



Wittmeyer Briefs

FROM THE LAW OFFICES OF RF WITTMAYER, LTD. PERSONAL INJURY LAW

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LAW OFFICES OF
RF WITTMAYER, LTD.
PERSONAL INJURY LAW

Community Spotlight: Hey Nonny Songwriter Contest



L to R: Chip, Ron, Brandon Reisdorf, Val Leventhal, Emily Barnes; Judges Jenny Bienemann, Robin Bienemann and Erich Specht.

Striking the Right Chord at the Fourth Annual Hey Nonny Songwriting Contest

As the old saying goes, *“Where words fail, music speaks.”* That’s exactly the spirit behind the Hey Nonny Songwriting Contest — a celebration of creativity, storytelling, and the local music scene.

This year marked the fourth year our firm has proudly sponsored this local showcase of talent and creativity, and it was another unforgettable season. Dozens of talented songwriters shared their original work, with each round bringing new voices, new styles, and new energy to the stage.

No contest is complete without prizes! The winner for best song was awarded \$1,000 plus a performance spot at Hey Nonny. Second and third place finishers took home \$400 and \$300 respectively. Of course, all final round winners received a mantel-worthy trophy to proudly display.

Here’s a look back at the finalists who advanced out of each preliminary round:

Round 1: Risa Kopp & her daughter (*Night Likes to Hold On*), The Black and Blue Hearts (*Heart Burn Blues*), Bruce Wilson II (*Sunset*), and Nick Stuart (*Witch Hazel and Wildflowers*)

Round 2: Dave Barrett (*Dance With Me*), Brandon Reisdorf (*The Worst Way We Could Go*), Aaron Newsome (*Dead Animal Bar*), and Emily Barnes (*Comets*)

Round 3: Val Leventhal (*Fine Red Wine*), Mike Flood (*Scared to Be Brave*), Aiden Burke (*Moments*), and Blue Rose (*Life Is Short*)

The competition built to a lively final round, where the top three were crowned:



**HEY!
WINNERS**

First Place:
Emily Barnes – *Comets*

Second Place:
Brandon Reisdorf
The Worst Way We Could Go

Third Place:
Val Leventhal – *Fine Red Wine*

Each songwriter brought their own unique voice and story to the stage. We left the event humming new favorites and were reminded of why we love supporting this contest year after year. Both the talent and creativity of the artists and the enthusiastic support by the audience inspire us to continue this project with Hey Nonny. We love supporting the songwriting community and we hope our involvement in the Hey Nonny Songwriting Contest provides some motivation for all you songwriters to continue writing and exploring new musical ideas!



A Message from Our Founder

Watching our team settle into the new “west wing” of our Arlington Heights office brings me back to when we first built out our space here eight years ago. At the time, it felt huge. But after years of growth, we realized it was now time to expand again. Thanks to familiar partners—Trend Construction, TMI, Rework, and our broker Bob Markay—the process was smoother and faster this time around.

When we first moved into 2101 S. Arlington Heights Rd. in 2017, we were a team of nine. Today, we’re proud to have 37 dedicated professionals. That growth journey, in many ways, began with my involvement in the Northwest Suburban Bar Association (NWSBA). Conversations with colleagues there, and later through law firm coaching with Atticus Advantage, taught me the value of continuous improvement. That mindset has shaped how we run our law practice ever since.

A good example: when we first moved in, we brought along stacks of paper files. Today, we’re fully digital—streamlining workflows and

improving efficiency. But while systems matter, the heart of our firm has always been our people. Work should be meaningful, enjoyable, and even fun. I’m proud that our team looks out for each other while delivering exceptional care to our clients.

As you’ll see in this newsletter, we recently gathered with our families at Busse Woods for our firm picnic—a reminder that the bonds we share go beyond the office. Through moments like these, and through our newsletters and social media, I hope you get to know the incredible people who make up our firm.

Most importantly, we’re deeply grateful to our clients—past and present—for trusting us with their important personal injury matters. It’s a privilege we never take lightly.

Ron Wittmeyer, Managing Attorney

RFW Firm Family Picnic

With summer winding down, our team came together for some fun at the RFW Firm Family Picnic. Colleagues, spouses, kids, grandkids, parents, grandparents—and even a few dogs—joined in on the afternoon festivities. (Colby Jack, of course, stole the show!) We were thrilled that members of our Kenosha team made the trip to Arlington Heights to join us at Grove 27 in Busse Woods. With perfect weather as the backdrop, it was the ideal day to connect and celebrate.



The potluck spread gave everyone a chance to show off their kitchen skills, and no one left hungry. The ice cream sundae bar, complete with sprinkles, M&Ms, and whipped cream, was a kid-favorite—and Ron may have enjoyed serving them up just as much as the little ones enjoyed eating them!



Of course, no picnic is complete without a little friendly competition. While the kids played ladder ball and bozo buckets, the adults battled it out in a 12-team corn hole tournament. After three nail-biting rounds, the championship came down to Larry and Lisa versus Ron and Jen—who ultimately claimed the crown. (We’ll see if they can defend their title next year!) The fun continued with a water balloon toss and egg toss, led by Ron with his trademark enthusiasm. Ann and Jen won the egg toss, and Lisa and Ralph prevailed in the water balloon toss (having won the egg toss last time.). By the end, a few people wore the evidence of the competition, but spirits stayed high.

Events like this remind us how lucky we are to work alongside people we truly enjoy spending time with. The summer picnic has become a highlight of the year, and we’re already looking forward to making more memories together at next year’s celebration.



Attorney Spotlight: Paula Candea



Attorney Paula Candea

For Paula, the pursuit of justice has always been deeply personal. Growing up in a family that immigrated from formerly communist Romania, she often heard stories from her parents about the injustices they endured during that time. Those early lessons left a lasting impression.

“From a young age, I cared deeply about fairness and felt a responsibility to confront injustice,” she shared. “We are blessed to live in a country that allows for

remedies when wrongs occur.” That passion eventually led her to become a felony prosecutor, standing up for victims of crime who faced overwhelming circumstances and relied on her to help right the wrongs committed against them.

Though her career has evolved, her mission hasn’t changed. ***“Today, instead of fighting crime, I fight against powerful insurance companies to secure justice for our clients. The setting may be different, but my mission is the same: to stand up for those who need it most.”***

Outside of the courtroom, Paula finds joy and grounding in family life. Paula acknowledges the pressure for modern-day moms to do it all: excel in their careers, make homemade dinners, exercise daily, and the list goes on. ***“In the midst of it all, I’ve learned how important it is to slow down and be present in whatever I’m doing, instead of constantly chasing the next item on my to-do list.”*** She carves out time for herself—whether it’s an early morning coffee and reading my Bible, a quick workout, or attending her monthly book club—knowing that caring for herself helps her show up better for others.

Family time often means heading outdoors, no matter the season. Inspired by the book *There’s No Such Thing as Bad Weather* by Linda Åkeson McGurk, she and her family embrace the idea that happiness shouldn’t hinge on sunshine or perfect conditions. ***“That perspective has become a guidepost in our parenting and in our overall approach to life: embrace the moment and be present, even when it’s messy.”***

When reflecting on what inspires her career, Paula points to truth-tellers—those who speak with honesty and conviction, even when it comes at a cost. Those who choose the hard road and refuse to remain silent in the face of wrongdoing. ***“Their courage has profoundly shaped how I see my role as an attorney,”*** she explained. But she also values the importance of how truth is carried: with grace, kindness, and empathy. ***“Being a truth-teller does not mean being harsh or inflexible—it means approaching hard conversations with humanity, advocating with both strength and compassion, and never losing sight of the dignity and respect every person deserves.”***

In her current role, she’s especially energized by the opportunity to keep growing. ***“I’m excited about continuing to sharpen my writing skills to achieve the best possible results for my clients,”*** she said. Drawing on her courtroom litigation experience while expanding her expertise in civil law keeps her motivated. ***“I feel fortunate to work alongside bright and talented colleagues that keep me on my toes and inspire me to keep learning and improving every day.”***



October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Don’t Be the Next Headline: How to Stay Safe from Emerging Cyber Threats

Cybercriminals are getting more sophisticated, using artificial intelligence and deepfake technology to trick people into sharing money or sensitive information. Even if you think you’re not a target, scammers often go after the easiest opportunity. Staying alert is your best defense.

The Rising Threat: AI-Enabled Scams

Scams powered by AI can generate convincing emails, texts, or even fake voices and video calls. Imagine a call that sounds exactly like your spouse or child—only it isn’t them. These impersonation tactics are no longer rare.

How These Scams Work

Attackers mix stolen details from social media with AI tools to create believable messages. They rely on urgency—pressuring you to send money, share a password, or open an attachment before you have time to think.

How to Protect Yourself

The best response is to slow down. If a message seems unusual—especially if it asks for money or personal details—pause before reacting. Don’t click unknown links, open unexpected attachments, or reply to texts from numbers you don’t recognize. Instead, confirm the request through a trusted method, like calling back on a known number. If something feels off, verify before acting.

Red Flags to Watch For

- Urgent or high-pressure requests
- Messages that feel out of character
- Unfamiliar payment or file-sharing methods
- Odd wording or unusual email addresses

The Bottom Line

Today’s scams may be smarter, but spotting red flags and taking a moment to verify can stop them. Staying alert for online scammers is simply a necessity today.

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Five Star Client Reviews ★★★★★

"They were professional, knowledgeable, and always kept me informed. They explained everything clearly and answered all my questions. Thanks to their hard work, my case was resolved successfully. I truly felt supported during a stressful time. I highly recommend Marina Safarov to anyone in need of legal assistance."

-Viktoria G. 8/2025

"I had a wonderful experience. Everyone was on top of everything and was helpful throughout the entire process. Atty Paula Candea took the time to explain everything and was very thorough. I definitely recommend RF Wittmeyer."

-Anthony C. 9/2025

"I am very pleased with the representation I received for my personal injury case. The team was incredibly detailed in documenting every aspect of my claim and took time to explain each step of the process. Denise was patient with all my questions and concerns and never made me feel rushed — Her thorough approach and dedication made a stressful situation much more manageable. They did a great job in securing a fair settlement, and I highly recommend their services to anyone needing a personal injury attorney."

-Carolyn K. 9/2025

"I had a great experience working with Attorney Greg and Maricela. They made the entire process incredibly easy and smooth from start to finish. Greg was professional knowledgeable, and always made sure I understood each step. Maricela was also amazing very responsive, helpful, and kind. I truly appreciate how efficient and stress free they made everything. Highly recommend!"

-Yoselin A. 9/2025

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