

SPANGENBERG SHIBLEY & LIBER

TRIAL LAWYERS

EST. 1946

SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER

2026

SPANGENBERG LITIGATION INSTITUTE





This year's Spangenberg Litigation Institute was a success, with all proceeds benefitting The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland. Since 2016, Spangenberg initiatives have raised $366,434 for Legal Aid. The event brought together attorneys from across the region to learn about the latest strategies, techniques, and developments in litigation and trial practice. Presentations by Spangenberg attorneys covered using visuals in depositions and at trial, proving damages, pursuing claims against law enforcement officers and municipalities, and mastering AI prompting to support reliable legal work. A judges' panel discussed courtroom conduct.

Again this year, 100% of registration fees went directly to The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, which secures justice, equity, and access to the courts for low-income individuals through legal representation and advocacy for systemic change.

The Spangenberg Litigation Institute reflects the firm's commitment to advancing the legal profession. Through education, collaboration, and continued support for Legal Aid, Spangenberg is proud to expand access to justice throughout Northeast Ohio.

Nicholas DiCello Receives CATA Excellence in Advocacy Award

Spangenberg Partner Nicholas DiCello was honored with the Cleveland Academy of Trial Attorneys' (CATA) Excellence in Advocacy Award, one of the organization's highest distinctions. The award recognizes accomplished plaintiff trial lawyers who demonstrate exceptional skill in the courtroom, achieve significant results for their clients, and remain deeply committed to protecting the rights of individuals through the civil justice system.

"Receiving the CATA Excellence in Advocacy Award is a meaningful reflection of the responsibility I feel toward every client who places their trust in me," Nick said. "I am incredibly grateful for my team at Spangenberg, whose dedication, excellence, and care for every client allows me to advocate at the highest level in the courtroom and give our clients the best opportunity to obtain justice."

Nick's recognition reflects his continued commitment to representing individuals seeking justice. It also highlights the preparation, collaboration, and client-centered advocacy that guides the work of the entire Spangenberg team.

Nick received his award at the CATA Annual Installation Dinner at the Shoreby Club in June. The event brought together members of Cleveland's legal community to recognize trial lawyers who have demonstrated excellence in the courtroom and a strong commitment to their clients and the civil justice system.

Spangenberg is honored to support CATA and its investment in the future of trial law. Congratulations to all the attorneys recognized for strengthening the legal profession and uplifting the communities they serve.



SPANGENBERG SHIBLEY & LIBER

Secures Settlement in Lorain County Jail Civil Rights Case

$6.35 MILLION SETTLEMENT

Spangenberg Shibley & Liber LLP Partners Nicholas DiCello and Jeremy Tor have secured a $6.35 million settlement on behalf of Jeffrey Fry, resolving a federal civil rights lawsuit arising from a 2023 incident at the Lorain County Jail that left Fry with a permanent spinal cord injury.



NICHOLAS DICELLO



JEREMY TOR

"Mr. Fry remained steadfast in seeking justice despite the significant hardships he faced over the past three years, and we were honored to stand alongside him," Nick said. "This resolution affirms that our civil justice system can provide meaningful access to justice for every individual and underscores the importance of holding public officials accountable when they violate constitutional rights."

Since the lawsuit was filed, Lorain County has seen changes in jail leadership, including the appointment of a new sheriff and the creation of an inspector general position responsible for independently investigating use-of-force incidents and other concerns within the jail.

The lawsuit stemmed from a 2023 incident at the county jail, when a corrections officer slammed Fry's head into a wall and concrete floor while his hands were handcuffed behind his back, knocking him unconscious and leaving him with catastrophic injuries. After the incident, jail staff failed to provide appropriate medical care despite clear signs of a serious head, neck, and spinal cord injury.

After the incident, the officer failed to adequately report it, providing false claims that Fry attempted to escape and then fell down. In his report, the officer wrote that Fry fell due to this "inebriated state" and was "guided" to the floor. A sheriff's office investigation later determined that the officer used inappropriate and excessive force and submitted inaccurate incident and use-of-force reports.

Fry filed a civil rights lawsuit in January 2024 and continued to pursue the case through investigations, criminal proceedings, and extended federal litigation before a settlement was reached this year. The settlement resolves claims against Lorain County, the City of Elyria, and other defendants. A portion of the settlement involving a private defendant remains confidential.

"The folks in these jails have constitutional rights that need to be protected," Jeremy said. "Throughout the lawsuit, we fought alongside Fry in our shared commitment to seeking justice, accountability, and systemic reform."

SPANGENBERG OPENS OFFICE IN TAMPA, FLORIDA

Spangenberg is excited to announce the opening of its new office in Tampa, Florida—an exciting step in the firm's continued growth and commitment to serving clients in Ohio, Florida, and beyond. Dustin Herman, who is now based in Tampa, will lead the new office and bring Spangenberg's tradition of dedicated advocacy, personal attention, and exceptional client service to the Sunshine State. Dustin will continue to represent clients across Ohio, and the Florida office will be focused on handling cases involving truck crashes, medical malpractice, nursing home abuse, and police brutality/civil rights violations.

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SPANGENBERG PARTNERS WRAP UP TERMS AS PRESIDENTS OF LOCAL LEGAL ORGANIZATIONS



JEREMY TOR

concluded his year-long presidency of the Federal Bar Association Northern District of Ohio Chapter. Jeremy was proud to strengthen the chapter's financial position and launch the organization's inaugural Bench-Bar Conference, which offered programming on key aspects of litigation practice. Jeremy remains actively involved with the chapter as immediate past president and served as co-chair of the committee for the second Bench-Bar Conference.



NICHOLAS DICELLO

concluded his year-long term as president of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association. He is most proud of the organization's commitment to defending the judiciary and upholding the rule of law. He presented the association's annual President's Award to Brandon Chrostowski, the founder, president, and CEO of EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute, which provides a culinary arts and hospitality training program for people returning home from incarceration.



DUSTIN HERMAN

concluded his year-long term as president of the Cleveland Academy of Trial Attorneys. During his presidency, CATA hired an outside consultant to modernize CATA's operations and preserve institutional knowledge, established the CATA Horizon Program as an annual event dedicated to training the next generation of trial lawyers, and redefined the CATA Trial Skills Institute to better reflect its focus on hands-on courtroom practice.