

## MY 2020 VISION An Ambitious Plan for the New Year

I haven't had 20/20 vision since I was 10 years old, but I certainly have a vision for my 2020 year. It's an ambitious plan, and to be honest, it keeps me awake some nights. But I'm excited to get started!

First, the firm will grow from seven to nine people strong in 2020. Our goal is to eventually handle *all* the legal needs an injured person could have that have arisen from their injuries. So, instead of just handling an injury case where our client was hurt because of someone else's negligence (car accidents, slip and falls, medical malpractice, etc.), we will be expanding our services in 2020 to help injured clients in other related areas such as workers' compensation and Social Security disability claims. These are both areas of law that often stem from the accident work we currently handle, so we are thrilled to be able to help in a more complete way.

Growing our staff means growing our workspace too. We don't want to bring in new team members only to have everyone cramped when clients come to meet with them. So, we negotiated a lease for additional office space in our current building. It's important that everyone has enough room to work and that we're still conveniently located for our clients. Our location and offices are great; we are less than a mile from downtown Boston and have free on-site parking. I did not want to give that up by moving!

In the coming year, we'll also be expanding our firm's "KnowTheLawFirst"-based marketing. What this means is that *all* of our marketing efforts will be driven by one core mission: get the prospective client free information they need to make smart legal



decisions. No crazy billboards or TV ads that scream "Call us now blah blah blah!" or "Call #Whatever!" These marketing methods do nothing for a client in search of quality representation. They confuse people and often lead to bad decisions. So, in furtherance of our mission, I will be writing a second book that will be offered free on our website, writing a weekly blog, and producing informative videos in our recently built in-house video studio. All of these resources will be designed to answer the various pressing questions prospective clients have. When an injured person makes better informed legal decisions, everyone benefits.

I don't think someone should have to be a lawyer in order to have a basic understanding of their rights in a certain situation. People don't always have to call a lawyer if they're dealing with a legal matter. Many times, when given the correct information, a lot of people can clear up the situation themselves. But when they do need an attorney, we want future clients to know they can trust us right out of the gate.

Last year was a very strong year for the firm. We were hired by more new clients and

settled more cases for clients than in any other year in our history! We now want to do better. Why? Because I believe if you're able to help some people, it would be irresponsible not to try to help even more people if you can. We believe we provide our clients with unparalleled service, and when someone needs legal help and they don't come to us, we have no way of knowing if they got the same quality service we would have given them. By growing our firm like this, we're able to make sure we're equipped to help as many people as possible. This is how we make our community a better place.

In addition to growing our firm, our resources, and our areas of practice, I also want to grow the Spada Law Scholarship Fund for 2021. Currently, 10 students receive \$500 each. Our goal is to increase the award to \$1,000 per student.

To call my 2020 vision ambitious would be putting it mildly, but I have the utmost confidence in our ability to make it happen. We have a plan and we're going to attack the new year head on!

*-Len Spada*

# HER INSIDER KNOWLEDGE HELPS OUR CLIENTS

## ROBYN CARTWRIGHT: SPADA LAW GROUP'S SECRET WEAPON

There's no such thing as a one-man-show — at least, not when it comes to personal injury law. No matter how skilled an attorney is, it takes a team of talented, dedicated individuals to really care for a client. At Spada Law Group, we're fortunate to have many amazing people at the firm, including Robyn Cartwright, our most senior Case Manager.

Next to Len Spada himself, Robyn is our senior-most staff member at the firm. She's been at the firm for the past 15 years. Prior to helping injured people do battle against the insurance companies, she worked FOR the insurance companies. Robyn spent 10 years working on the "other side" at MetLife Auto & Home Insurance Company. She worked as both a casualty claims adjuster and in MetLife's litigation unit. She has seen it all. Eventually, Robyn realized her time with MetLife had run its course, so she began looking for new opportunities.

"First, I reached out to a lawyer in the area that I had contact with," Robyn explained. "They didn't need any help at the time, but fortunately, they sent me to talk to Len Spada. Len was looking to bring on a Case Manager. We sat down to talk and really hit it off. I was excited to bring my perspective from the other side to help my new clients."

Robyn's insider knowledge of insurance industry practices has been incredibly beneficial to our clients. Robyn knows how insurance companies operate, what they look for, how they value cases and how they negotiate. Her experience translates into a huge advantage for our clients. She can put clients at ease because of her familiarity with the entire insurance claims process. Robyn never fails to go that extra mile and help them feel secure.

"When people are down and out, they don't know what the next step is," Robyn says. "I'm proud to be here to take them through the process and make it as easy for them as possible. We're not just pushing paper around; everyone on the team actually cares about people. I want our clients to feel that in every interaction. If a client has a question, they can call me for the answer. If they just need to vent, they can do that too. We aim to make connections and share personal stories so our clients know they're not in this alone."

In the spirit of making connections, Robyn is always happy to chat about DIY home improvement projects or share stories about her dogs. When Robyn isn't guiding clients at the office, she loves to spend the day at the beach with her dogs, Bididi the chihuahua, and Margo the Cavalier King Charles spaniel.



## REVIEW OF THE MONTH



*"When I called Len Spada's office, I was greeted by Mykayla, who not only took all my information about my injury but also was very compassionate and caring. She took time to listen and allowed me to vent at times. My phone calls were with either Mykayla or Robyn. They kept me informed but also checked on me regularly to see how I was progressing. I looked forward to hearing from them as they were always very caring. I also look forward to receiving Len Spada's newsletter each month. It has a personal message and information regarding various life issues. I sit and read it from cover to cover. I have not met Len Spada or his staff, but I would love to meet them and thank them personally. I was able to heal without worry while they advocated for me. I am so very grateful."*

**—Diana**

# WORD SEARCH



- |           |           |           |            |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| AQUARIUS  | SNOW      | PIG       | NEW YEAR   |
| CHAMPAGNE | CAPRICORN | TOAST     | RESOLUTION |
| JANUARY   | FIREWORKS | CELEBRATE | WINTER     |
| PARTY     | MIDNIGHT  | FREEZING  |            |

# Your Case Doesn't SETTLE: Now What?

## The Difference Between Mediation and Arbitration

When clients come in with a personal injury claim, our goal is to get their case settled for the full value as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, this doesn't always happen. The insurance company might not agree about who's at fault, or they offer much less than the claim is worth. When this happens, settling the case just isn't an option.

When clients hear that we can't settle their case, they start to worry that they'll have to go to court. While we are always ready to go to court and fight for our clients if we have to, most clients do not want to deal with that kind of stress if they can avoid it. The good news is that going to court isn't always the only option if we can't settle a case. There's also mediation and arbitration.

### What is mediation?

Mediation is when both parties — in this case, our clients and the insurance company — agree to meet together with a mediator. The mediator is usually a retired lawyer or judge who tries to help both parties reach a settlement agreement. If you are considering mediation, remember that the mediator is only there to facilitate the process; nothing they say is binding to either party.

Mediation is a voluntary process, and either side is free to walk away at any time. At Spada Law Group, 90% of our mediations result in a settled case.

### What is arbitration?

Similar to mediation, arbitration is a voluntary process in which both parties meet with a third-party neutral who acts as the judge to decide the case outside of the court system. However, while a mediator merely facilitates the process, an arbitrator's decision is binding. In a sense, arbitration is a quicker, less formal, and less expensive trial.

While there are some advantages (quicker, less formal, and less expensive) to choosing arbitration over trying your case in court, in arbitration, the decision is made by one person rather than a jury. By agreeing to arbitration, you are committing to the decision of the arbitrator. You cannot appeal if you believe a mistake was made.

Finding yourself involved in a personal injury case is never pleasant. The best-case scenario is that you are able to settle your case quickly for its full value and focus on your recovery. If a settlement isn't an option, remember that the team at Spada Law Group has your back. We're here to guide you through the process and help make the best decisions for your case.

Have a question about mediation, arbitration, or personal injury cases in general? Don't hesitate to call 617.889.5000! We're here to help.

## Local Chef's Corner

# New England Clam Chowder

Inspired by Allrecipes

Clam chowder has been a proud New England tradition for hundreds of years. Start your new year right with a hot bowl of traditional New England clam chowder.

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 slices bacon, diced
- 1 1/2 cups chopped onion
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 4 cups potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- 3 cups half-and-half
- 3 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp flour
- 2 10-oz cans minced clams

### DIRECTIONS

1. Place diced bacon in a large stockpot over medium-high heat and cook until almost crisp. Add onions and cook for 5 minutes. Stir in water and potatoes, then season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, then cook covered for 20 minutes.
2. Pour in half-and-half and add butter. Mix in flour to thicken soup. Stir clams and all clam liquid into the soup.
3. Cook for 5 minutes until heated thoroughly; do not bring to boil. Serve hot, preferably in sourdough bread bowl.

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# MEET SHADOW

## THE AMAZING HANG-GLIDING SERVICE DOG

For his entire life, Utah resident Dan McManus has suffered from several mental health issues, including generalized anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, night terrors, and severe panic attacks. Over the years, he's utilized numerous coping mechanisms to stave off the symptoms, but there are two things that calm him more than anything else: hang gliding across the Utah skies and the companionship of his service animal, an Australian cattle dog named Shadow.

Over the course of 37 years, McManus went from being a hang-gliding hobbyist to an expert instructor in Salt Lake City, going out gliding as often as possible. But it seemed that his passion gave his pup a bit of anxiety of his own. Whenever McManus would take off, Shadow always wanted to chase him. "So I would be out here flying, and he would chase me and jump up at me and sometimes get my foot and hang on a little bit ... It felt like he wanted to keep me safe," he says. And when McManus left Shadow at home, he'd often come home to a scratched-up floor and doors. It seemed that Shadow couldn't bear to be away from his owner. So, about 12 years ago, McManus had a special harness made for Shadow, enabling the pup to join him while he took to the skies. They've been side-by-side on nearly every flight since.



Some pet owners might balk at the idea of taking a dog on a hang glider, but it's clear that Shadow definitely *wants* to fly. Whenever they go out, Shadow wraps his paws around McManus' arm, remaining stoic as they survey the landscape together from high above.

While we all struggle with our own obstacles in life, it's nice to know that our four-legged pals will always be there to offer their support. As McManus and Shadow demonstrate, it's a bond that remains strong even hundreds of feet above the ground.