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2009 EDITION

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO  
LEGAL REPRESENTATION IN  
THE GREATER PHILADELPHIA AREA

**THOMAS KLINE**  
PERSONAL INJURY  
POWERHOUSE

WHO ARE THE  
LAWYERS OF  
THE YEAR?

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**The Legal Intelligencer**

## COVER SPOTLIGHT

# THOMAS KLINE

## BEST IN PERSONAL INJURY FOR 2009

2009

Philadelphia  
LAWYER  
OF THE  
YEAR

Personal Injury  
Litigation  
Thomas R. Kline  
Best Lawyers®

**W**idely regarded as one of the country's leading personal injury attorneys, Thomas R. Kline boasts a slew of multi-million dollar verdicts and settlements, with many of his cases shaping policy at major corporations and institutions.

The \$5.5 million verdict in *Palmer v. Hahnemann University Hospital* in September 2008 is no exception. The verdict resulted from the 2006 shooting death of 18-year-old William Palmer, the son of two Philadelphia police officers, who worked as a parking lot attendant at the hospital. Just 12 days prior to Palmer's murder, there had been another armed robbery in an attendant's booth on the hospital grounds, and measures were allegedly underway to beef up security with increased patrols, better lighting and surveillance cameras.

Using his rigorous style of cross-examination and evidence gathering, Kline was able to debunk the defense's claim that security was adequate, even using a video of the victim running to the hospital for help to prove that surveillance cameras weren't being manned.

"In my view, this sent a strong message to operators of parking lots and parking garages that it's imperative to provide protection to their employees," Kline says of the verdict, "and that simple, basic precautions and safety measures can avoid risk and save lives."

Just as the verdict in *Hall v. the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority*—the result of a 4-year-old boy having his foot torn off in a subway escalator—led to a revamping of the transit authority system, the Palmer verdict stands to alter the system of parking lot security, according to Kline.

"Civil cases are not only about compensation but about making change and holding major institutions and individuals accountable," he says.

While the Palmer case capped off 2008, it is indicative of the successes Kline has had over his three-decade career, taking on some of the biggest names in the pharmaceutical, medical and automobile industries. In 2003, Kline scored a \$36.4 million

settlement with Motiva Enterprises for the death of a worker in an oil refinery explosion—believed to be the nation's largest-ever settlement for a single-worker death. In the 2004 case of the Pier 34 collapse on the Delaware River, Kline secured a \$29.6 million settlement for three women killed in the accident. That same year, he earned a \$40.5 million settlement for six victims and other parties injured in an explosion at the Village Green apartment complex in Hatboro.

For several years, Kline was at the center of the massive litigation over Vioxx, the pain medication



**"A LAWYER IN A COURTROOM IS A TEACHER IF HE OR SHE IS DOING THE JOB CORRECTLY."**  
—THOMAS R. KLINE

removed from the market in 2004. As a member of the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee directing the multi-district litigation against Merck & Co., Kline interviewed many of the company's top executives to obtain testimony that became crucial at trial and helped lead to a \$4.85 billion settlement.

Kline has also been vigilant in representing victims of misdiagnosed breast cancers, a cause close to his heart after the loss of both his mother and wife to the disease.

"I feel a great sensitivity to the cause," says Kline. "And I've been active in the National Breast Cancer Coalition Foundation."

In the case of *Welteroth v. Spectrascan* in 1998, Kline won a then-record-setting \$33.1 million jury award for the estate of a woman late diagnosed with breast cancer, and later earned a multi-million dollar verdict in 2003 for the estate of Dagmar Lackman, who died of breast cancer after a doctor misread her mammogram.

The latter case earned Kline an appearance on ABC's *Nightline*, and the attorney is

regularly featured on television as a guest and commentator on legal news and policy. Having earned a host of accolades in the legal field, Kline is most proud of his recent election as president of the Inner Circle of Advocates, which was described by *The Washington Post* as "a select group of 100 of the nation's most celebrated trial lawyers."

No stranger to the spotlight, Kline leverages the dramatics of his courtroom performances to produce and perform in his one-man show, *As Theatre*, for continuing legal education. A former sixth-grade teacher, Kline now teaches at institutions such as Temple University and the National Judicial College in Nevada.

"I think some of the most important skills that I learned were in a classroom teaching sixth graders," says Kline. "A lawyer in a courtroom is a teacher if he or she is doing the job correctly."

A native of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, Kline worked

alongside his father at a women's dress factory, observing at a young age many of the injuries sustained by people in the workplace. He later attended Lehigh University, earning a master's degree in American History and completing coursework for a Ph.D. Soon after receiving his law degree from Duquesne University School of Law, Kline joined The Beasley Firm in Philadelphia. It was there that he met attorney Shanin Specter, and in 1995 the two opened what is now one of the city's most reputable and successful law firms. A recently released book called "Two Boys" chronicles the pair's respective successes in the SEPTA case and in a case involving a young boy catastrophically injured with a defective b.b. gun.

With several high-profile cases currently pending, including that of a 19-year-old college student whose meningitis was misdiagnosed and that of a young girl who lost her leg in a runaway bus accident, a tenured Kline proves that he is still vigilant in his fight for justice. —Jeannie Greeley