

HOT-BUTTON ISSUES

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4315 W. Lovers Lane, Suite A, Dallas, TX 75209 | 1900 W. Illinois Avenue, Suite 101, Midland, TX 79701

WHAT'S IN A PHOTO?

My dad has this photograph of my great grandfather and my grandfather sitting on a ledge up on Button Hill in Pennsylvania, where his family is from. It's a black and white photo, and it shows my grandfather and great grandfather gazing out at the land and taking it in.

To me, this picture represents not only the history of our family but also the way we pass something down through generations. The way my grandfather and great grandfather are sitting and gazing out at the land makes me think about me and my dad and our favorite pastimes. We like to go hunting and fishing and just be outdoors where we can sit, think, and talk, taking in our surroundings and just existing. The photo is a good reminder of the beautiful things that can happen when life slows down. It's a matter of cultivating that environment and being in the moment, and a photograph tells a story about that moment.

When it comes to the work we do at BLF, we're able to represent our clients through photos. In our cases, it often comes down to what a person or family was like before a traumatic event happened. Who were they before this happened to them, and what did they love to do?

It's so telling when you walk into someone's house and see the photos they choose to hang up. You can see that they love to travel, that family and friends are really important to them, or that their dog is their whole world. It's a natural part of what we do as humans — we look around for visual representations that tell stories about people's lives.

When I meet with a client for their case, I often ask them to share some photos from their phone or some of the pictures they have hanging up at home because those tell me so much about who this person is and who they were before their injury. Sometimes people are less confident or more shy after their injury, and seeing a photo is enough to know this change is brought about by what happened to them.

Often, I'll ask people to tell me about the photos. Where were you in this one? How often do you go here? Have you been there since the collision? Do you miss it? Did you love to travel before you were injured? It all starts visually, and it's a big part of what we do.



Injuries that have caused visible scars or deformities need to be represented through a timeline of photos to show how the victim has progressed and how the scars remain. Often, I notice that people who've been through life-altering events take fewer photos over time because of what happened to them, whether due to the burden they feel physically, emotionally, or as is most often the case, both. So, in addition to looking for photos, we also look for missing photos, the ones a person didn't take because they don't want to document their scars. When you walk into someone's house, you realize the lasting impact of these events.

Photos tell a story, and it's why we came up with the idea for a client photo wall. Our clients become part of the BLF family, and we want to honor that with photos of the people we've been fortunate enough to work with.

Have you ever looked at a photo and been transported right back to that moment, that point in your life, when the photo was taken? I'm excited to have our client wall up for this reason: so we can represent each of our clients and be reminded on a daily basis of their story and how we got to help them make it whole again.

-Russell Button

OUR ATTORNEY HELPS THE NEXT GENERATION OF LAWYERS

ASHLEY'S ROLE AS COACH FOR TRIAL ADVOCACY TEAMS

This February, our attorney Ashley Washington led a team of law students from the University of Houston Law Center in the American Bar Association's Client Counseling Competition hosted by Texas Tech University School of Law in Lubbock, Texas. Ashley has been coaching this trial advocacy team over the last year, and it's been a rewarding and enjoyable experience that has allowed her to share her skills with the next generation of lawyers.

Ashley's interest in volunteering to coach a team was born out of a promise she made to herself during law school. "I did these types of competitions, and I know how important they are. I made a promise to myself back then that I'd pay it forward," Ashley says of her experience on trial advocacy teams.

During the competition in February, one of the teams Ashley coached advanced to the semifinals, and while they didn't make it to the finals this year, Ashley is excited to return next year and take what they've learned during this year's competition to do even better. Throughout the competition, students get feedback from local attorneys who volunteer as judges, and this is another component that makes the competition so beneficial for soon-to-be lawyers.

For Ashley, coaching is a way to give back and pay forward the mentorship and coaching she received in law school. She sees the value in giving students access to real-world experiences like these



competitions. "It gives them the opportunity to practice skills that we use every day as lawyers. I think they learn a lot," she says.

The competition isn't over this year quite yet. Some of the students have other competitions they'll be competing in over the next few months. Ashley coached an environmental law negotiations team that competed at the end of March, and it's something she's excited to do more of.

We wish Ashley and all these students the best of luck in their upcoming competitions. Onto the next one!

FINDING HOPE

About two years ago, our team member Desiree saw a local news segment about a dog who'd been thrown from a car. The dog suffered broken bones and showed signs of neglect and abuse. The news mentioned that the dog rescue where she'd been brought, Apollo Support & Rescue, was still looking for someone to foster and care for her while she healed.

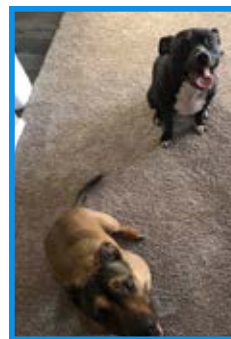
Being the compassionate, caring person she is, Desiree knew she wanted to help. She got in touch with Apollo and began fostering the dog, whom she called Hope, soon after.

In the beginning, Hope would cry all night and needed to be on medication to manage the pain. Since Hope had casts on two legs, Desiree needed to carry her out to use the bathroom, being careful not to let her get wet since water would ruin the casts. "The first few months were hard," Desiree says, "but she was so patient with me." Hope began to get better, and the more Desiree got to know her, the more she felt like part of the family.

"The plan was to foster her until she was ready for adoption," Desiree says. "The goal was to make sure she was healthy enough to be adopted." Of course, life doesn't always go according to plan — sometimes for the best. Desiree knew she'd found her dog, and Hope had found her forever home.

"I grew to love her," Desiree says. "She is the most perfect dog. She's so patient with me."

Since then, Hope's legs have healed, and she's an official part of Desiree's family. She gets along well with Desiree's boyfriend's dog, Lanie, and she's friendly with other pets and people.



Recently, Desiree and her boyfriend began fostering another dog, Peanut, through Apollo Support & Rescue, and they plan to care for her until it's time for Peanut to find her forever home. Desiree is excited to pay forward all the blessings she's received through adopting Hope. "Dogs are amazing," she sums up. We couldn't agree more.

DAYCARE BATHROOM SAFETY

Recently, we've been contacted about some truly heartbreaking situations where a child is severely injured due to being left to fend for themselves coming to and from the bathroom at daycare. Bathroom doors can be very heavy and difficult to maneuver for a small child, and when they are left to open and close it for themselves, their small fingers can get caught in the doorway. When the door slams shut, fingers can be cut off or maimed. As horrible as it sounds, we have talked to parents who have been through this nightmare with their child, and we want to make sure this never happens to your family.

Many young kids lack the self-control and maturity to be left alone in the bathroom. Accordingly, it is essential for Texas daycares to do the following.

- **Supervise children in the bathroom.** Children's privacy should be respected. However, a qualified childcare provider should be in or near the bathroom to make sure that children are safe. Additionally, groups of children should not be in a bathroom unattended.
- **Provide safe bathroom facilities.** For example, it is essential to have toilets and sinks that children can safely reach and to ensure that there is a way to unlock a bathroom door from the outside if a child can lock the bathroom door from the inside.

Bathroom accidents are preventable. Talk to your daycare provider and ask questions to ensure they are meeting these minimum requirements to keep your children safe while they are there. Daycares should take reasonable steps to prevent these accidents from happening and to keep young kids safe from bathroom injuries.

It is the daycare's responsibility to take reasonable measures to prevent these bathroom accident injuries while teaching children to use the toilet safely and independently. When they don't do that, they need to be held liable.

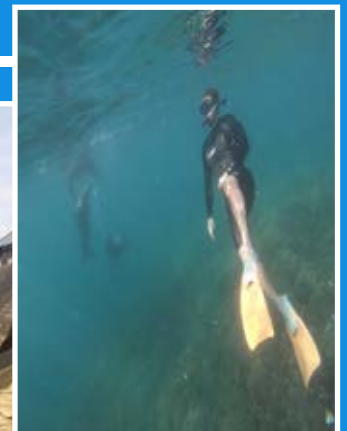
You send your child to daycare because they are too young to care for themselves. The daycare accepted the responsibility to keep your child safe when they agreed to enroll your child in its program. If that did not happen and your child was hurt in a bathroom-related accident, please contact us today to schedule an initial consultation about your child's rights and potential recovery.

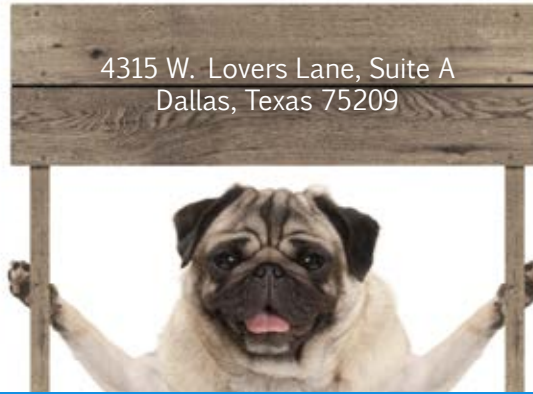


BUTTON LAW HIGHLIGHT REEL



Russell's trip to Todos Santos, Mexico

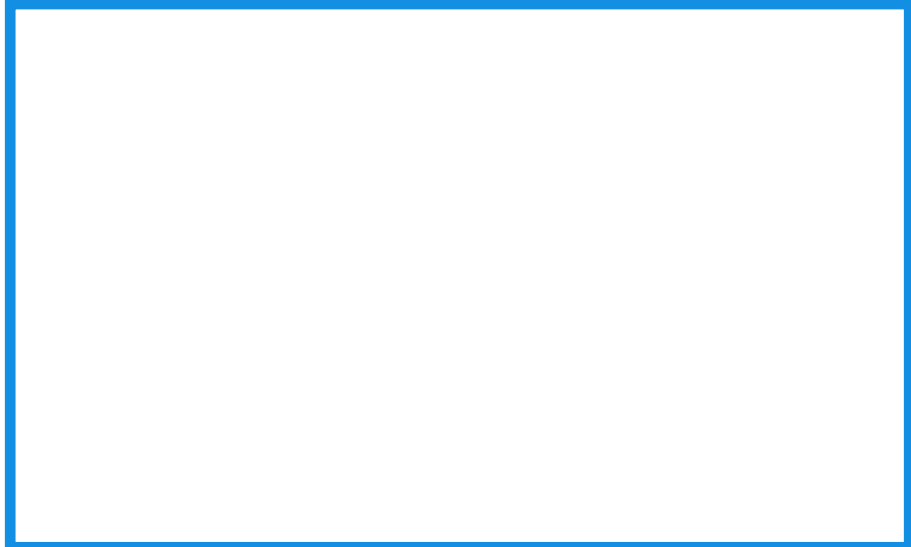




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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 The Story in a Photograph
- 2 Ashley Takes on the Role of Coach
- 3 The Story of Hope
Daycare Bathroom Safety Risks
Button Law Highlight Reel
- 4 Sharing Our Client's Story



A VOICE FOR JUSTICE

Our Client Heads to Law School

Last year, we had the honor of representing Rena and Ben Piper and helping them bring a daycare to justice after the facility neglected their son. From the case, Rena learned more than the importance of holding daycares accountable — she also found her calling.

This winter, Rena was officially accepted into law school. She plans to pursue her law degree and stand up for other families who have been affected by negligent daycares.

During mediation for the family's case, Rena realized that a career in law was her future. She watched as Russell and our team represented her and her family in a caring, compassionate way. "In mediation, I saw how much they cared. Some attorneys are so removed, but they're not. They're right there with you. It was a lightbulb moment," Rena says. "We all go through life trying to find that thing we feel is our calling, our purpose. It was one of those moments where you realize, this is it."

The case helped Rena understand what a big issue daycare negligence is and that she wants to dedicate her career to stopping it. "Seeing how much the system is broken and lacking, and seeing that there's someone who recognizes it and has a passion for it, I became keenly aware how many parents are in need of the type of support and



direction The Button Law Firm provides," Rena says. "I aspire to be that kind of attorney."

Even before starting school, Rena is already using her time to advocate for families and to make sure what happened to her son never happens to another child. She's the one who inspired us to plan our first seminar for families on daycare lessons learned, which includes her sharing her family's story.

From the start, that's why Rena and Ben pursued their case: to make sure what happened to their child never happens again. "Russell and the team embraced my passion and gave me a platform to help educate other parents. They feel just as passionate about it," Rena says. "They've been there along the way, and they are truly an inspiration."