

NEWS & VIEWS

Summer 2014

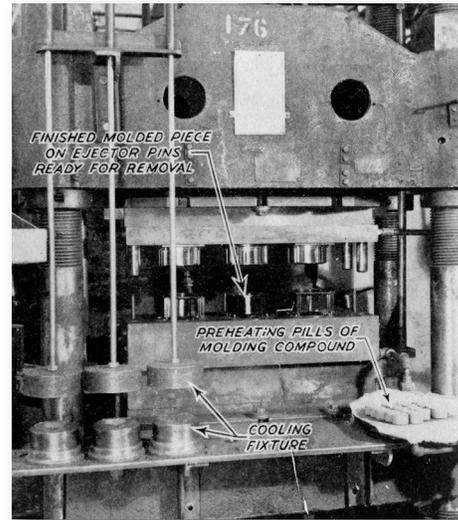
Attorney Advertisement

\$3 MILLION DOLLAR AWARD IN MESOTHELIOMA CASE FOR WORKER EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS AS SUMMER HELP

In May 2014, Lipsitz & Ponterio obtained over \$3 million dollars on behalf of a former plant worker for injuries resulting from his exposure to asbestos. At the age of sixty-one, our client was diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma. He brought suit against several companies responsible for the manufacture, distribution and sale of asbestos-containing products to his work site. Due to the confidential nature of this settlement, the names of the settling parties and the amount contributed by each company to the overall settlement cannot be disclosed.

At age twenty, our client went to work at Diemolding, Inc., a plastic molding facility located in Canastota, New York. Until the late 1970s, Diemolding utilized asbestos-containing plastic molding compound to make plastic parts, including handles and knobs for pots and pans. During our client's short time at Diemolding in the summer of 1972, his job duties included loading asbestos-containing plastic molding compound into a compression molding machine and cleaning out the press with an air hose. Both steps caused a considerable amount of asbestos dust and fibers to become airborne, which our client inhaled.

This case is significant because our client had only a brief exposure to airborne asbestos fibers and dust (he worked 8-10 hours



Pictured above: Compression Molding Press, similar to the one our client used while working at Diemolding.

a day, 5 days a week over a course of 12 weeks). Throughout his lifetime, his only known exposure to asbestos occurred during his 1972 summer employment at Diemolding. Duration and intensity of exposure are two important factors directly correlated to asbestos-related diseases. In the case of our

client, intensity of exposure ultimately caused his mesothelioma.

Our client died on June 30, 2013, after battling mesothelioma for one year leaving behind his wife of over forty years, three children and two grandchildren. ■

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LUNG CANCER SCREENING HAS ARRIVED AT ROSWELL PARK

- Dr. Mary Reid

Lung cancer continues to be the leading cause of cancer death in the U.S., killing more men and women than the other leading cancers combined. While smoking is clearly the main culprit, causing 85% of non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), the most common type of lung cancer, there are other important factors that work in synergy with smoking to elevate an individual's risk of lung cancer. These factors include exposure to asbestos, diesel, Coal Tar Pitch Volatiles and other air pollutants; a history of obstructive lung disease (COPD or emphysema); and a family history of lung cancer (parents, siblings or children).

The chance of surviving lung cancer remains poor: 80% of people diagnosed with lung cancer

do not live 5 years. This is primarily because the majority of lung cancers are diagnosed at late stages when curative treatment options, like surgery, are not possible. This is in stark contrast with other major cancers, such as breast, prostate, colon and cervical cancers, which have long had established screening tests that have improved early detection.

The good news is that lung cancer screening will now be recommended, based on the results of a landmark study. The National Lung Screening Trial (NLST), published in 2011, reported that screening high-risk lung cancer patients with a low-dose CT (LDCT) significantly decreased lung cancer mortality more than screening with routine chest x-ray (CXR). The NLST enrolled

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LUNG CANCER SCREENING HAS ARRIVED AT ROSWELL PARK

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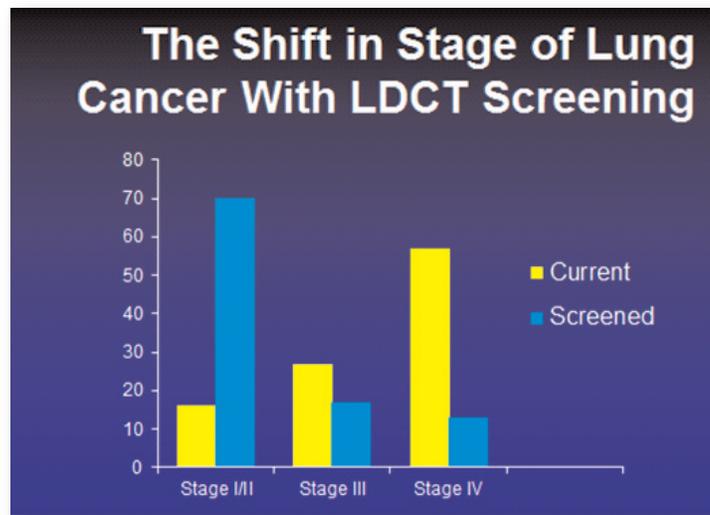


Figure 1 - Provided by Roswell Park Cancer Institute

more than 50,000 asymptomatic adults between the ages of 55 to 74 years who had at least 30 pack-years of smoking exposure, including former smokers who had quit within the past 15 years. Subjects in the study could have lung disease such as emphysema, but could not be suspected of having lung cancer. Enrollees were randomized to receive three annual screening examinations using LDCT or annual CXR. During a median follow-up interval of 5.5 years, there was a 20% reduction in the mortality rate from lung cancer for the LDCT screened group.

For the first time, this study provided evidence that lung cancer screening can, in fact, detect lung cancer at earlier stages, and that treatment of earlier-stage lung cancer can improve the overall 5-year survival. This concept is a welcome finding for the millions of tobacco-exposed adults who have seen virtually no improvement in lung cancer survival rates in decades. *Figure 1* above shows the impact that lung cancer screening will have on stage of disease at time of diagnosis, as compared to the current pattern. Earlier diagnosis translates into more treatment options and better survivability.

Since the NLST results were released, several professional organizations have developed screening recommendations utilizing LDCT. The most influential of these are recommendations from the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). The USPSTF completed a comprehensive review of all the available information on lung cancer screening, including the NLST results, to provide recommendations meant to guide public health policy. The USPSTF recommended a Grade B to lung cancer screening with LDCT for lung cancer. This means that “there is moderate certainty that the net benefit is moderate to substantial.”

The specific recommendations from the USPSTF are for annual lung cancer screening with LDCT “in adults, ages 55 to 80 years who have a 30 pack-year smoking history and currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years.” Furthermore, they recommend,

“screening should be discontinued once a person has not smoked for 15 years or develops a health problem that substantially limits life expectancy or the ability or willingness to have curative lung surgery.” Individuals with additional exposures that increase their risk of lung cancer, as mentioned above, may see even more benefit from regular screening.

The USPTF also recommended that screening be done in clinical centers that have multidisciplinary teams, with the ability to perform and interpret the LDCT, to biopsy detected lesions and to treat diagnosed lung cancers, regardless of the stage of the cancer. In addition, lung cancer screening programs must include smoking cessation counseling because the best way to control the risk of lung cancer is to quit smoking.

Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York, has an established lung cancer screening program that has been in operation for more than a decade. We have assembled a multidisciplinary team - experts in radiology, pulmonology, thoracic surgery and medical oncology - for the detection and treatment of lung cancer. We have also developed a smoking cessation service that provides personal counseling and the tools necessary to help high-risk individuals quit smoking.

WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BEFORE BEING SCREENED FOR LUNG CANCER SCREENING?

There are three main considerations to understand before undergoing lung cancer screening with LDCT. First, people at risk for lung cancer often have abnormal lesions, called nodules, detected on LDCT. The benefit of LDCT is that it detects these very small densities in the lungs, which may be cancerous. However, a main drawback is that it often detects lesions that are not cancerous. Unfortunately, it is difficult from the image to know if a lesion is cancerous or benign. Suspicious lesions must be followed closely by the clinician and at some point may require a biopsy. In the NLST trial, 96% of the nodules biopsied were benign; what is known as false positives. Additional analyses of the NLST data have also shown that individuals with multiple risk factors for lung cancer had the greatest reduction in lung cancer deaths and required fewer screenings to prevent a lung cancer death. They also had a significantly lower false-positive screening rate.

The second consideration for LDCT screening is that individuals with a 30 pack-year smoking history are recommended to receive yearly screening for 25 years upon their 55th birthday. While LDCT provides a low radiation dose, it can still confer some radiation exposure. Experts have determined that this cumulative exposure will not result in a significantly increased risk of cancer, but it remains a concern for patients and their advocates. Still, for people at high risk of lung cancer, the risk of cancer from smoking is greater

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LUNG CANCER SCREENING HAS ARRIVED AT ROSWELL PARK

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than the risk of a radiation-induced cancer.

Finally, once deemed eligible, high-risk individuals must follow the screening schedule recommended by their provider. Whether a repeat LDCT is recommended in 3, 6 or 12 months, each person must take responsibility for adhering to the screening schedule. Missed appointments can mean that the benefits of early detection through screening are lost. Like other cancer screening procedures, such as prostate exams, breast mammography and colonoscopy, the recommended schedules are the best way to prevent advanced cancers.



Lung cancer is the greatest cause of cancer death in the US. A 20% reduction in 5-year mortality means that more than 30,000 lives could be saved each year with appropriate screening, adding valuable years of life. The recommendation by the USPTF supports insurance coverage for all eligible patients in the US under guidelines of the Affordable Care Act.

Remember, lung cancer screening requires a team of experienced clinicians to manage every phase of your care, and it requires your commitment to keep to your schedule to get the most out of screening. We invite you to call us at 1-877-ASK-RPCI (1-877-275-7724) for more information or to find out if you are eligible for lung cancer screening. ■

RPCI Lung Screening



What to Expect When You Call Roswell Park for Lung Cancer Screening

When you first call 1-877-ASK-RPCI (1-877-275-7724) and tell the operator that you are interested in lung cancer screening, you will be asked a series of questions to make sure that you are eligible, including:

- Are you between the ages of 55 and 80?
- Have you smoked at least 30 pack-years of cigarettes (for example, 1 pack a day for 30 years OR 2 packs a day for 15 years)?
- If you have already quit smoking, have you smoked within the last 15 years?

If you answer **YES** to all three of these questions, then you are eligible for lung cancer screening with LDCT. The operator will transfer your information to our scheduling team and they will call you to schedule an appointment for an evaluation. After talking to a member of our clinical team, you will then be scheduled for the LDCT and possibly a lung function test if you need one. Our goal is to only test you as often as you need to be tested and to provide you with the best treatment options available.

If you **cannot answer YES** to all three questions, you are not eligible for lung cancer screening according to current guidelines. Additional resources may be offered based on your needs, including smoking cessation services.

LIPSITZ & PONTERIO RECOVERS \$2.4 MILLION FOR FORMER LABORER

In June 2014, Lipsitz & Ponterio obtained a settlement in excess of \$2.4 million for a former laborer for injuries resulting from occupational exposure to asbestos. Our client was diagnosed with mesothelioma in November 2012 at the age of 72. He led an active life that included extensive recreational vehicle travel throughout the United States. He was a Harley Davidson enthusiast and enjoyed riding his motorcycle during cross-country trips with his wife. After he was diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma, he brought suit against several companies responsible for the sale, manufacture and distribution of a variety of asbestos-containing products to which he was exposed during the course of his employment.

From approximately 1959 to 1961, our client worked as an auto mechanic. He was exposed to asbestos fibers, dust and particles from the removal and replacement of automotive parts. For a short

time before joining the United States Navy in 1963, he repaired boilers and furnaces. This equipment contained asbestos components and was often covered in asbestos-containing insulation. In order to perform maintenance procedures, it was necessary for him to disturb the asbestos insulation on boilers. After his honorable discharge from the Navy in March 1967, our client went to work for a commercial restaurant equipment service company. He repaired and maintained industrial cooking equipment containing asbestos. From 1972 through 1990, our client operated his own commercial restaurant equipment service company.

After battling mesothelioma for nearly two years, our client died on June 30, 2014. He is survived by his wife of over twenty years, four children, and six grandchildren. ■

BLADDER CANCER IN INDUSTRY

It is well known that cigarette smoking and genetic predisposition are potent risk factors in the development of cancer of the bladder. Cigarette smokers can increase their risk of contracting this cancer by as much as four times. Lesser known, but still important, is the risk posed by exposure to certain chemicals found in industry.

Of particular note are three chemicals known as benzidine, β -Naphthylamine and *ortho*-toluidine, all of which are known human bladder carcinogens. These chemicals were widely used in the manufacture of dyes and pigments for textiles, paints, plastics, paper and hair dyes. These chemicals were used in dyes and pigments in drugs and pesticides, and also as antioxidants in the rubber industry. Exposure to these chemicals also occurs in the printing industry, particularly in businesses that worked with azo dyes, such as Disperse Orange. These dyes, and others with known carcinogenic potential, have largely been replaced but were still widely used during the mid and late 20th century. This is important to note due to recent findings related to latency. Previously, it had been thought that the latency period for bladder cancer in occupationally exposed workers would expire after thirty years. However, recent research shows that even after a thirty year period, clinical cases related to occupational exposure were still arising.

The rubber industry is another area of concern for worker exposure. A particularly potent example in Western New York is the Goodyear Plant in Niagara Falls. For years, employees at the Goodyear Plant were exposed to unsafe levels of *ortho*-toluidine. This caused many of them (as much as three times the expected amount for the area) to develop bladder cancer. Much of this could have been prevented had the workers been provided with adequate and timely warnings.

This kind of situation was not uncommon in the twentieth century. Increasing knowledge of human carcinogens and occupational exposure prompted government agencies, such as OSHA, to impose new and stricter regulations on chemicals. The suppliers, manufacturers and distributors of these chemicals were ordered to place warnings on the products to ensure that workers knew of their toxic nature. However, many companies refused to comply with these new regulations for fear that they would suffer economically if users knew of the dangers.

Because use and production of known bladder carcinogens (*ortho*-toluidine, benzidine and β -Naphthylamine) has been significantly withdrawn in the United States, current potential for industrial exposure and occupationally related bladder cancer should be low. However, both *ortho*-toluidine and β -Naphthylamine are byproducts of several industrial processes where nitrogen-containing organic matter is heated and burned. Included in these processes are carbon and graphite electrode manufacture, foundry coke production and

roofing and paving. Coal tar pitch, a black or brown residue left by the distillation or heat treatment of coal tar, can release coal tar pitch volatiles (CTPVs), which become airborne when coal tar pitch is heated. ■

Bladder Cancer: Focus on Buffalo Color

Buffalo Color, originally part of the National Aniline Chemical Company, was the largest of the three Allied Chemical manufacturing facilities located in Western New York. In 1879, it began manufacturing many different dyes and colorants for the textiles industry on Elk and Lee Streets in Buffalo.

Buffalo Color was well known for using asbestos to cover a vast majority of its pipelines and associated equipment. Asbestos refractory materials and insulation also covered equipment located in chemical manufacturing facilities, dye plants and boiler houses. However, lesser known is the danger posed by the actual chemicals being used inside Buffalo Color to make its products.

As its original name, National Aniline and Chemical Company would suggest, Buffalo Color produced many different dyes based on aniline and aniline derivatives, including but not limited to indigo dye. The production of these dyes was based in reactions, such as the Bechamp-reduction. It was used to reduce aromatic nitro compounds, such as nitrobenzene and nitronaphthalene to their corresponding anilines using iron and hydrochloric acid. This process, among others used to produce aniline-derived dyes like the ones manufactured at Buffalo Color, had the potential to expose workers to several toxic agents, including three well-known bladder carcinogens: benzidine, β -Naphthylamine and *ortho*-toluidine.

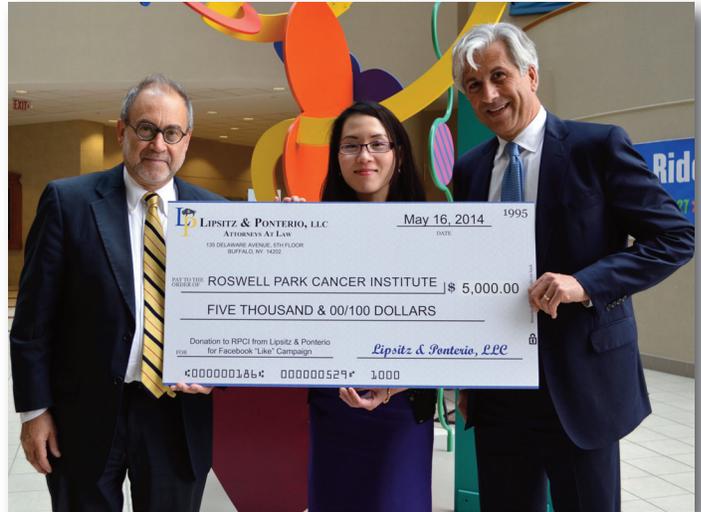
According to early 1970s data collected by an Allied Chemical researcher, the reported incidence of bladder tumors in workers at Buffalo Color, from 1930 to 1975, was 36 among workers exposed only to benzidine. The number of bladder tumors in workers exposed to benzidine, as well as to other potential carcinogenic agents, including β -Naphthylamine and *ortho*-toluidine, was 115. According to the researchers, it was established that production at this plant involved substantial exposure to known bladder carcinogens: Benzidine, β -Naphthylamine and *ortho*-toluidine, and consequently, led to significant increases in bladder cancer deaths among those workers.

LIPSITZ & PONTERIO FACEBOOK CAMPAIGN TO BENEFIT ROSWELL PARK

In April 2014, Lipsitz & Ponterio reached its Facebook campaign goal to benefit Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI). From October 1, 2013 through April 1, 2014, the firm raised funds through its Facebook page in order to help further mesothelioma research at RPCI. For each new “like” received on Lipsitz & Ponterio’s Facebook page, one dollar was donated to RPCI, for a total cash donation of \$5,000.

“Our firm’s mesothelioma clients have been treated with great care and compassion by the medical staff at Roswell Park Cancer Institute, especially by Dr. Grace Dy and her research team. That is why we chose to support RPCI in our recent Facebook campaign,” said firm partner Michael A. Ponterio.

The firm has also sponsored RPCI’s All Star Night Gala and two lung cancer events: the Breath of Life Celebration in October 2013, and most recently, in May 2014, A Taste for Life, which raised \$42,000 to support a promising genetic test for lung cancer developed at Roswell Park. ■



Pictured above: John N. Lipsitz, Dr. Grace Dy (Roswell Park Cancer Institute - Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine) and Michael A. Ponterio.

LIPSITZ & PONTERIO OBTAINS A SIGNIFICANT SETTLEMENT FOR A FORMER BETHLEHEM STEEL COKE OVEN WORKER

Lipsitz & Ponterio recently achieved a significant settlement for the family of a retired laborer who worked in the Coke Oven Division at Bethlehem Steel. Our client was 77 years old when he was diagnosed with Stage IV Lung Cancer. He brought suit against the companies that designed, sold, constructed and maintained the coke oven batteries at the Lackawanna plant.

From 1951 through 1993, our client held various jobs working on top of and alongside the coke oven batteries. He first worked as a coal sampler in the Metallurgical Department. This job required him to sample coal from each of the coke oven batteries. He then became a laborer in the Coke Oven Division cleaning up coke and coal spillage. As a laborer, he frequently worked as a lidman and as a door cleaner. As a lidman, he was required to stand directly on top of the coke ovens for extended periods of time in order to charge empty ovens with coal provided by the larry car. This work was extremely difficult and harsh because of the extreme heat and dense smoke caused by coke oven emissions leaking from the top-side of the ovens. The lidman’s job was by far one of the most exposed jobs at the steel plant. Eventually, our client went to work in the heater gang where he cleaned and swept under the coke ovens. He also held the job of tar chaser. Throughout his almost forty year career at Bethlehem Steel, our client was continuously exposed to large quantities of fumes, dust and vapors containing carcinogenic compounds, principally polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).



Pictured above: Coke ovens charging at the former Bethlehem Steel plant in Lackawanna, New York.

Prior to his lung cancer diagnosis, our client was an active man and enjoyed playing golf. He also loved to cook and prepare group meals for people living in his retirement community. After a two-year battle with lung cancer, he died in March 2012, leaving behind a wife, three children and seven grandchildren. ■

EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURER LIABLE FOR ASBESTOS EXPOSURE

There is no question that a manufacturer has a duty to warn about the hazards of the products it puts into the stream of commerce. The legal precedents which established this proposition in New York State are more than fifty years old and remain good law. It is well established in New York law that a manufacturer has a duty to warn against latent dangers resulting from foreseeable uses of its products of which it knew or should have known. Latent dangers are those which, by their nature, are not so open and obvious that the user of the product could not reasonably claim to be ignorant of them. For over twenty years, however, the manufacturers of equipment, such as industrial pumps and valves, which are sold with asbestos containing internal and external components, have urged our courts that they cannot be held liable for cancers, in particular mesotheliomas and lung cancers, resulting from the maintenance and repair of their pumps and valves and other similar items. These equipment manufacturers have indeed been arguing in state courts nationwide that their “bare metal” products are merely compatible with the use of dangerous asbestos components, just as a book of matches is merely compatible with a stick of dynamite.

In 2012, Lipsitz & Ponterio represented the widow of a former employee of the General Motors plant in Tonawanda. Gerald Suttner regularly repaired and maintained steam lines. His work involved the use and manipulation of asbestos-containing gaskets and packing in and on valves manufactured by Crane Co., the defendant at trial. In October 2012, the jury delivered a verdict in favor of the Suttner family and assigned a small but significant share of the responsibility for Gerald Suttner’s mesothelioma and death to the defendant. Crane Co. appealed from the verdict and judgment to the Appellate Division of the Fourth Department, which is one level below the State’s highest Court, the New York Court of Appeals. At the heart of this appeal was Crane’s argument that, although the plaintiff claimed her husband was exposed to deadly fibers from the regular repair and maintenance of its valves, there was no evidence at trial that he was exposed to the original asbestos-containing parts for which it was responsible. At argument before the Court in Rochester, New York, the defendant conceded that it had a legal duty to warn about asbestos contained in the original component parts but that after those original parts were replaced and then replaced again with packing and gaskets sold by another manufacturer, defendant’s duty came to an end.

The defendant argued here, as it had argued successfully in the states of California and Washington, that the law of strict product liability for failure to warn could never apply to a company which did not itself make and sell the exact materials which caused the plaintiff’s injury. This argument is known as the strict stream of commerce theory of product liability. It relieves a manufacturer

“It is well established in New York law that a manufacturer has a duty to warn against latent dangers resulting from foreseeable uses of its products of which it knew or should have known.”

of liability for injuries resulting from the use of dangerous replacement parts, even though the manufacturer knows that the regular operation of its equipment will require the removal and replacement of worn out components causing the release of asbestos fibers into the worker’s breathing zone. Fortunately for workers throughout New York State, the Appellate Division of the Fourth Department finally rejected Crane Co.’s unreasonably narrow concept of the duty to warn, upheld the jury verdict in favor of our client, and remained faithful to more than fifty years of New York State legal precedent. ■

Keep us Informed

Change in Your Medical Condition?

If you previously filed a claim with Lipsitz & Ponterio, a change in your medical status may entitle you to additional legal compensation. It is important to keep us updated so that we can file new claims on your behalf.

Moving? New Telephone Number? Email Address?

If you are moving or have a new telephone number, it is important that you inform us of this change as soon as possible. Please also let us know if you have a winter or summer address.

Update Your Information by Calling or Emailing Us:

Call our office at (716) 849-0701 or
Email Marlene Potter:
mpotter@lipsitzponterio.com

MESOTHELIOMA CASES IN DUREZ NEIGHBORHOOD, NORTH TONAWANDA, NEW YORK

Nearly thirty years ago, attorneys Michael A. Ponterio and John N. Lipsitz began representing former and retired workers from the Durez Plastics facility in North Tonawanda, New York, in legal claims for mesothelioma and lung cancer. Mike and John have continued to represent these men and women since establishing Lipsitz & Ponterio, LLC, in 1995. Mike's grandfather worked at the plant as did his father, before he started the practice of law in Tonawanda.

The rate of mesothelioma cases among former Durez workers is one of the highest in the nation. As reported in a 2006 article published in "The International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health," Niagara County ranks sixth in the nation for the highest death rate from malignant mesothelioma. We believe that the use of asbestos at Durez accounts for the largest number of these deaths.

Durez was established in 1926 and quickly became a leader in the production of plastic molding compounds. Unfortunately for its employees and for the residents of the area surrounding the plant on Walck Road, Durez incorporated raw asbestos fiber to strengthen its plastic molding compounds. Giant mixers were used to combine thousands of tons of raw asbestos with other raw materials. This was an extremely dusty process, and it resulted in harmful dust becoming airborne and spreading around the plant and into the neighborhood.

Significant contamination also occurred in the Resin and Varnish buildings, where large reactors, kettles and stills were insulated with crumbly, chalky and dusty asbestos-containing pipe covering and block insulation.



Pictured above: A mixing booth that was used at the former Durez Plastics plant located in North Tonawanda

Durez continued using asbestos until the end of 1978. The North Tonawanda facility closed in 1994. The period of time between first exposure to asbestos and the onset and diagnosis of mesothelioma, known as the latency period, is typically between 15 and 50 years.

The risk of developing mesothelioma from dust released by the operations at



Pictured above: The former National Grinding Wheel plant (as it appears today) on the corner of Walck Road and Erie Avenue.

Durez will probably not abate for another 15 years.

The risk of contracting mesothelioma is not confined to Durez employees. It also extends to their immediate families and to those who worked and lived in the neighborhoods that surrounded the Durez plant.

We currently represent the family of a former employee of National Grinding Wheel, an industrial operation located west of the Durez plant on Erie Avenue and Walck Road. Our client worked there from 1953 through 1987. National Grinding Wheel manufactured grinding wheels used in other industrial settings. In 2013, at the age 81, our client died from mesothelioma. He was employed at National Grinding Wheel from 1953 through 1987. He worked in the bakelite section located on the second floor of the north-west portion of the plant. All externally facing areas of the National Grinding Wheel plant, including the mixing department of the bakelite section, had multiple windows that opened to the outside environment. Due to the extremely hot working conditions, the windows were almost always kept open. Workers recall seeing dust exhausted from the dust collectors a short distance away at the Durez facility.

Durez area residents report having seen the fields outside of the plant contaminated with dust, including Ramsey Field where little league activities were conducted in the 1960s and 1970s. If you lived, worked or played near the Durez plant in North Tonawanda, New York, any time before 1979, you should consider sharing this information with your doctor. ■

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ATTORNEY SPOTLIGHT - KEITH R. VONA

Keith R. Vona is a Junior Partner at Lipsitz & Ponterio. Since 2005, Mr. Vona has been a key member of the firm's asbestos/mesothelioma and lead litigation practice groups.

Within the past several years, as part of the trial team at Lipsitz & Ponterio, Keith has tried numerous cases before judges and juries, representing six plaintiffs injured by occupational exposure to asbestos and two children poisoned by lead paint. All eight cases resulted in verdicts in favor of the plaintiff. In addition, Keith has tried a number of other cases resulting in substantial settlements during trial.

"The work we do at Lipsitz & Ponterio is about restoring justice. I derive great satisfaction from holding negligent companies responsible for wrongs they perpetrated against our clients."

Keith served in the United States Marine Corps. Prior to joining Lipsitz & Ponterio, he



worked as a City of Buffalo police officer for ten years. He received his B.S. from the State University of New York College at Buffalo and his law degree from SUNY at Buffalo Law School. He is a member of the New

York State Trial Lawyers Association, the Bar Association of Erie County and The American Bar Association. In 2013 and 2014, Mr. Vona was selected as an Upstate New York Rising Star by *Super Lawyers*. ■