

As Seen In... *Forbes*, February 2, 2009

Michigan Auto Law

Michigan's current law for auto accident victims is the most difficult in the country. There are those on both sides of the debate on whether this is a good or a bad thing. But when a person is injured in a serious or catastrophic vehicle accident, the debate is, indeed, academic. The issue simply becomes: Who is the best lawyer to handle my case? And a difficult law requires a specialized law firm.

Enter Michigan Auto Law (Gursten, Koltonow, Gursten, Christensen & Raitt, PC), Michigan's largest law firm completely specializing in serious automobile accident cases. Michigan Auto Law is a third generation firm with 16 lawyers helping people who have been injured in car, truck and motorcycle accidents.

The firm has won the top jury verdict in Michigan automobile accident cases in six of the past nine years, a remarkable track record considering the thousands of lawyers who handle personal injury cases in the state. More impressive still is how the firm gets most of its cases, as it does no television advertising, yellow pages or other traditional forms of marketing.

"Almost all of our cases are referred to us by other lawyers, both in Michigan and throughout the country," says attorney Steven Gursten. "We get so many referrals because we tend to handle the high-end injury cases, where the costs can be tens of

thousands of dollars to do it the right way. In these cases, who the lawyer is becomes one of the biggest factors in determining the outcome. That means the best settlements and verdicts every year, but it also means lawyers who treat people with kindness and compassion, return phone calls and take time to answer questions. There just aren't a lot of lawyers who do that."

An attorney also needs to know the intricacies of proving "serious impairment." Gursten says documentation is key, and that's what sets apart the approach of the attorneys at Michigan Auto Law.

"Many attorneys don't do the little things — the detail work — but we do," says Gursten. "If we are known for one thing among Michigan lawyers, it is for taking cases that most lawyers would have settled for one amount, and, by showing the very real, legitimate problems that our clients are going to have, getting a higher amount."

Understanding the no-fault law, knowing the medicine and being top-notch in the courtroom require creative and smart lawyering. As Gursten puts it: "When you do things right, the reality is you are going to get very reasonable settlement offers. When you prepare from day one for trial, and you have proven trial results, the effect is that 99 percent of our cases settle. Our clients are usually thrilled with the results."



Steve Gursten

About Those Trucks...

Steve Gursten of Michigan Auto Law is one of the nation's leading experts on serious truck accident injury cases. He is past president of the Interstate Truck Litigation Group for the American Association for Justice and represents the State of Michigan as a Board of Governor for the Association of Interstate Trucking Lawyers of America. Gursten says successfully representing plaintiffs in truck accidents often involves detective work that not many law firms have the expertise in:

- There can be layers of insurance coverage with sister companies and other corporate entities not always disclosed. "We find hidden layers of additional insurance coverage in catastrophic cases all the time," Gursten says.
- Lawyers make the difference in these cases, and hopefully this leads to safer roads. "Lawyers are performing a critical but unacknowledged service in taking on unsafe trucking companies in an environment where state and federal agencies are not aggressively enforcing the mandatory safety rules," Gursten says, citing federal studies that state one out of three big trucks on the road has serious safety violations.



Top row (from left): Alison F. Tomak, Kevin H. Seiferheld, Ian M. Freed, Amy L. Gubesch, Brandon M. Hewitt, Michael R. Shaffer, Jeffrey A. Bussell, Deborah A. Tonelli, Jeffrey H. Feldman, Thomas W. James
Bottom row: David E. Christensen, Steven M. Gursten, Larry E. Gursten, Leonard M. Koltonow, Robert M. Raitt
Not pictured: Kathleen E. Johnson

MICHIGANAUTOLAW

Gursten, Koltonow, Gursten, Christensen & Raitt, PC

26555 Evergreen Road, Suite 1530 | Southfield, MI 48076 | (800) 968-1001 | www.michiganautolaw.com

Law Offices in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Southfield, Sterling Heights/Warren and Ann Arbor