

# MAJ PACESETTER

## Thomas James

*Gursten, Koltonow, Gursten,  
Christensen & Raitt, PC,  
Farmington Hills*

Farmington Hills lawyer Thomas James was a “non-traditional student” starting law school later in life.

“Coming from California, my last career was as in internet channel sales/business development. As you can expect, I was always looking for ways to increase my commissions. While talking it out with my wife, she mentioned that a bottle-neck in the process seemed to come from my own internal contract modification/approval process. I discovered that if I obtained a JD, I might be able to reduce the time required to get my sales contracts modified by my legal department. So we left California and I attended MSU Law,” stated James.

“I came to law school seeking an education closer to transactional type of legal work. Litigation was never an area that I considered. However, I thoroughly enjoyed civil procedure and evidence. I started taking all of the trial advocacy courses that were offered. I joined the moot court board and participated in the national mock trial travel teams. After my second year of law school, I focused my efforts on joining a top-notch litigation law firm. I joined MAJ as a student member in 2004 while working as a law clerk with Gursten, Koltonow, Gursten, Christensen & Raitt, P.C. and later joined the firm. While working here, I discovered that most everything we do is a product of great minds working together to further the goals of our clients and practice. Everyone at the firm is encouraged to be a member.

“Our firm’s focus of assisting victims of car crashes allows our law-



*Juggling at an  
MAJ Phonathon*

yers to spend less time trying to figure out what the law is and more time strategizing on how to obtain a fair and reasonable recovery. I have the added benefit of having carved out a niche in my first-party practice of self-employed wage loss recovery and attendant care. It is likely a by-product of my business experience (MBA, Accounting degree and pre-law work history) but I really enjoy digging through the numbers, receipts, earnings, and expenses to figure out the true wage loss for my self-employed clients.”

James continues his membership and contributes to MAJ/JPAC because he recognizes the benefits and believes in MAJ’s mission. “Individually we are all great lawyers, but together we are a force. I know that every day hundreds of other MAJ members check the listserver only to help other lawyers. Where else do you find that type of camaraderie? How many times have I tapped into the deposition bank and found a great DME transcript? How many times have I posted questions on the listserver only to receive five great answers within 10 minutes? No other single resource can do what MAJ does when it comes to streamlining work. It is an amazing collaborative environment. MAJ members are so generous with their time, thoughts, and work product. Since I discovered the listserver, I do not think I have cre-

ated one thing from scratch. I would not be where I am today, doing as well as I am, if it were not for the participation of other MAJ members sharing their knowledge and experience with me.”

A monthly JPAC contributor since 2007, James believes, “Without question, JPAC is essential. Supporting the civil justice system is critical to our current clients, future clients and my family. Every day our government is under attack from deep pocket special interest groups seeking to strip consumers and families of their rights while simultaneously seeking to create blanket immunities for other groups. Supporting JPAC furthers the goals of having a legal system which protects its citizens, provides safe work environments, and holds negligent parties responsible for their actions.”

James has to remind himself to see the forest through the trees. “Working long hours at an intense level makes us susceptible to getting lost in the grind. When we take that moment to look up and see the smile of the client that we just helped or get that handwritten card from the family member of a victim, it is amazing. I love what I do.

“I am blessed to have such a great family with my wife, Angie, at the helm. My children Ethan, Cameron and Chloe make the long hours and stress all worth it.”

Join  
**Thomas James**

in Contributing to  
**JUSTICE PAC.**

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