

SNELLINGS LAW PLLC

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SnellingsInjuryLaw.com

February 2020

How Losing My Kidney Made Me a Better Lawyer

"I'm sorry, Scott. There has been too much damage to your kidneys. You are going to need a transplant at some point in the future." On the list of things you imagine may one day change your life, most of you would not think an organ transplant will be one of them. I know I certainly didn't think so, not even on the day the doctor told me the news.

In 2008, a different doctor diagnosed me with ulcerative colitis — nothing to do with kidneys. Unfortunately, the medications that doctor prescribed did affect my kidneys; in fact, the medications caused permanent damage to them. To add insult to injury, it turned out I never had ulcerative colitis in the first place.

Over the next decade, my kidney function steadily declined, and I eventually reached the point where I needed the transplant. When you need a transplant, you get an organ in one of two ways. You can be placed on the organ donor list and wait for a phone call, which will hopefully come in time. The other option for certain transplants is to receive one from a live donor … but you have to ask. In my world, they call this "The Big Ask." I have asked for many difficult things in my life (for my gorgeous wife to marry me, for her parents' permission to marry her …), but asking people to get tested in order to give me a kidney was the hardest ask I have ever made. Thankfully, I had a number of people from my family, community, and church and several of my friends step forward and get tested. My best friend, Jacob Thompson, was one of them.



I met Jacob during my freshman year at Baylor University, and we became instant friends. After college, Jacob worked at an accounting firm before joining the Navy. Even while Jacob was deployed, we still kept in touch, and he knew about my kidney issues and future need for a transplant. For Jacob, there was never any hesitation about whether he would get tested. He just told me to let him know when the time came and he would be there. Before he was tested, Jacob and I used to joke that, of course, he would be my match — that is just the way it was supposed to work! Then, as the time for a kidney transplant grew near, we became more serious about it and began to pray that he would be my match. After all of the testing had been completed, our prayers were answered: Jacob was a nearly perfect match.

When you need health care urgently (in my case to avoid having to go on dialysis), there is nothing convenient about it, and getting my kidney transplant was no exception. Our transplant surgery was scheduled for Oct. 31, 2017. (Having a surgery on Halloween was not creepy at all by the way … especially a transplant.) As stressful as undergoing a transplant surgery can be, I had an added layer. Snellings Law was just two months old. Clearly, all of the planning I had done in getting the firm up and running did not include me undergoing a transplant just two months after starting. Thankfully, I had an amazing paralegal, Gina, who was up to speed and able to hold the fort down while I was out. That was hard, but nothing compared to saying goodbye to my children the night before my operation.



My wife and I drove down to stay near the hospital the night before the surgery. I will never forget leaving my house that night. Despite being an optimist, I knew that there was a chance I might never see my children again. If the unthinkable happened and I did not survive the transplant, I knew that my youngest two, at just 3 and 5 years old, were too young to keep their memories of me.

I will be forever grateful to Jacob for donating his kidney to me. His wife, Carley, was eight months pregnant when he underwent donor surgery, so it really was the ultimate sacrifice. Our families have taken a trip every year since the transplant to celebrate, and we call it our "Kidneyversary" trip.

By the time I had my kidney transplant, I had already been a lawyer for many years, but no amount of legal preparation and practice can teach you the lessons I learned throughout this experience — and continue to learn. We all understand pain and seek to avoid it. What we often discount are the emotional aspects of these situations, like the fear you

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Meet Conan

THE DOG WHO HELPED TAKE DOWN AL-BAGHDADI

On Oct. 28 last year, President Donald Trump tweeted a photo that quickly went viral. It showed an adorable snapshot of a bright-eyed Belgian Malinois, tongue lolling, still wearing its camo military vest. In the caption, President Trump explained that the pup, Conan, was a national hero who was instrumental in taking down ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

With four years in special operations forces and roughly 50 missions under his collar, Conan was selected to be part of the team that pursued al-Baghdadi through a network of underground tunnels in northwest Syria, where the terrorist ultimately died. It's unclear whether Conan was there to track al-Baghdadi or to spot improvised explosive devices that may have been planted on the route, but either way, he performed well.

According to NBC News, Conan was injured by some live electrical cables during the mission, but he recovered quickly and was back on duty within the week. Meanwhile, President Trump invited the brave pup to the White House and tweeted out a doctored photo that showed him awarding Conan a Medal of Honor.

President Trump captioned the photo "AMERICAN HERO!" and he's not alone in his appreciation for the hardworking dogs that have been helping our military since World War II.

"To me, they're the first line of defense," United States War Dogs Association President Ron Aiello told Vox after the news about Conan came out. "They're such a great asset to our military today."

Military dogs are put up for adoption after 6–8 years in the service, which means a lucky civilian could take Conan in as early as 2022! Meanwhile, dozens of other smart canine heroes are looking for homes. To learn more about military and other working dog adoptions, visit MissionK9Rescue.org.



… continued from Cover

feel immediately after being involved in some traumatic event or receiving traumatic news. It's the kind of fear where your head begins to spin and time slows down as you try to digest what has happened. It's the anxiety that streams through your body as you realize life may never be the same again. It's the heart-wrenching sorrow you experience as you come to terms with your future and what may no longer be available for you to pursue, enjoy, teach, and learn. It's the dread of each recovery day and the potential for bad news.



It's the soul-crushing defeat of your health backsliding. It's even the dread as the hospital light comes on at 3 a.m. and a nurse or tech comes in to find a vein that hasn't been poked too many times already.

Experiencing these emotions, dealing with the fallout of a significant health issue, fighting through setbacks, and continuing to sit in the doctor's room once a quarter waiting for the doctor to walk in and report how my new kidney is holding up — all of these experiences have made me a better lawyer. These lessons have taught me how to be more empathetic and understanding on a deeper level than ever before. I feel a connection with our clients as they tell me their stories of what they have been through. I feel a sense of pride for them as they move through their recoveries and begin to heal. I better understand the flood of emotions they endure throughout the entire process. Having that better understanding allows me to better relate those emotions to others, including insurance adjusters and juries.

While I would never wish to endure difficult health or other situations, perhaps one of the

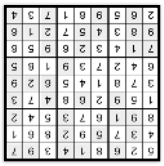


greatest lessons I have learned is that there is good in everything as well as a chance to grow and improve, but only if you embrace it. My kidney transplant has helped me become a better father, husband, friend, and lawyer. If you are facing an uphill battle, let me encourage you too. Embrace the challenge, fight with all you have, and find the good in your struggle.

-Scott Snellings

TAKE A BREAK

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EASY SHRIMP SCAMPI

Make date night simple with this easy shrimp scampi recipe.

Ingredients

- 4 tbsp butter
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 lb shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1/2 tsp oregano
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 8 oz cooked linguine
- 1/4 cup parsley

Directions

1. In a skillet over medium heat, melt 2 tbsp of butter with 2 tbsp of olive oil. Add garlic and cook for 2 minutes.
2. Add shrimp and oregano, stirring frequently until shrimp is pink. Remove shrimp from skillet.
3. Add wine and lemon juice to skillet and bring the mixture to a boil.
4. Stir in remaining butter and olive oil and cook until butter is melted.
5. Add cooked shrimp to skillet and cook for 1 minute, stirring occasionally.
6. In a serving bowl, top cooked linguine with shrimp mixture. Garnish with parsley and serve.

Inspired by The Blond Cook

FROM ZERO TO 300

Meet the Women Who Pioneered Motor Sports

While Danica Patrick and Courtney Force are well known as modern faces in motor sports, they're far from the first women to cross the finish line. Since the early 1900s, women have been a constant fixture of automotive racing, including the following three who each left their marks on the sport.



SHIRLEY MULDOWNEY

Shirley Muldowney is professionally known in the drag racing community as "The First Lady of Drag Racing." In 1973, she was the first woman to earn a Top Fuel license from the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) and, despite backlash from competitors, went on to win the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series an unprecedented three times. Twentieth Century Fox documented her trials and accomplishments in the 1983 biopic "Heart Like a Wheel." Muldowney famously loathed her own characterization but still lauded the film as required viewing for anyone interested in the sport of drag racing.

JANET GUTHRIE

Janet Guthrie had her sights set on the stars from day one. A skilled aerospace engineer, she began her racing career in 1963. After taking home two class wins in the famed 12 Hours of Sebring endurance race, Guthrie became a well-known figure among racing gurus. In 1976, she became the first woman to compete in the NASCAR Cup Series when she finished 15th in the Coca-Cola 600, then called the World 600. To date, Guthrie's storied career has landed her in the International Women's Sports Hall of Fame, the International Motorsports Hall of Fame, and the Automotive Hall of Fame.

DOROTHY LEVITT

Dorothy Levitt is known for her driving skills on both land and water, setting the first water speed record and an early women's world land speed record. Her motor racing career started slow in 1904 due to illness and various car troubles, but Levitt eventually went on to garner a reputation for her speed and earn the nickname "The Fastest Girl on Earth." When she wasn't racing, she spent her time writing. In her book "The Woman and the Car," Levitt recommended that women carry a small mirror with them for driving in traffic, effectively inventing the rearview mirror five years before it went into production.

If you want to learn more about these women and others in motor racing, pick up Todd McCarthy's book "Fast Women: The Legendary Ladies of Racing."

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STEALING MISS HELEN

'OCEAN'S 3' ATTEMPT A HIGH-STAKES HEIST

On a hot summer day in late July 2018, three people entered Miss Helen's home, forcibly removed her, put her in a stroller, and ran toward their getaway vehicle. This might sound like a typical kidnapping story, but Miss Helen is no ordinary person. She is a 16-inch horn shark living at the San Antonio Aquarium.

Fortunately, their fishy behavior didn't go unnoticed, and someone alerted the aquarium staff. One perpetrator drove away with Miss Helen in tow, but the other two were stopped by aquarium staff, later confessing to their involvement. Thanks to some observant witnesses and aquarium surveillance, police were able to identify the third thief and obtain a warrant to search his house. As it turned out, he had an extensive aquarium in his home and possibly hoped to add Miss Helen to his collection. After being identified, Miss Helen was returned home safely.

The aquarium staff was grateful to have Miss Helen back unharmed, despite her ordeal. "She's a tough little horn shark, I'll tell you that," affirmed Jamie Shank, the assistant husbandry director at the aquarium.

NO MINOR CRIME

While many animal lovers might disagree, animals are considered personal property, so stealing them is a crime of theft, not kidnapping. The penalties for stealing animals vary depending on each state's laws, and some states have specific laws regarding animal theft.

In Texas, larceny law designates the theft of property valued between $1,500–$20,000 as a felony. In the case of Miss Helen, who's valued by the aquarium at $2,000, the thieves committed a felony. Also, transporting certain animals requires special permits, which led to additional charges against the three thieves.

The Animal Welfare Act, which was adopted in 1966, is the only federal law that regulates the treatment of animals in research, exhibition, transport, and by dealers. Interestingly, it only applies to warm-blooded animals, so if Miss Helen had needed further protection, she would be left out in the cold.

