



FINNEY INJURY LAW  
- TRIAL LAWYERS -

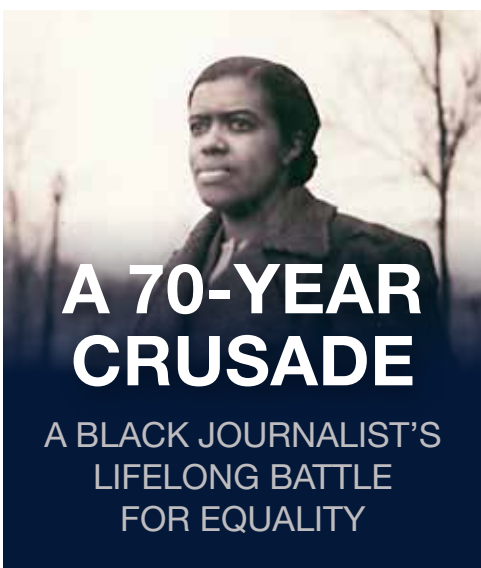
12444 POWERSCOURT DR., SUITE 300  
ST. LOUIS, MO 63131  
FINNEYINJURYLAW.COM // 314-293-4222



PRST STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
BOISE, ID  
PERMIT 411

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Takeaways From a Tough Court Case
- 2 Top Jobs for Teens and Students
- 2 What Happens When Both Parties Share the Blame
- 3 How a Cat Saved an Army Veteran in Need
- 3 Quinoa Veggie Bowl
- 4 Lucile Bluford's Tireless Crusade for Racial Justice



One of Missouri's best-known, most respected civil rights activists and citizens was born this month more than a century ago.

Lucile Bluford was a well known journalist and opponent of segregation. Her 60-year career as editor, manager, and eventually co-owner of The Call, an influential Black weekly newspaper,

spanned an era of dramatic change in race relations in Missouri.

Bluford considered her job a calling rather than an occupation. On the role of The Call in attracting public attention to issues of justice, she wrote, "Every movement for the advancement of black citizens has been championed and fought for through its news pages, its banner headlines, and through its editorial columns."

Born on July 1, 1911, into a middle-class family in North Carolina, she moved with her family at the age of 10 to Kansas City. In Missouri, which at the time was a Jim Crow state with "separate but equal" policies, Bluford was required to walk past an all-white elementary school near her home to attend a segregated school for Blacks two miles away.

Bluford applied in 1939 to the University of Missouri's highly regarded journalism school and won acceptance, only to be rejected after the university discovered she was Black. With the backing

of the NAACP, Bluford continued to apply to Mizzou and file lawsuits until the Missouri Supreme Court ordered the university to admit her in 1941. Mizzou subsequently closed its journalism program. Although Bluford never attended classes there, Mizzou eventually reversed course and awarded her a medal and an honorary doctorate.

Bluford worked with other Black women professionals in 1958 to end segregation in Kansas City department stores. The group achieved its goal through the peaceful means favored by leading activists at that time. Later, Bluford was saddened to witness the devastating Kansas City Riot in 1968. She campaigned against police brutality, which she saw not only during the riot but in everyday interactions between police and residents.

To commemorate the achievements of the woman who became known as "the conscience of Kansas City," the city's public library named a branch after Bluford in 1988.



12444 POWERSCOURT DR., SUITE 300 • ST. LOUIS, MO 63131 // FINNEYINJURYLAW.COM // 314-293-4222 // JULY 2024

# Lessons From a Hard Loss

## DEFENSE LAWYERS' CONDUCT PRODUCES UNFAIR RESULT

As I write this, we are about a week out from our last trial. It did not go so well for us. But the result feels different than other losses. It is hard to place, but I was accepting of the jury result within a day or so. We put on the best case we could and put in the time to do it right. I was less accepting of the lack of professionalism from the opposing side.

I write a lot of notes to myself during trial. Just simple reminders to be a nice person, be professional, and be who you want to be. It usually keeps me grounded and present. This trial was a struggle for me. The defense counsel was someone I had regarded as a friend but that quickly faded. This was a game to defense counsel, but it is my client's life. The defense counsel's antics surprised me. They took cheap shots at my client, said inadmissible things so loudly "under their breath" that the whole courtroom heard it, and repeatedly violated rulings of the court. When we brought it to the court's attention, the response was, "Did I say that out loud?"

In fact, at one point, I looked at them and just said, "Why are you doing this?" I was met with blank stares. It was a very disappointing feeling. You can tell a lot about a person's ethics and professionalism when they are in trial. I wish I never vouched for this person's ethics when professional groups called me to inquire about admitting them. My trust in this defense lawyer was misplaced. We will not make that mistake again.

As with every trial, we learn invaluable lessons. We had taken this case over from another firm after five years. They asked us to try the case. Looking back, I would not have substituted our firm's work for theirs. But I did and I shouldn't have. They had a reason for doing things a

certain way and we have a reason for doing them our way. Adjusting to their way, because almost all the depositions were completed when we got the case was tougher to do than I thought. It required a lot of mental energy.

I feel mostly for our client. He is a good guy who didn't deserve the treatment he got in the courtroom. The personal attacks were unfounded and vicious. It took a tremendous amount of courage to listen to all the lies told about him and not be able to respond. He should be proud of how he handled it.

A day after the verdict, I received an email from a juror. She was distraught about the verdict and the antics of the defense lawyer. She relayed that other jurors considered things that the judge told them not to and she repeatedly had to remind them of that. Unfortunately, it is incredibly difficult to impeach a jury's verdict with that information. She told me she felt our client got a raw deal and it was not fair. I agree with her. It wasn't fair, and it wasn't right. The system isn't always fair. If it was, I wouldn't be needed.

One of the notes I write myself asks this question: Will I be proud of my conduct in 15 years? I can say yes, I am happy with how we conducted ourselves in that trial. We abided by every single court ruling and rule of professional conduct. I wonder if the defense asks themselves the same question.

One case is never worth your reputation.



# LEAVE THE LEMONADE STAND BEHIND

## The Perfect Summer Jobs for Teens and Students

Few things feel better than cashing your first paycheck. If you want your kids to enjoy the joys of payday while building connections and resumes, then recommend they try to break into some of the best gigs available to teens and students this summer!

### Tutor

From juniors and seniors preparing for college placement tests to college students looking to build up credits over the summer semester, there is no shortage of young people looking for help with their studies. Tutoring can be fairly lucrative to start, with the average salary of a full-time tutor being about \$39K per year; it's an excellent way for young adults to break into a career in education — or just share their knowledge to help others struggling.

### Pool Cleaner

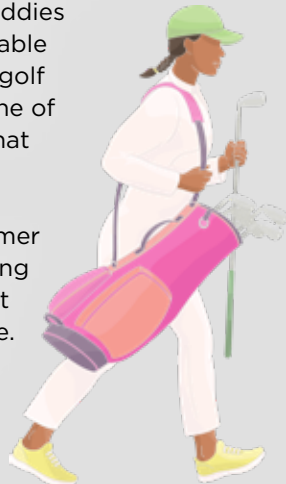
Why not encourage your children to make money while enjoying the summer sun? The neighborhood pool cleaning circuit is abuzz with so many looking to escape the heat. The average pool cleaner salary is around \$32,000, with hourly rates varying depending on location

and experience. If the work is enjoyable and comes naturally, it may be a great preamble for starting a pool cleaning business.

### Golf Caddy

Business often takes place on the green, and as a caddy, your child will be privy to all of it. In addition to carrying bags, finding loose balls, and giving advice on how to get the lowest score, golf caddies can also use their time to build valuable connections. The average pay for a golf caddy is around \$18 per hour, but one of the best parts of being a caddy is that golfers make great tipsters.

Regardless of their choice of a summer job, getting out in the sun and making extra cash is a great way to kickstart your kids' careers or save for college. If your kids have the opportunity to earn work experience, now is the best time to start!



# Fluffy's Heroic Deed Saves a Veteran

In 2020, Ron Williams, a Korean War veteran in his mid-80s, lived alone. His only lifeline was his Life Alert, a small device designed to alert healthcare officials if an emergency occurred. That was until he was gifted a black-and-white spotted cat named Fluffy. From the moment they met, it was clear the two would make a perfect pair. But what Ron didn't know was that he had been given more than a companion — he had been given a savior.

### Feline Friend

While Ron did not have many people to talk to, he did have Fluffy. The two shared mostly one-sided conversations, likely interspersed with the occasional meow. Whenever Ron received a call on his cellphone, he got in the habit of saying, "Ring-a-ding." While the two shared a deep bond, Ron never considered that Fluffy was actually listening.

"I just fell in love with him," Ron said of Fluffy in an interview with FOX17 in Michigan. As it turned out, Fluffy loved him back.

### Fluffy to the Rescue

One fateful day, at around 8 a.m., Ron slipped and fell on his way out of the shower. He landed on his arm, which became pinned under him. His Life Alert, which he had relied upon for



situations like this, was charging in the other room. His cell phone, his only other means of calling for help, was on the bathroom counter, out of reach. The hours ticked away, and Ron lay in agonizing pain on the bathroom floor. At just past midnight the next day, Ron had an idea. Fluffy had wandered into the bathroom to check on his friend.

"Ring-a-ding," Ron told him, and Fluffy knew to retrieve his phone and bring it to him. Ron was able to call for help in time to save his life. Fluffy's quick thinking prevented tragedy. This heroic act is a great reminder that our pets care — and listen — more than we may ever give them credit for.

# Fair Compensation

Imagine that a pedestrian is struck and injured by a cyclist while crossing a busy street, causing her pain, suffering, and sizable medical bills. As attorneys investigate the case, however, it is discovered that the pedestrian was texting and not paying attention to her surroundings as she crossed.

Who should pay? Cases like this are often decided based on the legal doctrine of comparative negligence. Most states have some type of comparative negligence legislation. Defendants can claim under this doctrine that they shouldn't be penalized for their actions because the victim was partly to blame.

While the cyclist in this hypothetical example should be held at least partly responsible for the accident, the pedestrian would probably bear

a share of the blame. The damages she received would be reduced in proportion to the blame assigned to her. If the pedestrian was found to be 20% to blame and the damages awarded were \$100,000, her award would be reduced by 20% to \$80,000.

Comparative negligence can be a factor in a wide variety of personal injury cases, including auto, motorcycle, truck, and bicycle accidents, dog bites, slip-and-fall injuries, and wrongful death cases. Missouri is one of 12 states with a pure comparative negligence law, assigning liability to parties based solely on their culpability. Other states have modified comparative negligence laws, which apply only in cases where the plaintiff's blame is either equal to or less than the defendant's level of negligence.

## Victims of Personal Injury Deserve Justice

Blaming the victim is one of the most common defenses mounted by plaintiffs in personal injury cases. But if you are injured in an accident for which you are partly to blame, that does not mean that you are not entitled to damages. Victims in such cases should still consider proceeding with a personal injury claim.

If you have been injured in an accident, an experienced personal injury attorney can help you sort out what laws apply in your situation and help you present the strongest case possible on your behalf. The attorneys at Finney Injury Law have years of experience helping personal injury victims receive fair compensation for medical bills, pain, suffering, and lost wages. Don't hesitate to contact us for a free consultation to discuss your case in detail.



## QUINOA VEGGIE BOWL

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, diced
- 1 cup diced zucchini
- 1 cup diced mushrooms
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 cups cooked quinoa

### DIRECTIONS

1. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat.
2. Add bell peppers, zucchini, and mushrooms and cook until softened, about 5 minutes.
3. Add oregano, salt, and pepper and stir to combine.
4. Add the cooked quinoa and mix thoroughly.
5. Cook for an additional 5 minutes, then 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 call us at 314-293-4222. Thank you for spreading the word about Finney Injury Law.