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TOP PLAINTIFF LAWYERS 2019



Gregory L.
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Newport Beach

Product liability,
personal injury



Bentley is at the forefront of a growing nationwide battle as he pursues lawsuits over deadly e-cigarette explosions across the country.

Bentley's big fight is against LG Electronics, which manufactures the batteries thought to trigger the explosions.

"The industry is just allowing these explosions to occur," Bentley said. "It's been a long fight that we're just continuing to push."

The company is disputing jurisdiction "in California and really in any state," so the current issue involves jurisdictional discovery "and eventually establishing that they have contacts in the U.S. and can be held accountable for these harms."

"The big takeaway, from my perspective, is that this industry is still courting minors, getting kids addicted with these fruity flavors with no regulation," Bentley said. "It's just business as usual for this industry. It's sad."

Some cases have settled, part of more than

\$100 million in settlements Bentley has secured in the last 18 months. That includes \$12 million from the City of Los Angeles for a wrongful death lawsuit on behalf of the family of Alice Gruppioni, an Italian who was killed on her honeymoon after she was struck by a vehicle driving on the Venice Beach Boardwalk. Bentley obtained a key appellate ruling that said a busy commercial area such as the boardwalk was not considered a recreational trial under state law and thus was not eligible for immunity. *Gruppioni, et al. v. City of Los Angeles*, BC553109 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed July 29, 2014).

"Thankfully, the city is taking steps to make the boardwalk safer and hopefully prevent this from happening again," Bentley said.

Bentley also is taking on the CSAA Insurance Exchange, the northern California division of American Automobile Association, over its insurance policies for homeowners who lost everything in deadly wildfires. Bentley said he believes the company's policy to evaluate coverage

limits is not compliant with state insurance laws. *Kimura v. CSAA Insurance Exchange*, SCV-263694 (Son. Co. Super. Ct., filed Dec. 18, 2018).

"So many homeowners lost their homes to find out that they're woefully underinsured," Bentley said.

Bentley opened Bentley More LLP in 2016 with his longtime friend Keith P. More after years as a name partner at what's now Shernoff Bidart Echeverria LLP.

They started with seven lawyers and now have 17. Despite the success, Bentley said plaintiff's lawyers face an increasingly challenging political environment that's affecting jurors and how they receive facts and argument.

"It's a culture change, and I'm noticing when I'm trying cases that people are now more willingly and openly conveying what they think and are less likely to be persuaded because they're digging in," Bentley said

— Meghann M. Cuniff