
NEWS RELEASE

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PAINESVILLE LAWYERS NAMED FINALISTS FOR NATIONAL AWARD

A successful class action lawsuit against the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation has won the notice of one of the one of the country's most influential legal organizations and put two Painesville attorneys and their co-counsel in the running for the Public Justice 2007 Trial Lawyer of the Year Award.

Patrick J. Perotti and **Patrick T. Murphy** of Dworken & Bernstein Co., LPA in Painesville; **W. Craig Bashein** of Bashein & Bashein Co., LPA; and **Paul W. Flowers** of Paul Flowers Co., LPA, both of Cleveland; and **John Smalley** of Dyer, Garofalo, Mann & Schultz in Dayton were named by the Public Justice Foundation as finalists for the award bestowed annually to the lawyers who made the greatest contribution to the public interest by trying or settling a precedent-setting case.

The team recovered \$52 million in *Santos v. Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation*, a class action on behalf of 8,000 injured Ohio workers who were required to reimburse the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation for funds they collected from insurance companies or third parties in connection with their injuries – a practice known as “subrogation.” The state statute governing those demands was deemed unconstitutional and, after seven years of litigation, the Ohio BWC was ordered to return wrongfully held funds to the workers.

Perotti, Murphy, Bashein, Flowers, and Smalley are among 37 lawyers in eight cases named as finalists for their committed work in the public interest. The cases that were nominated this year involve a range of issues, from worker safety and environmental protection to juvenile justice reform and the rights of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita victims. Detailed summaries of each case are accessible on the Public Justice website at www.publicjustice.net.

The winner of the nationally prestigious award will be announced on July 17 at the Public Justice Foundations 25th Anniversary Awards Dinner and Gala in Chicago.

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Public Justice, America's public interest law firm, is dedicated to using trial lawyers and other attorneys' skills and resources to advance the public good. Founded in 1982 (as Trial Lawyers for Public Justice), Public Justice utilizes a nationwide network of more than 3,000 attorneys to pursue precedent-setting and socially significant litigation. It has a wide-ranging litigation docket in the areas of civil rights and liberties, consumer rights, worker safety, toxic torts, environmental protection, and access to the courts. Public Justice is the principal project of the Public Justice Foundation, a not-for-profit membership organization. It has offices in Washington, D.C., and Oakland, California.