

2002 **40**
under
forty

40 Illinois Attorneys Under Forty to Watch



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Telly C. Nakos

Age: 36

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Type of Law: Personal Injury

Law School: Case Western Reserve University

Honors/Involvement: Eli Lilly Scholar-Wabash College; Illinois Trial Lawyers Association – Board of Managers and Legislative Committee; American College of Trial Lawyers – Justice Lewis F. Powell Award for Trial Advocacy (two-time recipient); International Academy of Trial Lawyers Award for Excellence in Advocacy; American Jurisprudence Award for Trial Advocacy; Frequent contributor and lecturer for Illinois Trial Lawyers Association and Chicago Bar Association

Telly Nakos, a partner of the Chicago-based law firm Anesi, Ozmon, Rodin, Novak & Kohen, is known as many things: a fierce litigator, a determined advocate of his clients and a tireless worker. But he's not known as someone who's afraid to inject a little drama into his court appearances.

For example, in 1994, Nakos tried a product liability case. During the trial, he elicited testimony from the defendant's representative that the only thing wrong with the defendant's product was the size of the box that initially contained it.

The defendant's representative repeatedly denied that the product itself was defective in any form or fashion. This didn't sit well with Nakos, who, during his closing argument, bluntly challenged the jury by stating, "If the only thing wrong with the product is the box, then we'll leave right now." Nakos then opened the swivel courtroom gate, walked into the gallery, opened the door to leave the courtroom and ordered his client to join him. His client, the members of the jury and everyone else in attendance looked at Nakos in amazement. But everyone in the courtroom knew one thing: Nakos was right. The result of this bit of showmanship? Nakos gained a substantial verdict in his client's favor.

Such dramatics, though, would mean nothing if Nakos did not back them up with end results. Fortunately for his clients, Nakos does this. In fewer than eight years, he has successfully tried about 25 cases. Only one of these has been appealed,

and the First District Appellate Court unanimously upheld Nakos' initially successful verdict in that instance.

"Unlike many other litigators, Mr. Nakos' courtroom theatrics are truly genuine and sincere," said Gregory Balos, with the Alsip-based Law Offices of Gregory G. Balos. "Mr. Nakos' nature is to put forth the best of his ability in whatever he does. If Mr. Nakos believes someone has been wronged, he will tenaciously pursue the truth until justice is served."

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Nakos immediately tasted success in his legal career after joining the Plaintiff's bar in 1994. In 1994, Nakos and fellow partner Curt Rodin obtained a verdict of more than \$3.9 million on behalf of three millwrights who suffered severe burns when a torch they were using to dismantle a dust-collecting machine ignited a sugar-dust explosion. The most severely injured plaintiff earned an award of nearly \$3.3 million. Just 5 months later, Mr. Nakos received a \$2.78 million Jury Verdict for a union pipe-fitter who fell from a ladder and sustained a back injury.

Nakos has set an Illinois record for obtaining the fastest Jury Verdict over a million dollars.

In 2000, he obtained a \$1.5 million verdict on behalf of a woman who was struck in the head, neck and shoulder by a tumbling paper-plate display at a large department store. Nakos won his case by presenting compelling evidence regarding the lack of safety with the display. He also proved just how damaging his client's injuries were. Jury members returned with their verdict favoring Nakos' client in just 15 minutes.

In 1998, Mr. Nakos also set an Illinois Settlement record for a plaintiff rendered triplegic, when he and partner Bruce Kohen obtained 11.7 million dollars for a handicapped man from Colorado who slipped and fell at McCormack Place. The Settlement was a landmark result in the area of handicapped and accessibility rights. Mr. Nakos is married to his wife, Tamara; and has 2 children, Athena and Aristotle.