

2004 40 under forty



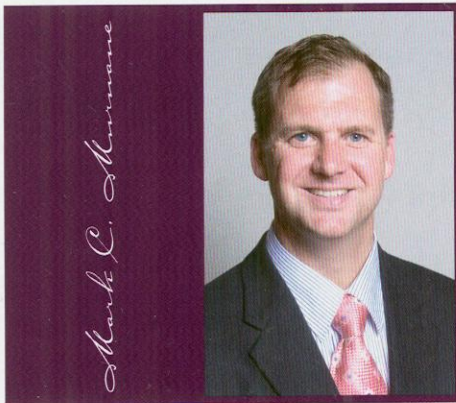
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2004
40 Illinois Attorneys Under Forty to Watch

Mark C. Murnane

Age: 37



Specialty: Personal Injury

Law School: Loyola University Law School

Mark Murnane has notched several successful multi-million dollar verdicts and settlements for his clients while specializing in personal-injury law for the Chicago firm of Anesi, Ozmon, Rodin, Novak & Kohen, Ltd. But one result stands out during a career filled with success.

In late 2001, Murnane co-chaired a case where he obtained a \$7.1 million verdict on behalf of an ironworker who while unloading I-beams from a flatbed truck suffered a fractured and dislocated ankle and a torn meniscus. This result is the highest verdict ever reported for an ankle injury in the state. In fact, the verdict more than doubled the previous high of \$3.24 million.

This case helped further cement Murnane's already stellar reputation. Just listen to the praise his peers give him:

"I have witnessed Mark's skills in the deposition setting, in motion practice and at trial," said John Lynch Jr., an attorney with the Chicago law firm of Cremer, Kopon, Shaughnessy & Spina, Ltd. who has interacted with Mark regularly during the past nine years. "Whenever I learn that Mark will be my opponent in a lawsuit, I know that I'm in for a challenge, but also that I'll be a better lawyer at the end of the case."

The ironworker case was not an easy one. Murnane's client claimed that his injury will result in a permanent limp, and that he can no longer work as an ironworker because of it. While suing the general contractor and subcontractor operating the work site, Murnane's client claimed that the soil on site was wet and unstable, allowing wooden "cribbing" that had been set on the ground to receive the I-beams to settle unevenly into the mud after the 2,000-pound I-beam was craned off the truck. The beam then rolled off the cribbing and onto the plaintiff's ankle.

The defendants in the case argued that the plaintiff's negligence contributed to the accident. They also contested his disability claims, insisting that he could return to ironworking.

Despite these claims by the defendants, Murnane's cross examination of the general liability expert and jobsite super-

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"He combines an attention to detail with a tenacity and articulateness that makes him a formidable opponent to even the most able and prepared defense attorneys."

intendent along with his direct examination of the plaintiff's treating orthopedic surgeon convinced members of the jury to award the highest verdict in state history for an ankle injury. This result caused other attorneys across the state to notice Murnane and his impressive record.

Perhaps the greatest evidence of Murnane's courtroom skills are the compliments he earns from those peers who oppose him in contentious cases.

"Whenever I encounter Mark as an adversary, I have mixed feelings," said Jeff Sandler, an attorney with the law firm of Cassiday, Schade & Gloor, LLP in Chicago. "He is always well prepared, has a game plan and sticks to it, which usually means that I and my client will face a tough battle. On the other hand, I look forward to working with (and against) Mark as he is, quite simply, a gentleman. He has the unique ability to blend his advocacy with civility, courtesy and cooperation. When he gives you his word, you can be assured that he means it."

Lynch, too, has served as Murnane's opposition in several cases. He has come to recognize Murnane as one of the state's top trial lawyers, one whom he says combines an attention to detail with a tenacity and articulateness that makes him a formidable opponent to even the most able and well prepared defense attorneys.

These skills, Lynch says, make Murnane a cinch pick for this year's list of top young lawyers.

"Your nomination process seeks to identify those 'up and coming' attorneys in Illinois," Lynch said. "The verdict in the (ironworker) case, as well as Mark's skills, reputation and success, reveal that he is not only 'up and coming' but has already arrived."