, earlier this month, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration projected that overall motor vehicle fatalities declined 1.7 percent in 2011, reaching their lowest level since 1949. Motorcycle deaths remain one of the few areas in highway safety where progress is not being made. Read [more](#).



Report: Graduated Licensing Laws Save Lives

[The Washington Post](#) reported that even though "fatal crash rates of teen drivers have plunged in recent years, a new report from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) and the Highway Loss Data Institute (HLDI) shows that states can significantly reduce teen fatalities and collision rates by strengthening existing graduated driver licensing (GDL) laws." The Post noted that, currently, "all 50 states and Washington, D.C. have three stages of graduated driver licensing (a supervised learner's period, an intermediate license-after passing a road test-that limits driving in high-risk situations, and full-privilege driver's license), but the systems vary in strength."

About Our Firm



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The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck, LLC

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The Dept. of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service regulate meat, poultry products and processed eggs. Check their recalls [here](#).

Click [here](#) for Food and Drug Administration recalls, market withdrawals and safety alerts.

For updates on the peanut products recall click [here](#).

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The trial attorneys at The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck, LLC represent individuals in all types of personal injury cases throughout the state of Connecticut and the state of Rhode Island, including, in Connecticut: New London County, New Haven County, Middlesex County, Hartford County, Tolland County, and Windham County; and in Rhode Island: Bristol County, Kent County, Newport County, Providence County, and Washington County.

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