

suburbanlife

+ Also
Inside:
Leading men,
family law
attorneys,
and more

The founding attorneys of
Laffey Bucci & Kent LLP excel
at helping injured workers and
crime victims find justice against
powerful opponents.

page 60

LAFFEY BUCCI KENT



The founding attorneys of **Laffey Bucci & Kent LLP** excel at helping injured workers and crime victims find justice against powerful opponents.



A Fighting Chance

by **MATT COSENTINO** | photography by **ALISON DUNLAP**

Screenwriters and novelists love a good David vs. Goliath story, especially in a courtroom setting. In the real world, however, cases pitting the “little guy” against a major corporation or powerful individual are won largely because of behind-the-scenes preparedness, knowledge, and determination, not dramatic courtroom heroics.

For going on 13 years, Laffey Bucci & Kent LLP in Philadelphia has been exhausting every resource to help injured clients in two distinct areas of practice: workplace accidents, particularly on construction sites; and crime victims, specifically those who have suffered sexual abuse or assault. In both areas of practice, clients tend to find themselves in an extremely vulnerable position, and often struggling to move forward with their lives.

“We’re not afraid of a fight, and we actually like a good fight,” says Jeffrey F. Laffey, who started the firm in 2009 with fellow attorneys Paul Bucci and Brian Kent. “The best way to handle our clients’ cases is to presume that it’s going to trial, because when you do it that way you don’t leave

any stones unturned, and that is truly in the best interest of the clients.

“We’re ever mindful that our client is the little guy going up against the well-oiled machine—an opponent with a lot of resources at their disposal to attack our clients during litigation,” he continues. “Frankly, I wouldn’t have it any other way. It’s what motivates us to take on the big guy, beat him, and make him regret not dealing with us fairly.”

The ability to “level the playing field” is fundamental to the firm’s identity.

“The courtroom is truly the only place where somebody, regardless of their socioeconomic background or race or any other factor, can be on equal footing with a billion-dollar corporation,” Kent adds. “When you’re trying to expose and prevent and stop some of the atrocities that we see on a regular basis, the law is a hugely powerful tool in order to do that.”

Laffey, Bucci, and Kent all trained under some of the nation’s best and brightest

attorneys, and the latter two are sons of successful trial lawyers. The three met while working at a previous firm and instantly became close friends. Their shared approach to the law inspired them to branch out on their own.

“Jeff, Brian, and I share the same values and we’ve always worked toward the same goal, which is assisting our clients to the best of our abilities, providing them a vigorous representation, and taking it to the end of the mat,” Bucci says. “We’ve worked very hard to build the firm, and we’re fortunate that we’ve been able to hire and retain the talent that we’ve amassed to help us grow.”

Laffey is the son of a union carpenter, which makes him uniquely qualified to co-lead the firm’s workplace accident division with Bucci. He understands the mindset of the working class, and brings the same blue-collar approach to his practice. He proudly supports union causes and political candidates who are pro-union, and has even created charities that help union families.

He regularly speaks to various labor unions on the topic of workplace safety.

"I love being the blue-collar guy getting white-collar results for my deserving clients," he says. "I grew up on the union dime, and I share those hardworking, middle-class values as my clients: a fair wage for an honest day's work. There's an immediate connection to my clients, and vice versa. I feel more comfortable with them than I do my professional colleagues and professional adversaries."

Laffey has obtained numerous seven- and eight-figure results for his clients. Prior to the pandemic, Laffey obtained a \$2.5 million jury verdict on behalf of a union carpenter who injured his spine when a

case of the 2003 parking garage collapse at the Tropicana Atlantic City, which led to the largest construction accident settlement in U.S. history.

"The Tropicana was a horrible tragedy, and it was horrible because of the scope of it," he says. "You had dozens of families involved and several workers were killed, and I believe 36 workers were injured. The magnitude of that was profound, but it's no less profound for that family whose father or brother was in a single accident on the job site and suffered some kind of catastrophic injury or death."

Laffey and Buccì are both OSHA certified. Such certification helps them understand the nuances of construction cases and

with prosecutors and law enforcement.

"When a victim comes into our office, first and foremost we always tell them that we believe them," Kent says. "Secondly, we will do anything we humanly can do in order to hold people accountable and prevent this from ever happening to somebody else again. That means running down every single lead and getting every single document we can. If there is a wrong that has been committed, we're willing to go the distance."

Kent himself is a survivor of clergy abuse, and he often shares his personal story with clients who have had a similar experience. He wants them to understand that he truly knows what it feels like, and how difficult it



JEFFREY F. LAFFEY



PAUL BUCCI



BRIAN KENT

scaffold he was standing on collapsed. He describes the verdict as "especially rewarding because the defendants didn't offer us a penny."

He also has a keen understanding of the toll a workplace accident can take on the employee and his or her family.

"Many, many accidents occur that never make the news," he says. "It's the guy who falls off scaffolding and fractures his heel or the guy who falls in an uncovered hole and needs surgery. If I fell and needed surgery, I'd still be able to do my job. But when my clients get hurt, the stakes become that much greater because oftentimes they're prevented from remaining in their chosen career and providing for their families."

Buccì has a blue-collar attitude, too; both of his grandfathers came from that background in Pittsburgh. As the Swiss Army knife of the practice, Buccì handles everything from crime victim cases to medical malpractice, but he focuses primarily on workplace accidents. He was one of the lead attorneys in the

avoid potential pitfalls that might cause less knowledgeable attorneys to stumble.

"The reality is you have to know the subject matter as well as, if not better than, the people you're deposing in the case," Buccì says. "No matter how many cases we handle, every case is unique in its own way. You have to know the subject matter as well or better than anybody else in the case, and that includes the experts."

Kent brings the same kind of determination to the crime victim division of the firm. Formerly a prosecutor, he leads a team of like-minded lawyers in seeking justice for victims of assault, abuse, and human trafficking. The legal team not only has experience on the criminal side of these cases but also continues to collaborate

can be for them to come forward and share details about one of the most difficult things they will ever have to face.

"I want them to understand that it's part of the healing process," he adds. "These kinds of things have a lifelong impact, and coming forward can be a very powerful tool in getting your voice back and holding those responsible for what happened to you accountable."

All three attorneys have become nationally renowned and often get called in to help with cases across the country. No matter the case, clients can expect full transparency, no false promises, and unremitting support from start to finish.

"I take a lot of pride in the fact that we are able to substantially alter our clients' lives for the better," Laffey says. "In order to do that, it takes sleepless nights, tireless dedication, and sacrifice of time away from family. That's what I wanted it to be like when we created our own firm, and I'm happy that's exactly what it has become." ■



Laffey Buccì & Kent LLP

1100 Ludlow Street, Suite 300 | Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 399-9255 | LaffeyBucciKent.com