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COVER STORY

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# Promises Kept

**KEN ALLEN** HONORS HIS ROOTS  
BY FIGHTING FOR CLIENTS

**Kenneth J. Allen is one of Indiana's most prominent plaintiffs' attorneys. He has led the *Indiana Jury Verdict***

*Reporter's* list of million-dollar verdicts for 14 straight years. Over the course of his storied career, Allen has appeared as plaintiffs' counsel in more than 100 trials and appellate decisions. Repeatedly recognized by *The Best Lawyers in America*, *Law Dragon* and numerous other publications for his courtroom prowess, Allen still remembers his roots.

For Allen, watching his father labor in the steel mills for a lifetime taught him both the value of hard work and that education was key to a better life. And then there was the promise.

"Before my dad died, he made me promise I'd finish school; he knew otherwise I'd end up in the same situation as him," Allen recalls. "I was still a teenager when he died, but I honored that promise. Consequently, I've been truly blessed; but I'll never forget where I came from."

It's also part of the reason that Allen—who first began laboring in the mills at 17, then as a railroad trackman and later a construction carpenter—still pays his union dues. "I know what it's like to work in a dangerous job where you face two choices: either do the job or go home, and I know that if you need the money to support your family or for school, you do the job, even if the workplace isn't as safe as it should be."

This sense of responsibility to honor his past while making sure his clients get the best representation possible stretches beyond the courtroom as well.

Allen and his wife have donated time and contributed tens of thousands to local organizations, charities and causes, such as the United Way, Boys & Girls Clubs, NAACP, YMCA, Catholic Charities, The Caring Place and numerous local homeless and women's shelters. Just last month, he gave hundreds of bike helmets to school children in an effort to promote bike safety.

"Preventing harm and promoting safety are driving forces in our firm," says Allen, who was the recipient of the Fifth Annual

Child Safety Advocate Award for outstanding dedication in forwarding the issues of child safety, awarded by the I. U. School of Medicine and the Indiana Safe Kids Coalition.

"At the end of the day, the overriding goal of this law firm is preventing injury," he says. "And we take pride in effecting changes in the safety laws or modifications to a dangerous product or unsafe practice. Those kinds of changes help not only a specific client, but potentially thousands of others at risk of suffering similar harm."

Take a recent case—tried to an \$18.5 million jury verdict—involving a tractor trailer that crashed into a car in snowy conditions, killing the car's occupants. The

semi-truck driver was using cruise control to save diesel, but after the verdict, the trucking company changed its policy, and now trains its drivers not to use cruise control in inclement weather. "That's what we're about in a nutshell," Allen says.

"The jury's decision not only helped our clients but made our community safer. Lobbyists would've prevented passage of a new law banning cruise control in bad weather, but the verdict had the same effect. By holding those who act carelessly or negligently fully responsible for the harm they cause, our work motivates companies to do right, spending more on safety and accident prevention. That is our greatest motivation."



Ken Allen

With its exclusive focus on personal injury and accident law, Allen's multi-state firm has become one of the premier personal injury practices in Indiana and Illinois. The firm's attorneys are known in both states for their passionate and dedicated representation of injury victims, particularly in cases involving semi-truck crashes and serious work accidents.

"Our singular concentration has helped us achieve a depth of knowledge unattainable by general practice law firms," Allen notes. "Typically, only very large corporations can afford to have a number of lawyers working on a case, but we'll often have a dozen lawyers looking at one case, collaborating on a single issue, trying to find the best right answer; because it's not so difficult to find a right answer—the challenge is finding the best one."

To provide clients with focused legal representation, Kenneth J. Allen Law Group not only limits its practice area to accidental injury and wrongful death, but also its workload: the firm actually declines nine out of every ten potential cases. Allen explains, "we only accept cases we believe in; when you know you're fighting for justice, it makes the countless hours spent preparing and fighting for our clients all worthwhile."

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