

# Daily Journal

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## Top Labor & Employment Lawyers 2021

### Keith P. More

**M**ore and longtime friend Gregory L. Bentley opened their personal injury boutique in 2016 to represent California workers and consumers with a focus on catastrophic workers compensation cases, and wrongful death and vehicle accident litigation.

For More, Covid-19 put a renewed emphasis on the importance of aggressive representation in workers comp cases. “I had a bunch of cases where workers contracted Covid on the job but insurers denied the claims,” he said. “But once we forged ahead with discovery, the insurers picked up the death benefits and compensated the families.”

He had success in earlier cases too. In 2016, Jonathan Goodwin was a 32-year-old state-employed registered psychiatric nurse who fell off a ladder at work and was left with a traumatic brain injury and other serious diagnoses.

“Even though he has a brain injury and can’t live on his own, the state would not stipulate to his 100 percent disability,” More said. “So we took it to trial.” *Goodwin v. Atascadero State Hospital*, ADJ10298755 (WCAB, filed Feb. 16, 2016).

Such cases are heard by administrative law judges working for the state’s Workers’ Compensation Appeals Board. In Goodwin’s case, the trial was held in September 2020. “The defense called Mr. Goodwin’s former supervisor to attack his credibility,” More said. But More had done a thorough background check on the supervisor and learned she was the one with credibility issues. “She talked about his character, saying

he had anger issues. He had once sworn and kicked a chair. The defense relied on that to claim he had a pre-existing bad temperament, behavioral issues that were irrelevant. She admitted that he was a hard worker. But that let me ask about her character—over the insurance company lawyer’s vehement objections.”

It turned out that the supervisor had three DUIs and a nursing license suspension on her record. “It was as dramatic a cross-examination as I’ve had,” More said. “Boy, did she look bad. We learned that at one point she was working with an ankle bracelet.”

The defense was unprepared for the turnaround and rested its case without attempting to rehabilitate its witness, More said. In addition, More had successfully asked the court to block a defense expert’s testimony. The court awarded Goodwin 100 percent disability status, worth \$2,800,000, plus lifetime medical treatment estimated at \$10 million. Workers’ Compensation Judge Katharine Holmes rated the case as “above average complexity” and awarded More significant attorney fees.

“That was a great victory for us,” More said.

More performs charitable work with the Orange County Trial Lawyers Association to raise money in a live auction for groups such as Veterans Local Institute, Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation, Miracles for Kids and the Downs Syndrome Society.

“We also work with an organization to help the homeless called the Lucky Duck Foundation,” he said.

— John Roemer



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