

THE METRO REPORT

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Navid Alband

Photo by Rachel DeLira

Dear Coach RED... by Collette Portis, M.Ed. with RED Development Group

Dear Coach RED,

I'm passionate about helping people. More specifically women. I host seminars to help them overcome the challenges we face in life, business, and in our community. I know that it's my purpose to help and to pass on what I've learned throughout my life to help them overcome. I will admit that I'm very discouraged because no matter my efforts I've not been able to get the women in the room so I can help them. I've aggressively used social media to market my event, but after 3 years the largest number of attendees I've had is 12. Help because I'm discouraged and ready to quit on my purpose.

Sincerely,
Purposed and Discouraged

Hello Purposed and Discouraged,

I want you to first know that you are not alone in this. Many suffer from the same or similar issue. Nevertheless, I have a solution for you. Here are 5 steps to connect with the audience you've purposed serve.

1. **Define.** Define what you want to accomplish. List the 3 things you want your audience to walk away with, i.e. understanding the value of self care, finding your life as an empty nester, etc. Answer what you want your audience to do after they've attended your event and how can you help them get there.

2. **Determine Your Audience.** Who does your heart tell you to serve. The answer cannot be everyone. It is impossible to serve everyone because it's challenging to know how to connect with EVERYONE'S specific need. Look at those who tend to connect with you naturally. Then evaluate that group to find those who need what you have, want what you have, and have the provision to pay for what you have.

3. **Collaborate.** Who are you connected with that is connected to your audience already? Is it your local church? Is it your local YMCA or Boys & Girls Club? Be sure to find the connections that have a large number of those you want to serve. Who else has the heart to serve your audience? Collaborate with other speakers and ask them to join their audience with yours to create a combined event.

4. **Connect.** Now that you have your audience defined and your collaborative partners it's time to connect with your audience. What social media platforms does your audience use for the purposes of find what you have to offer? What groups on social media or local to your area has your audience in them? Think



Collette Portis, M.Ed. with RED Development Group

like your audience then find them in the places they frequent.

5. **Serve.** Finally, serve your audience. Service begins before you ask them to attend your event. You have to build a relationship with them. Use your expertise to show them that you know what you're talking about. You should be posting in groups information based on your knowledge. If you're a masseuse, tell use the benefits of getting regular massage. Share videos and articles about massage, etc. Build a relationship with those you want to serve so they come to know, like, and trust you. Then they will seek you out once they understand you are a solution.

Purpose requires that you have an audience to serve, but we must put in the work because our audience is ready to be served.

Sincerely,
Coach RED
www.reddevelopmentgroup.com

If you have a pressing business question or you're faced with an obstacle that you just can't overcome send us a letter and we'll answer here. We look forward to helping you maximize your greatness.



Post L Group – Making a mark by Steve Rochun

Don't let his quiet spirit or — as some would say — the smooth taste fool you. Jeffery Postell, President and CEO of Post L Group is all about business, building the right relationships and making solid connections. Contrary to what you might think from his mild manner, he can also be direct.

Prior to starting his business, Postell was a project manager for a large construction company. During his time there, he noticed there was only one black-owned, truly influential construction manager working in Fort Worth and there were no black-owned drywall trade contractors. "I saw an opportunity in the market that I knew I had the skillset to fill. There was space for us and there was a need for us to show the industry that black-owned companies can make it in this business," said Postell.

He formed the Post L Group on October 1, 2015. The startup didn't come without some early challenges. Because banks consider new construction firms to be high, very risky ventures, obtaining lines of credit and healthy capital to grow his business were difficult. "It didn't help being black," says Postell. "There was a strong stereotype for black construction firms that we had to fight against, and in some cases, we still do. The industry thinks black contractors cost more and are unable to perform the work. The last challenge I'll mention is how difficult it was and is to break through when the industry prefers to do business the way it's been done since the beginning of time."

“ Postell and his group have come a long way in a relative short time. [And] in a tough industry, Post L Group is making its mark. ”

Instead of giving up, Postell knew he had to overcome the challenges. He stayed super lean while he continued bidding on work. While executing as much work as he possibly could, he retained money and kept that retained money in the company. "The bank had to see a history of us making money. Overcoming the stereotype was simple. We focused on performing our work safely, with quality and delivered on time, no matter what." Postell understood relationship building, showing the ability to add value to jobs and having tough conversations was the way to get their shot to break into the market.

Breaking into the market has gone well. Post L Group just wrapped up the JPS Hospital Behavioral Health

Assessment Center re-model and are currently replacing DFW Airport Terminal C, gates 33-39.

The Post L Group was recently recognized as a finalist in the Rotary Fort Worth Minority Business Awards. Postell states, "Being a finalist was important for me. It was a taste of 'they're noticing us bit'. The hard work I've put in and the hard work our team puts in — in a tough business — is an important thing for the market to recognize. And I appreciated the selection."

He recognizes that he can't build a great company alone. He leans on his truly organic and diverse staff to do great things that lead to public recognition.

He says he loves what he does and the biggest reward he receives from his business is being able to provide jobs to people from underserved communities and black people that may not get that job opportunity at other firms. That, along with taking responsibility to talk to people in underserved communities about opportunities in construction and why it's so important for black people to embrace this industry make his foray worthwhile.

When asked what the best or most helpful advice he received when he started his company, Postell replied, "Keep the main thing the main thing." This goes along with recommendations and encouragement that he would offer a startup or new business owner: manage your financials and books properly from day one, focus on being really good at what you do and don't get hung up on one bad job or one bad deal. He also points out that mentors are very important. "The opportunity for mentors to let start-up owners know where the landmines and potholes are, is really helpful. Mentors also give new owners the vision and confidence to let them know they can achieve success. Last but not least, there is the accountability a mentor can bring to your life by helping keep you on task."

When he wants to relax, Postell spends time watching movies with his wife, watching NatGeo, taking bike rides on the Trinity River, fishing with his sons, watching the boys play sports and reading.

Since his first job in the construction industry as a general laborer, pushing a broom, Postell and his group have come a long way in a relative short time. But in a tough industry, Post L Group is making its mark.



Jeffery Postell, President and CEO of Post L Group

Photo credit: Chris Curtis

Navid Alband – A life in balance by Queenie White

When Navid Alband came to America in 1984, his parents were clear in their goals for him and his older sister – to build a better life for them. Their legacy was about creating opportunities for their children to have the future they envisioned for themselves.

The same could be said for Alband, managing partner at Alband, Lane & Balderrama Law Firm, one of Fort Worth’s most respected criminal defense and immigration law firms. Together with his partners, Javier Balderrama and Bill Lane, Alband creates opportunities for his clients to achieve outcomes that positively affect their future.

“During law school at the University of Texas at Austin (UT), I interned with large law firms because that’s what I thought I wanted to do. I soon found out that I was bored and needed to find my passion in law,” says Alband. After completing internships in Houston and Los Angeles, he interned for the Texas District and County Attorney’s Association (TDCAA), a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping prosecutors around the State. There, he helped assist prosecutors with legal support and education, becoming fascinated with topics like criminal law. For him, it was a natural progression to his future career as a prosecutor and ultimately, a criminal defense attorney.

While working at TDCAA in his third year of law school, the office received what was perceived to be an ominous letter written in an unknown language from an inmate at a local prison. The director of the prosecutor’s office asked Alband to find a resource to help translate the letter. Unbeknownst to the staff, the letter was written in Elvish, the language featured in the Lord of Rings trilogy – which Alband had recently seen. His ability to decipher the letter impressed his director, and led to a feature in the monthly newsletter and a recommendation that ultimately got him hired at the Tarrant County Prosecutor’s office.



Navid Alband, managing partner at Alband, Lane & Balderrama Law Firm Photos by Rachel DeLira

others see that people are human with experiences and backgrounds that drive them to action,” said Alband. “I’m passionate about bringing out the entire picture of an individual, answering the question, ‘What led to that one day of action?’ If I can’t identify with the client as a human being, I know I’m not the right lawyer for the case.”

“I think one of the biggest things I’ve learned as a lawyer and as a person, is that we can’t be so quick to judge. If you look at any sacred text – we are encouraged to not judge others. We tend to categorize our differences instead of accepting the fact that we are all a product of our upbringing, good and bad. So, there’s a principal across all religions, do unto others as you want them to do unto you, that I think we should embrace. It’s about extending grace to others,” said Alband.

A graduate of UT, his undergraduate in psychology also strongly influenced his decision to become a criminal defense attorney. “I find human behavior fascinating – learning what makes people tick. So, that makes me look at what influenced a person’s behavior and apply

that as I seek justice for my clients. For me, it’s about being in their corner, making sure they receive a fair trial because that’s the right thing to do. It’s very satisfying to know that you are the only thing that stands between you and the power of the State. It’s even more satisfying to establish your client’s innocence or to hear the words, ‘Not Guilty!’”

Alband’s dedication to his clients has earned him recognition as one of The National Trial Lawyers Top 100 Trial Lawyers, and he is a previous recipient of The National Trial Lawyers Top 40 Under 40 Award. He’s also been honored as a fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation, where the membership is composed of the most elite Texas attorneys. The Foundation’s members are nominated because of their dedication to the administration of justice and high professional standing among their peers.

Alband’s background and education are the foundation of why he is a successful criminal defense attorney. Raised by first generation immigrants, he learned the concept of right and wrong from an early age. “My father was a judicial assistant in Iran and we consistently talked about justice and fairness, which was rare in Iran because of the corruption happening at that time. So, those values are ingrained in me.”

As a parent, Alband wants to leave a legacy of similar values to his own children. But, his professional suc-

cess gives his children more choices about their own life path. “My parents made huge sacrifices to provide us with opportunities for a better life, so the expectation was to get a good education and provide for your family. It wasn’t about doing what you love, but about doing what gets you a level of income to be satisfied with life. Their expectations enabled me to create a life that allows my children more freedom to pursue their passions in life and in their careers. My goal is to instill the values of hard work and justice that my parents passed down to me and to create an environment where I exemplify love, honesty and integrity. And yes, I want them to love what they do.”

Alband has found that love both professionally and personally. “I think when you’re happy and well-adjusted, different aspects of your life tend to be buoyed. So, I’m a man of many interests which helps me live a balanced life and definitely contributes to me being an effective lawyer.” In his free time, Alband can most often be found with his wife and children or pursuing one of his many passions, which include racing cars or playing soccer. But his passion for fly fishing is what he envisions for his future. “Retirement? I think it’s practicing law part time in some coastal town or in the Hill Country and teaching fly fishing. Yes, I think that’s how I’d like to spend the rest of my days.”

“I’m a man of many interests which helps me live a balanced life and definitely contributes to me being an effective lawyer.”
– Navid Alband

His experience as a prosecutor gave him a different perspective of the criminal justice system. “I realized there are so many parts that play into prosecuting and defending a case. We often see people and situations as black and white, good and bad. But, I wanted to help



Devoyd Jennings, I met him!

by Shevoyd Hamilton

At the age of 10, my mother and I were at the local washateria (laundromat) on Oak Grove Rd., when she called me over to look at an article in a community newspaper she was reading. She pointed to a name that was very similar to mine. Neither she nor I had ever seen any name that was remotely close to mine.

She came up with my name after looking through books of French and German names. She said that she took a few letters from here and there and threw a little bit of soul into it and she came up with my name.

The name she showed me in the paper that day was Devoyd Jennings.

I first met Devoyd in 2003 after I began working at the Fort Worth Business Press. My first encounter with him was not quite what I was expecting. I slowly made my way over to him and introduced myself. Hello Mr. Jennings, my name is Shevoyd; Shevoyd Hamilton." I drew out the second mention of my name, announcing so he could properly hear it and realize the strong similarity of our names. I had envisioned this as the perfect icebreaker. He simply shook my hand and said, "Good to meet cha," and begin speaking to someone else. I thought, "That's it?!"

I remember thinking to myself I couldn't wait to tell my mom that I met "that guy" with the name similar to mine.

Over the next few years, I saw him from a distance or had quick conversations consisting of the exchange of hellos. By this time, I would say, "Hello Dee." He would say, "Hello Savoy."

As my role and responsibilities grew with the Business Press, so did our relationship. One day Dee called me and asked if I would meet with him. When we met, the first questions he asked me, "What do you do for the magazine? And you do know that Rich Connor (Publisher) and I go a long way back?"

I thought this must be a set up by Rich and Dee. Instead, this was the day I began to know Devoyd Jennings. This was the day that I really met him. I began to understand that my impression of our first

meeting was not who he was. He had been observing me and had really taken an interest in who I was and how he thought I could play a part in impacting the African American business community.

Devoyd's dedication and life's work to benefit the African American community should not be taken for granted. Devoyd spent many years of his life working to bring financial and health equity and balance to the African American community, working to ensure that equal access to business opportunities were available for all communities and members of the Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce. His impact is immeasurable.

When we first began the ground-work for The Metro Report, Devoyd was one of the first people I met with. He not only encouraged me but extended an open door any time I needed him. His experience in the community and in greater Fort Worth was invaluable. There were some days that he took hours out of his day to share and offer his insight on what made Fort Worth tick.

He was excited about me undertaking the publishing of The Metro Report. After every published issue, he would say, "I'm proud of you Savoy." But I, like many others in this city and state are proud of him. He has left an indelible mark on Fort Worth and it's African American community.

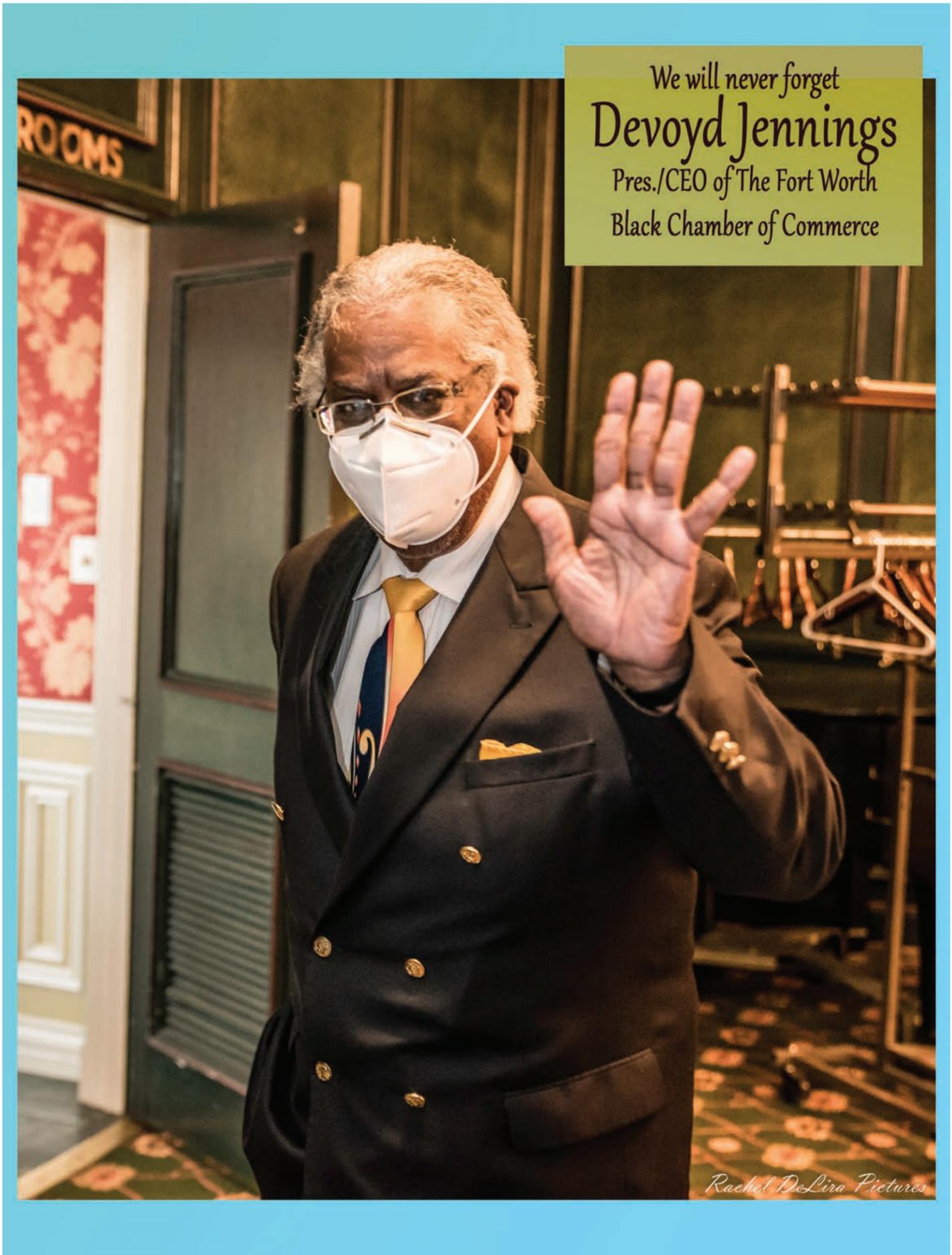
I will always remember that day at the washateria. As close as our names are, he stands alone, because there will never be another Devoyd Jennings.

On most days he still called me Savoy, but I didn't mind. It's just who he was.

Hey Mom, I want you to know that I met that guy... you know, the one with the name similar to mine. I'm sure glad that I did.



SHEVOYD HAMILTON





Ask the Banker

We polled some local bankers and asked several questions that small business owners have about building banking relationships. In this and upcoming issues, we will give you the answers they provided. If you have a banking question you would like answered in this forum, please send your questions to info@themetreport.biz.

What questions should a small business owner be prepared to ask?

What are banks doing to reach out and engage potential clients?



Before you meet with a prospective bank, prepare by making a list of your needs/questions and asking yourself what you want to know about them. Remember, you are in the driver's seat. How can doing business with them help foster the success and growth of your business? Is your business/industry a good fit for them? What sets them apart from every other bank in town? What's unique about their products and services? Don't be afraid to ask tough questions. If you don't have a clear understanding of something, press in by asking, "Why?" or "How?"

Jeanine Werberig - Happy State Bank, Senior Vice President Commercial Lending

- Does the bank have the resources, solutions, and innovation to help you meet your growth goals, such as treasury management services to manage cash flow and optimize working capital?
- Are lending decisions made locally and what does the process look like?
- How will the creditworthiness of a company be determine?
- Would the bank respond quickly to acquisitions, equipment and property additions, and needed loan term modifications?
- Does the bank have experience in the markets and industries that are vital to your success? or "How?"

Ann Morris - American National Bank & Trust, Vice-President

Ask open-ended clarifying questions about your bankers goals and what type of transactions are in their fairway. Asking specific questions about the loan approval and deposit account set up process will help identify any potential pitfalls ahead of time.

Ryan Jones - Simmons Bank, Commercial Banker II

- Be prepared to ask questions about fee structures and what will be the benefit of banking with them.
- Does the bank have experience working with companies in my industry?
- Ask questions around the financial stability of the bank and capabilities of the bank.
- Is your bank a SBA Approved Lender?

TC Alexander - BOK Financial, Senior Vice-President, Branch Business Banking and Sales Manager

Every bank or banker uses different approaches to source new clients. I personally believe in using a referral network that includes customers, prospects and centers of influence. A referral allows for a "warm" introduction to a prospective client and allows the prospective client to get some feedback on our bank. As most banks, we target those customers that are in industries that we understand and have an expertise. With that said, if I were a company looking for a bank, I might ask another business owner where they bank and see if they would make an introduction.

Martin Noto - Inwood National Bank, Executive Vice-President & Chief Lending Officer

- Community outreach - Banks are engaging with the community by teaching banking basics to build a foundation of financial knowledge. This can open doors to understanding what they may need and seek for help from their trusted source that opened this door for them.
- Social Media is heavily utilized as an outreach to promote current products that present a realistic solution for the client. Change can be scary, which is why Bank's also accompany this outreach movement with a personal support mechanism to guide them through this journey.
- Past the successful reach to the potential clients, Bank's engage customers by presenting a "whole-package" solution to service the clients in several different ways. This allows the bank to provide many solutions to the client all through one provider.

Amy Stoermer - Simmons Bank, Commercial Portfolio Manager II

Banks, generally speaking, continue to use news sources (periodicals, magazines, radio and TV) as well as social media and direct mail. They also sponsor events, host receptions and align with trade or industry groups. The true engagement from this strategy, however, comes through one on one solicitation or follow up by the bank personnel of the attendees at these events. The most effective means of engagement, in my opinion, comes through referrals from existing, happy clients.

Grant James - CapTex Bank, Executive Vice-President, Fort Worth Market President

The Little-Known Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

by Scharli Branch

Among the unexpected changes that came with 2020 and 2021 were the rapid development, testing, and administration of more than 300 million COVID-19 vaccines. Despite the effectiveness of the vaccine, the decision to be vaccinated remains a highly divisive topic. Notwithstanding the overwhelming data demonstrating the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines, there have been some adverse reactions creating doubt as to the safety of the vaccines.

Luckily, there is a little-known federal program specifically to help people that have an adverse reaction to a vaccine. That program is the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (NVICP), more commonly referred to as the Vaccine Program.

The government's Vaccine Program was developed in 1986 in response to a noticeable rise in lawsuits brought against vaccine manufacturers. The basis for those lawsuits was that the vaccine manufacturer failed to warn about the potential side effects. The increasing number of lawsuits continued causing the price of vaccine production to soar, which forced some vaccine manufacturers to stop production. This began to create a vaccine shortage in the United States.

The shortage came at a time when the United States was beginning to see the eradication – because of vaccinations – of serious, highly contagious conditions such as polio and measles. Wanting to continue this positive trend and provide support for research and development of vaccines, Congress passed the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act in 1986. Part of the Act established the Vaccine Program. Its sole purpose was to provide an avenue to compensate individuals who experience a rare adverse reaction to a covered vaccine.

Funding for the Vaccine Program comes from a \$.75 excise tax taken from each administered vaccine in the United States. That small tax goes to a fund, which is used to pay damages to individuals who make a claim in the Vaccine Program. Since its implementation in 1988, 24,084 claims have been filed and \$4.5 billion has been paid in damages.

To receive compensation from the Vaccine Program, a claim must be filed in the United States Court of Federal Claims. Among other requirements, an individual who wants to make a claim in the Vaccine Program must have received a covered vaccine and been injured thereafter. An attorney from the Department of Justice is responsible for responding to the claim and defending the fund.

All the proceedings for the claim are heard and decided by a Special Master (functioning as a Judge).

To help remove barriers to entry and make the Vaccine Program accessible, attorney's fees are paid by the fund regardless of the outcome, assuming the case is brought in good faith. Any attorney who has been admitted to practice in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims can bring a claim on behalf of an injured party. Even with all of these benefits, the Vaccine Program remains relatively unknown, even amongst physicians who treat patients with vaccine-related injuries.

While the Vaccine Program covers the most common vaccines administered in the United States, such as measles, seasonal flu, and whooping cough (DTaP or Tdap), the COVID-19 vaccines are not included because of their emergency approval status. Congress can add the COVID-19 vaccines as covered vaccines if and when they receive full approval from the FDA, which Pfizer and Moderna have applied to receive.

Although compensation for vaccine-injured individuals and liability protection for COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers exists while the vaccines have emergency approval status, it is more limited than the Vaccine Program. Full FDA approval would remove those protections, potentially causing consequences similar to those seen before the existence of the Vaccine Program. To protect individuals and manufacturers, Congress is likely to amend the list of covered vaccines to include the COVID-19 vaccines. This would be especially true if booster vaccinations are recommended for continued immunity against the COVID-19 variants.

The polarizing and political nature of the COVID-19 vaccines often distract from how extremely effective they have been in reducing the amount of serious complications and deaths arising from the virus. As virus variants remain an ever-present threat, the need for vaccination will continue. This underscores the importance of providing a means of compensation for rare adverse reactions that may come from any widely administered medicine, while also providing some protection to the vaccine manufacturers.

About the Author: Scharli Branch is a licensed Texas attorney, admitted to practice in the Court of Federal Claims. She spent two years at the United States Court of Federal Claims-Office of Special Masters analyzing and drafting decisions on hundreds of vaccine claims. She currently works as a healthcare litigation associate at Cantey Hanger, LLP in Fort Worth, Texas.



SCHARLI BRANCH

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Anita McNew

Name, title, company: Anita McNew, MS, LPC; Clinical Therapist, The Women's Center of Tarrant County

City of residence: Fort Worth, TX

City of birth: Fort Riley, KS

Spouse: Mikel McNew

Children: Shelbi McNew Gonzales, Devon McNew, Monica McNew, Madeline McNew

Company description: Social service agency in Tarrant County meeting the needs of individuals and families who have been impacted by adverse experiences and trauma.

Years with company: 6

Personal business strategy: To provide effective clinically therapeutic assistance to individuals recovering from the impact of trauma due to sexual or domestic violence.

Challenges your company (or industry) will face

the next 12 months: With the possibility of an increase in the number of cases of Covid-19 in Tarrant County comes the concern that individuals may once again find themselves sheltering in place. This practice not only impacts the way we serve clients, but also increases the risk for those living in unsafe circumstances.

Business advice to share:

Start by believing a person's perception of their challenges. Then, meet them where they are without personal bias and assumptions, and treat them in a way that respects their individuality.

Worst business decision:

Waiting so long to get to the Women's Center.

Your greatest achievement:

Raising self-confident, self-sufficient children who have a heart for service.

First job: Keep on Bookin' used book store in Killeen, TX

Dream job: I'm doing it now.

Hobbies: I am a Market Partner for Monat Global Hair Care and provide vocal coaching to singing groups and individuals. I sing in a church choir, enjoy crafting of all kinds, and have begun to dabble in paint. My husband and I enjoy traveling in our RV and spending time with our two dogs and two cats.

Role models: Jane Montgomery Gibson, a mentor and friend from childhood.

How I know I'm successful: I know that I am successful because I have little regret when I lie my head on the pillow at night.

Favorite book(s): Anything by John Grisham, Lonesome Dove by Larry McMurtry, and the Harry Potter series by J K Rowling.

Favorite movie: 42

Favorite restaurant: I recently discovered Panther City BBQ in Fort Worth and am obsessed with it.

People I'd most want to share

a meal with: Princess Diana, Ghandi, Mother Teresa, Jimmy Fallon

Pet peeve: Litter bugs

Colleges attended:

Stephen F. Austin State University, University of Texas at Arlington, Texas Wesleyan University

Favorite place to get away:

The beach

I collect: Shoes

Motto or theme song:

You are the captain of your own emotional ship.

The talent you'd most like to have:

Drawing/painting





“ Lisa Logan makes the complicated process of buying and selling such a painless experience, it’s easy to overlook the high degree of real estate savvy and professionalism that she brings to the process.

~ ERIC P.

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