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- TRIAL LAWYERS -

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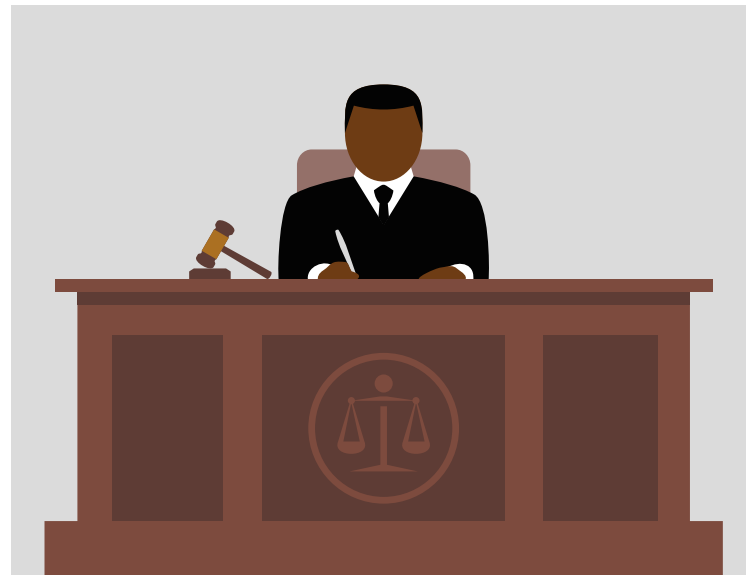


Walter Moran Farmer THE MAN OF MANY FIRSTS

In 1889, a quiet, unassuming man — a Black man — walked out of the halls of Washington University with a law degree, right here in Missouri. That man's name was Walter Moran Farmer. He would lead a life of firsts and blaze a trail for all lawyers to follow.

Because of the unfair times, he would never be treated equal to his white peers. He would have to work harder, smarter, and against much prejudice. And he did. Four years after graduating from law school, Walter M. Farmer would argue a case in front of the Missouri Supreme Court — the first Black lawyer to do so. One year later, he argued that case to the U.S. Supreme Court and became one of the first Black lawyers to argue a case to this country's highest court.

That case was *Duncan v. Missouri*, a murder trial that ended in a death penalty conviction. Farmer pointed out that there were irregularities in how the case had been tried, especially at the state level, and took the case to the U.S. Supreme Court for a hearing. Never afraid to push for justice, Walter M. Farmer would soon find himself in court once more — on the other side of the bench.



That's right: In the early 1900s, Farmer was appointed to a special judgeship in the St. Louis municipal court. This made him not only Missouri's first Black lawyer but also its first Black justice of the peace.

Little is known about Farmer's late life; he kept his personal life private for obvious reasons. Odds are good he still has family in Missouri, proudly admiring his life and legacy as we do today.



TRIALS & THEIR TALES

- NEWSLETTER -

1600 S. BRENTWOOD BLVD., SUITE 220 • ST. LOUIS, MO 63144 // FINNEYINJURYLAW.COM // 314-293-4222 // JANUARY 2021



WHEN RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you. I realize this will be coming out right near or right after Christmas. As I write this, we are just coming back from Thanksgiving. We had a very nice holiday that was low-key — turkey dinner in the garage. I very much enjoyed it. There is truth to saying that it is not what you are doing so much as whom you are with.

We are starting 2021. As we have all heard a million times, 2020 is one year we want to forget. The memories of 2020 will fade over time. But 2021 is here, and we couldn't be happier. Everywhere you look, there are signs of hope. People are doing their best to minimize spread and keep kids in school. Children are back playing sports (at least in a limited way). Vaccines are being distributed, which show remarkable efficacy in trials. There are plenty of reasons for hope.

And we are gearing up to get back in the courtroom. It feels like years since we have been in one, and we cannot wait to get back. There is very real excitement in courtrooms because they are where actual business gets done. The rubber meets the road, so to speak, in the courthouse. Our clients have waited and waited for their day in court — for their story to be heard and for justice to be sought. We look forward to leading that charge with them. In fact, as of this writing, we are set for three trials in early 2021. I cannot wait to stand in front of

prospective jurors and just talk with them. I want to hear their stories and life experiences. I want to get to know them on an individual level. It has been quite some time since we have been able to enjoy conversation with strangers.

We are also starting 2021 bigger than our office has ever been. We remain committed to providing the best client experience and being on the cutting edge of trial technique and personal injury litigation. That requires a commitment to the practice by our entire office — both of time and effort but also of finances. Yes, we believe you must invest in growth and experience. It doesn't just come with time. We are constantly looking for ways to sharpen our skills to better ourselves and our practice. There is no place that we will not travel to if it can make us better people and a better firm. Those go hand in hand.

So, here is to a robust and healthy 2021, a year where we round the corner from the virus and continue on to do great things and our businesses, families, and lives grow as we have always imagined. Yes, there will be disappointments in the coming year. There will be trying times. But if what we have gone through is any indication of what we are made of, there is nothing we cannot handle. I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for choosing us in your times of need. We are here to help.



LET THAT FRESH AIR FUEL YOU

4 TIPS TO MAKE GETTING OUTSIDE EASIER

1. Make it a priority. Getting outside means making the conscious effort to do so. If you want to reap its benefits, you have to decide to make it a priority in your day-to-day schedule. If you make the act important to you, you have more motivation to actually do it.

2. Use mornings effectively. Waking up and getting the day started can be hard. But studies have shown that natural light helps decrease your melatonin production, which means you feel ready to face the day sooner. So, set yourself a second alarm to head outside and take a quick walk around the block just after waking. Don't even wash your face or grab coffee. Just get out there.

3. Take your work outside. If you're working from home, take some work outdoors. Phone and virtual

meetings are a great outdoor option, especially if you'll just be an active listener and aren't required to do any work simultaneously. Attach a note to your meeting reminders to get yourself set up outside five minutes before you start.

4. Create a schedule. It might feel strange to set reminders throughout the day to step outside, but you easily get wrapped up in activities and overlook breaks, and these reminders are exactly what you need. Start with 10-minute blocks three times a day. If you stick to them, soon you won't need a schedule to get outside anymore.

Winter weather may be cold, but even when you're bundled up under a jacket and scarf, just 5-10 minutes outside can do wonders for your mood and energy for hours.

Hunkering down and waiting for the dark and chilly winter season to pass sounds pretty nice. But the reality is, if we deprive ourselves of time outside, we do ourselves a big disservice both mentally and physically. Staying indoors all day affects your energy and mood, which makes it hard to get anything done, so here are four easy tips to make it easier to get a little fresh air.

I Slipped in a Private Lot — And They Say It's Not Their Fault!

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SNOW REMOVAL?

It's almost impossible to avoid bad weather and the hazards that come with it this time of year. You can be a safe commuter, or even work from home, but eventually you're going to leave the house. What happens when that trip to the grocery store, church, or other private property ends in a slip and fall on the ice? Who's responsible?

Most cities, including the city of St. Louis, require "immediate" removal of snow and ice from public sidewalks and spaces (including parking lots) after it ceases to accumulate (as soon as the snow stops falling) and before it starts to accumulate again. This duty falls to "managers, agents, or occupiers of any premises," unless it's a rental property with more than six units. If that's the case, it's the job of the "owner or agent of the owner" to do the job.

The definition of "immediate" changes by municipality, but generally, it means

less than 24 hours after the snow ceases to fall.

Who are 'agents of the owner'?

This is the part of the law that refers to snow removal services or property management companies. They don't own the parking lot you slipped on, but the owner contracted with them to remove the snow and clear the ice — and clearly they didn't do a very good job. So, can they be held responsible?

Although the law says that "agents of the owner" are responsible for snow removal if contracted, it can be tricky to successfully sue snow removal and property management companies for failing to do their job, even though that failure led to your slip and fall.

That doesn't mean that it's out of the question, but just like trying to sue a private homeowner for your fall on the sidewalk outside their house, it doesn't succeed very often.



So, who is responsible?

Generally, whoever actually owns the property will be the most likely party for you to sue in the event of a slip and fall. Not only are they most likely to be insured against such a suit — meaning a potentially higher payout — but the courts are more likely to find guilt with property owners than other parties. As we said before, it's possible that a snow-removal contractor could be party to a slip-and-fall lawsuit, but that's usually a harder case to make. Those companies may try to hide behind other subcontractors, especially if it's a larger property management company that doesn't just handle snow removal or if they don't carry insurance against these kinds of lawsuits.

You'll need to work with a qualified personal injury attorney to determine whether a lawsuit is the right move for you and whom to bring one against if it is.

GREASE AND FINGERPRINTS BE GONE

3 HANDY WAYS TO CLEAN YOUR SCREENS

While phones, tablets, laptops, and desktops have become convenient, everyday technology, one struggle remains: constantly dirty screens. Regular cleaning is a must for battling fingerprints, dust, and other smudges, not to mention all the germs that can collect on the surface of your device. But how do you clean your screens without ruining any functionality? Before you drench your device in your typical household cleaner, try these three cleaning products and say goodbye to dirty screens!

Mobile Screen Wipes

Chances are, you use your phone more than all your other devices combined, resulting in a constantly dirty screen. With mobile screen wipes, you can rest assured that no matter how dirty your phone screen gets, you can clean

it any time, any place. These wipes are individually wrapped and can easily fit in a pocket, purse, or drawer at work. As an added bonus, they can also clean your eyeglasses.

Screen Cleaner

Screen cleaners can thoroughly and safely clean any device's screen and keep it streak-free long after cleaning. Since you simply spray some onto a cleaning cloth, the 5-ounce bottle lasts quite a while.

Electronic Wipes

Electronic Wipes are perfect for removing grease smudges, dust, and fingerprints from any of your delicate screens, including TVs, tablets, phones, and laptops. They can even be used to spot-clean keyboards. The wipes come ready to use and contain no harsh ingredients.



EASY ONE-POT LENTIL SOUP

Inspired by MinimalistBaker.com

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 shallots, diced
- 4 large carrots, sliced thin
- 4 stalks celery, sliced thin
- Sea salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste
- 3 cups red potatoes, cubed
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 2-3 sprigs fresh rosemary or thyme, chopped
- 1 cup uncooked green lentils, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups chopped kale

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large pot, heat oil over medium heat and sauté garlic, shallots, carrots, and celery for 4-5 minutes, adding salt and pepper to taste.
2. Add potatoes to pot, along with more salt and pepper. Sauté for 2 minutes.
3. Add vegetable broth and herbs, then bring soup to a simmer.
4. Add lentils, stirring until soup returns to a simmer. Then, turn the heat to low and cook soup uncovered for 15-20 minutes.
5. Finally, add kale and additional salt and pepper as needed. Cook for 3-4 minutes, thin soup with additional vegetable broth as needed, and serve!

YOUR REFERRALS MEAN THE WORLD TO US

There is no greater compliment we can receive than a client telling a friend or loved one about us. If you know somebody who has been injured and needs an attorney who will fight on their behalf and give their case the attention it deserves, please pass along this newsletter and have them give us a call at 314-293-4222. Thank you for spreading the word about Finney Injury Law.