



# \$1,135,000 Settlement in Car Crash Injury Case

Mrs. C was driving to a family reunion when she was involved in a serious car wreck. She suffered a “bucket handle” injury to her intestines, an injury to her spleen that required it to be removed, and a broken wrist and ankle that both required surgeries.

BBGA Attorneys Michael Ruppensburg and Alex Hughes secured a \$1,135,000 settlement days before the case went to trial.

The settlement is notable because it was in a small, rural county without a history of significant verdicts and settlements and was over three and a half times Mrs. C’s medical bills.

## The Wreck

Mrs. C was driving south on U.S. 1 in Louisville, Jefferson County, Georgia. Another driver turned left

in front of her. Mrs. C didn’t have time to stop and crashed into it. This is what Mrs. C’s car looked like after the wreck:

## The Wreck



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## 8 BBGA Attorneys Included in 2024 Edition of The Best Lawyers in America®

Blasingame, Burch, Garrard & Ashley, P.C. is pleased to announce that six lawyers are included in the 2024 edition of The Best Lawyers in America® and two lawyers are included in The Best Lawyers in America: Ones to Watch® list for 2024.

Lawyers recognized in The Best Lawyers in America list are divided by geographic region and

practice areas. They are reviewed by their peers based on professional expertise and undergo an authentication process to ensure they are in current practice and in good standing.

Join us in congratulating the following lawyers named to the 2024 The Best Lawyers in America list:

- **Henry Garrard** – Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions –

Plaintiffs, Medical Malpractice Law – Plaintiffs, Personal Injury Litigation – Plaintiffs, and Product Liability Litigation – Plaintiffs

- **Drew Hill** – Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions – Plaintiffs and Personal Injury Litigation – Plaintiffs

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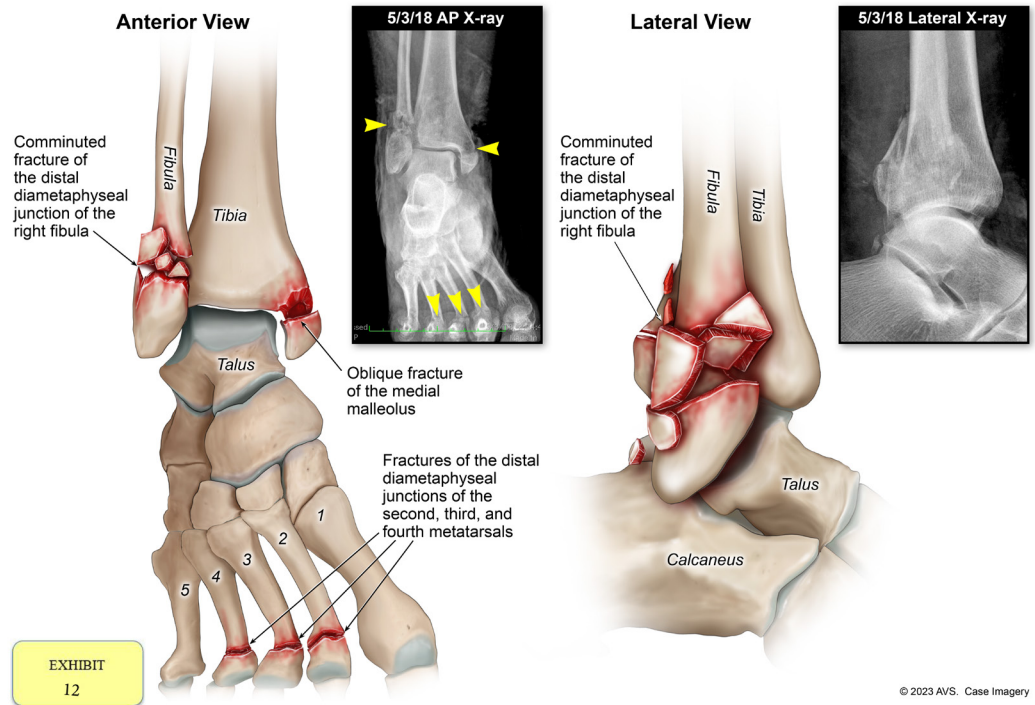
### Car Crash Leads to Broken Ankle, Broken Wrist, Severe Intestinal Injuries

The wreck broke Mrs. C's ankle, wrist and also caused a bucket-handle injury to her intestines. A bucket-handle injury is where the force of the seatbelt restraining you during a wreck causes a part of your intestine to separate from the abdominal wall. When it separates, it looks like the handle of a bucket, which is where the name comes from.

EMS life flighted Mrs. C to University Hospital in Augusta, Georgia. Doctors placed her on a ventilator and performed emergency surgery to repair the injury to her intestines.

The surgery involved removing 22 inches of her small intestine and then stitching the ends together. During the surgery, doctors discovered her spleen was badly injured and decided to remove it.

## Right Ankle Injury



Diagrams courtesy of Case Imagery

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She lost so much blood from her intestinal injury that she required nearly 9 pints of blood transfusion.

Doctors later performed surgeries to repair her broken wrist and ankle, which involved fixing the fractures with a metal plate and screws.

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## What are the long-term health effects of her injuries?

Q: And what is the significance of someone having an organ, specifically the spleen, removed?

“The spleen is involved in processing of bacteria. So as you're -- if you have bacteria in your bloodstream, as it passes through the spleen it gets filtered and gets tagged with a protein marker, so that the immune system, particularly the, what are called, macrophages will recognize them and kill them. So it's very important to fighting off infections, particularly against what are called encapsulated organisms, which are certain bacteria that have a cell wall with certain proteins on it.”

Q: As a result of having her spleen removed is [redacted] at increased risk of infection for the remainder of her life?

“Yes.”



Trauma surgeon

Q: As a result of having to have an abdominal surgery and/or having her bowel removed is [redacted] at risk for any future issues?

“Yeah. Anytime you have an abdominal operation there's going to be scar tissue formed between the different loops of bowel and the rest of the bowel, like the abdominal lining, and that scar tissue can lead to a kinking and a blockage of the bowel in the future. There's no way of preventing it. But it's just -- means that you're going to be at risk for the remainder of your life.”

## BBGA Attorney Speaks to UGA Law Students

BBGA Attorney Tyler Mathis recently spoke to UGA Law students at a Lunch & Learn event hosted by the Student Chapter of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association and the First-Generation Student Association. Tyler spoke about his journey to becoming a plaintiff's attorney and shared les-

sons he has learned along the way. Tyler joined the personal injury team at BBGA in June 2020. His practice at BBGA includes medical malpractice, car and truck accidents, nursing home abuse, and other personal injury cases. Tyler earned his J.D. at the UGA School of Law.



# PRACTICE AREAS



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## Injury Continued

The surgeon who performed the emergency surgery testified by video and we made exhibits of his testimony to show the jury.

We also prepared illustrations of her ankle injury after the wreck and after surgery to show the jury at trial. Mrs. C was in the hospital for over a month and then confined to bed for several months while she recovered from her injuries.

She required a wheelchair, then a walker, and then a cane to walk as she healed. She also required months of physical therapy to help her recover.

We prepared the top right exhibit to show the jury how much Mrs. C had been through as a result of the wreck.

Unfortunately, Mrs. C developed post-traumatic arthritis in her ankle. Her ankle is often painful and she has difficulty walking and going up and down stairs.

According to her orthopedic surgeon, she will likely need ankle replacement surgery, which involves removing the bottom portion of the tibia and the top portion of the talus and replacing it with an artificial ankle joint. The surgeon testified by video, and we made exhibits of his testimony to show the jury.

We also prepared illustrations of the future ankle replacement surgery to show the jury at trial.

## Trial & Settlement

The defendant driver had only \$25,000 in insurance, which the insurance company quickly agreed to pay. Mrs. C. had several car insurance policies with uninsured motorist coverage, which we filed a lawsuit to pursue.

The case had several twists and turns before trial. First, COVID hit, delaying discovery and trial. Second, the defendant driver passed away from a medical condition unrelated to the wreck. When this happens, Georgia law automatically “stays” the case until an administrator is

What treatment has she endured?

**Future Treatments**

- Post-traumatic arthritis of ankle
- Abdominal blockage
- Ankle replacement surgery

**Emergency Treatment**

- Life flight to hospital
- 8 2/3 pints of blood transfusions

**Rehabilitation**

- Fully electric hospital bed
- Wheelchair
- Walker
- Boot
- Cane
- Splint on wrist
- Lived in basement for 4 months

**Hospitalization**

- 32 days in hospital, including 5 days in ICU
- Ventilator
- Wound vacuum
- Urinary catheter
- Blood clot in right arm

**Surgeries**

- Surgery to remove 22 inches of small intestine
- Surgery to remove spleen
- Surgery to set wrist and ankle
- Surgery to repair wrist and ankle

Photos By: Envato Elements  
Sensitive and confidential information has been redacted and stock photography used to protect our client.

## Future Right Ankle Replacement

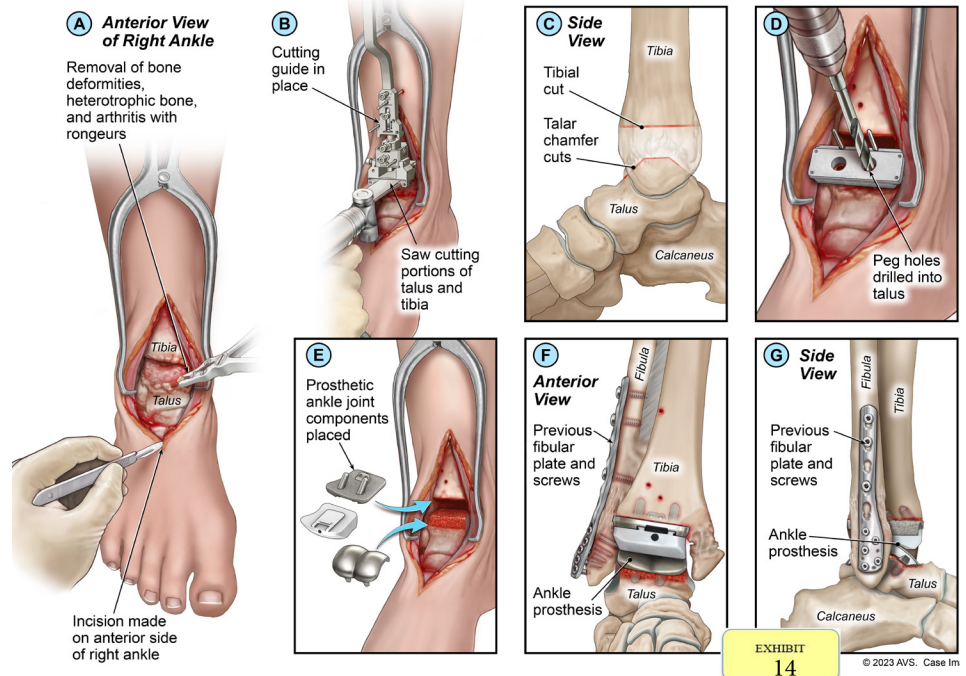


Diagram courtesy of Case Imagery

appointed for the estate and the administrator is substituted as a defendant. We filed a petition with the local probate court to establish an estate for the defendant, had the county attorney appointed as administrator, and then substituted the county attorney as the defendant. Next, one of the insurance companies that provided uninsured motorist coverage filed a motion arguing that

**Injury Continued** its policy did not apply to the wreck. We responded and the judge ruled in Mrs. C’s favor. The case was then set for trial. The Saturday before the trial, we were able to secure a fair settlement for Mrs. C, ending the case. We are pleased to have helped Mrs. C and we wish her the best in her ongoing recovery.

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### Best Continued

- **Evan Jones** – Personal Injury Litigation – Plaintiffs
  - **Jim Matthews** – Medical Malpractice Law – Plaintiffs, Personal Injury Litigation – Plaintiffs, and Product Liability Litigation – Plaintiffs
  - **Thomas H. Rogers** – Commercial Litigation
  - **Michael Ruppensburg** – Personal Injury Litigation – Plaintiffs
- Join us in congratulating the following lawyers named to the 2024 edition of Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America:
- **Alex Hughes** – Personal Injury Litigation – Plaintiffs
  - **Chase Ruffin** – Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions – Plaintiffs, Medical Malpractice Law – Plaintiffs, and Personal Injury Litigation – Plaintiffs

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## BBGA Announces New Shareholder

Blasingame, Burch, Garrard & Ashley, P.C. (BBGA) is pleased to announce the promotion of BBGA attorney Charles W. “Chase” Ruffin to shareholder. As a member of BBGA’s mass tort and personal injury practice groups, Chase handles a wide range of matters including cases involving defective medical devices, medical malpractice, nursing home abuse, car and truck accidents, and dangerous property conditions.

Chase is passionate about helping injured clients or those who have lost a loved one because of someone else’s negligence. He played a key role in the firm’s representation of hundreds of clients injured

by defective surgical mesh devices. He has also successfully helped injured clients recover fair compensation from insurance companies that defend negligent nursing homes, healthcare facilities, and other businesses across a variety of industries. Before joining BBGA in 2019, Chase worked for two large regional law firms in Atlanta and Macon, where he represented clients in personal injury cases, business disputes, intellectual property disputes, eminent domain cases, and real estate disputes. Chase’s broad litigation experience allows him to approach each case from a unique angle, and he works hard to use this experience to achieve the best possible results for the firm’s clients.

Chase graduated with honors from Georgia State University College of Law. During law school, Chase served on Georgia State’s Law Review and was a member of the Moot Court team. He also worked for both trial court and appellate judges, which provided him with unique insight into how judges and their staff analyze and reach decisions in cases. Chase continues to use the insight gained during these experiences in his practice today.

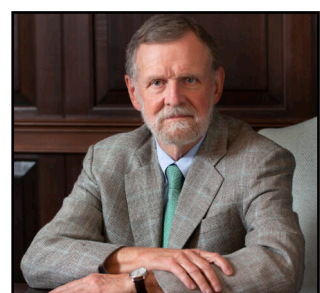


Chase Ruffin

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## UGA ‘Advocate Magazine’ Features BBGA Partner Henry Garrard

UGA Online Magazine “Advocate” recently wrote a feature article called “Henry G. Garrard III: Doing the right thing.”



The article discusses lessons that Henry learned at the UGA School of Law that he has taken with him throughout his career.

“Garrard ... recalled that one of his professors offered sage advice ... that still resonates with him today,” the article reads.

“He impressed on me to always protect your integrity and that if you ever, ever lose your integrity or let it be compromised you can’t get it back, and I think that has stayed with me as much as anything else,” Garrard said. The full article can be found at <https://advocate.law.uga.edu/>.



# 4th Annual Elder Abuse Litigation Seminar

Dozens of attorneys from across Georgia attended the 4th Annual Elder Abuse Litigation Seminar on October 20 at the Epicurean in Atlanta.

The annual event is part of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association's Continued Learning Program

and co-hosted by Elder Abuse attorneys with Blasingame, Burch, Garrard & Ashley, P.C.; Prieto, Marigliano, Holbert & Prieto, LLC; and Lourie, Chance, Forlines, Carter & King, P.C.

Attendees learned from the top elder abuse attorneys in the state

and following the seminar, had the opportunity to network with fellow attorneys and speakers at a cocktail hour held on the Sky Terrace Event Lawn at the Epicurean. Below are some photos from this year's seminar.





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Tyler Mathis



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