

## New and Improved GVK

### Calculated Growth and Expansion

The first quarter of 2017 has gotten off to a great start for GVK. We are proud to add to the depth of our services and we continue in our commitment to quality legal representation and efficient legal services for our clients.

The GVK of today is comprised of over 65 attorneys in 4 offices including senior partners, seasoned litigators and bright new hires ready to tackle issues big and small for our clients.

Upgrading our infrastructure, launching a new website, inviting partners to join GVK in key management and client-based positions and the ability to offer clients non-traditional legal services are just some of the exciting changes we've seen at GVK in 2016.

### Long Island Office

We recently opened the doors of a fourth office located at 100 Crossways Park West in Woodbury, Long Island. This new and modern space is set in the center of Long Island.

Named Partner, Co-Founder and leader of the firm's Transportation Department, Matthew J. Vitucci heads the new Woodbury office. Matt is joined by Alida A. Verdino, Partner and Professional Liability Specialist; Daniel P. Mevorach, Partner and Co-Chair of the Coverage Department; James P. Deegan, Partner and Senior Trial Counsel and Bill V. Kakoullis, Partner and Construction Accident Specialist.

### Work Life Balance

GVK has always strived to better serve our clients and provide a healthy work-life balance for our staff. The opening of the Woodbury office is yet another example of our efforts. GVK attorneys are now closer than ever before to the Courts and clients located in Queens, Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

## ATTORNEY SPOTLIGHT

### Jessica Clark



Jessica Clark, a newly promoted partner who has been with GVK since 2010 married Ralph Consentino on October 1, 2016 before 275 guests including 20 GVK co-workers at The Basilica of Old St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan. The reception followed at Dyker Beach Golf Course in Brooklyn, New York.

The newlyweds went on a Mediterranean Cruise and ended their trip with a blessing from the Pope in Rome.

# WHO'S NEW AT GVK

GVK welcomed partners, Bryan T. Schwartz, Andrea Silk and Robyn Silvestri. The three had previously worked together at the Manhattan offices of Wilson, Elser, Moskowitz, Edelman and Dicker, LLP and at Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard and Smith, LLP.

## **Bryan T. Schwartz**

Bryan has over 17 years of experience defending transportation and complex litigation matters and primarily focuses on cases involving tractor trailers, heavy trucks, buses, ambulances and para-transit vehicles.

## **Andrea Silk**

Andrea specializes in the wind down of run-off programs and large scale settlement projects for insurers, re-insurers and captives. Over the past 15 years, Andrea has reviewed, monitored and provided her clients with action plans for over 12,000 claims and defended well over 4,000 cases in run off.

## **Robyn Silvestri**

Robyn's expertise lies in the defense of insurance coverage matters and bad faith claims. She customarily represents insurers in declaratory judgment actions arising out of insurance coverage disputes in State and Federal Court.



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Robyn Silvestri  
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# WHO'S NEW AT GVK

GVK welcomed Partner Bill Kakoullis and Senior Associates Maria Zouros, Richard Gonzalez, Andrew Lauri and Ava Maynard to the Woodbury Office.

**Maria Zouros**  
[mzouros@gvlaw.com](mailto:mzouros@gvlaw.com)

Maria, a seasoned litigator with over 20 plus years' experience has joined our Long Island Office. Maria has extensive experience in all aspects of liability defense, including commercial and residential premises liability, automobile litigation, construction accidents, products liability and pharmacy negligence actions.



**Andrew Lauri**  
[alauri@gvlaw.com](mailto:alauri@gvlaw.com)

Andrew, a seasoned litigator with over 20 plus years' experience joins GVK in our construction litigation practice area. Andrew has a wide range of experience in all aspects of liability defense and specializes in construction accident and construction defect defense.



**Bill V. Kakoullis**  
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Bill comes to GVK from D'Amato & Lynch, LLP, where he spent most of his legal career with over 35 years' experience handling complex litigation involving all types of personal injury and construction/labor law matters and insurance coverage.



**Ava R. Maynard**  
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Ava joins GVK with 25 years' experience representing elevator and construction equipment contractors in both products liability and general negligence actions. She also has 33 years' experience defending premises and general negligence actions in State and Federal court.



**Richard Gonzalez**  
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Richard heads the firm's Maritime and Admiralty Law Group. A retired Lieutenant Commander with the U.S. Coast Guard, Richard specializes in handling marine casualty investigations, including licensing actions involving merchant mariners. Richard is also experienced in accessing personal injury, property damage and premises liability claims.



# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Maria Formisano

GVK's recent growth and expansion could not have been accomplished without Maria's insight. Maria has been with GVK since the beginning. According to Doreen Pankewicz, long time office manager for the Hackensack office, "Maria is the glue that holds us all together." Never was it so obvious than in September of 2016 when within one week, GVK moved its Manhattan office into a completely new space and opened a Long Island office. Thank you Maria!

A graphic featuring the text "GVK" in a vertical font on the left and "GWINS" in a large, bold, white font on the right. The background is a dark blue grid with white numbers, resembling a stock market ticker or data table.

## Summary Judgment

Associate, [Rozaly Cohen](#) was successful in Superior Court, State of New Jersey in dismissing all claims of punitive damages, costs and attorney's fees against her client.

The plaintiff alleged that the defendant's actions against the plaintiff's coop amounted to Consumer Fraud. Rozaly argued and the Court agreed that the relationship between the association and the coop shareholder is not that of the landlord tenant, and therefore, The Consumer Fraud Act does not apply.

## Trial Win

Senior Trial Counsel and Partner [Kenneth S. Merber](#) obtained a defense verdict on behalf of a longtime GVK client and one of the largest property maintenance companies in the United States.

In an alleged slip and fall by an employee at their offices, the plaintiff alleged that the matron of a GVK client failed to place a warning cone in the area of a recently mopped floor. RSD was alleged and both the plaintiff and his physician had previously testified that an amputation of plaintiff's lower leg was sought to limit or end his constant pain.

After the bifurcated trial, the jury returned a unanimous defense verdict in less than 30 minutes.

## GVK Practice Areas

*Click each link to connect*

- Construction Accident
- Construction Defect
- Elevator and Escalator
- Emergency Response
- Environmental
- Excess Insurance Monitoring/  
Substitution Counsel
- Insurance Coverage and  
Litigation
- Labor and Employment
- Life Sciences
- Litigation and Reserve Analysis
- Maritime
- No-Fault/PIP
- Premises Liability
- Product Liability Defense
- Professional Liability
- Real Estate
- Restaurant and Innkeeper  
Liability
- Security Guard Litigation Defense
- Subrogation and Property Loss
- Trucking and Transportation



## Trends in Litigation Defense & New Types of Insurance

### **Level Insurance is changing the scope of financial risk associated with civil litigation: but for whom?**

With the advent of companies who provide to plaintiffs either pre-settlement or pre-verdict funds (with a hefty interest rate), the risk associated with civil litigation has consistently decreased for plaintiffs, while the risk associated with trial for the actual firm's or attorneys trying the cases remained constant.

### **Is this the new trend in Insurance Litigation?**

However, with the introduction of Level Insurance in 2016, where coverage is afforded to cover costs of trial in the event of a defense verdict; firms and attorneys alike are minimizing risk. Level does not analyze the merits of any particular case, as the policy is only paid out if the matter proceeds to trial and a jury awards no money to the plaintiff. Level does not pay out for lawsuits that are dismissed or settled pre-verdict.

### **Is this going to increase motivation to take cases to verdict?**

As a result, in 2017, we will likely see the number of cases that plaintiffs' counsel recommend taking to trial increase, with little to no impact on the amount of low level cases plaintiffs take on or refuse to take on from the beginning.

Gallo Vitucci Klar LLP is a full service insurance defense firm with offices located in New York City, Long Island, Westchester and New Jersey. Our attorneys are experienced litigators, focused on client satisfaction and superior results.

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