

THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL 2014 ELITE TRIAL LAWYERS

In the last year, plaintiffs lawyers helped their clients win billions of dollars in awards—in fact, the 100 largest verdicts of 2013 yielded more than \$10 billion in recoveries. That sum is likely to be equaled or surpassed in 2014. The ripple effects of these wins reach beyond dollars, with plaintiffs' efforts helping in many cases to reshape public policies or reform corporate behavior.

Recognizing the impact of this work, The National Law Journal and Law.com this year teamed to select law firms that are doing the most creative and substantial work on the plaintiffs side.

The result is our inaugural list of America's Elite Trial Lawyers. The 50 firms named here pulled in big victories in complex cases that have a wide impact on the law and legal business.

To create our list, we vetted more than 100 firms, poring over nominations and reporting on performance. We recognized the work of the firms as a whole, understanding that successful trial work is usually the result of a team effort. We also strived to capture a wide variety of practices and business models—from Wall Street securities specialists to firms that focus on high-impact personal injury cases.

Read the [methodology](#) for our report.

In this special report, you'll find insights on why we selected the firms that we did. In November, we'll gather in Las Vegas for a special dinner and conference honoring the firms and focusing on the current state of the plaintiffs bar.

Podhurst Orseck

In the early stages of a now famous checking overdraft fee case that ultimately involved more than two dozen of the largest U.S. banks, Podhurst Orseck had "no idea how monumental this lawsuit would become," said firm partner Steven C. Marks. "We started to see the scope in discovery and then we just kept adding banks." The case that began against a few banks is ending this year with settlements that have topped \$1 billion, with several outstanding.

Podhurst Orseck began a half-century ago, with early roots in airplane-crash litigation. Today, its cases and plaintiffs are not only U.S.-based but stretch from Brazil to Russia. A recent celebrated win was the \$765 million settlement against the National Football League, aimed at compensating former players for concussion-related injuries and preventing future ones. "This wasn't a money grab or an effort to hurt the sport of football," said plaintiff Shawn Wooden, a former Miami Dolphins' safety. "This was about getting some help for players who are sick, and making it safer for kids playing football now." Wooden's co-plaintiff is Kevin Turner, who played for the Philadelphia Eagles and New England Patriots and is battling ALS.



Steven Marks

Said Marks: "I came here 30 years ago thinking I would leave for the securities industry. But this place is more like a family than a business." — Pat Wechsler

LOCATION OF MAIN OFFICE: Miami | **NUMBER OF PARTNERS:** 9

KEY TO WINNING: "When you go into the courtroom, juries are looking for someone to lead them. That can be the judge, but a good plaintiff lawyer will also try to do that. It's all about building a relationship of trust." —Steven Marks