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KATE WESTAD

A Minnesota Super Lawyer,
Super Mom and All-Around
Superwoman

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KATE WESTAD

A PASSION FOR
PERSONAL INJURY LAW





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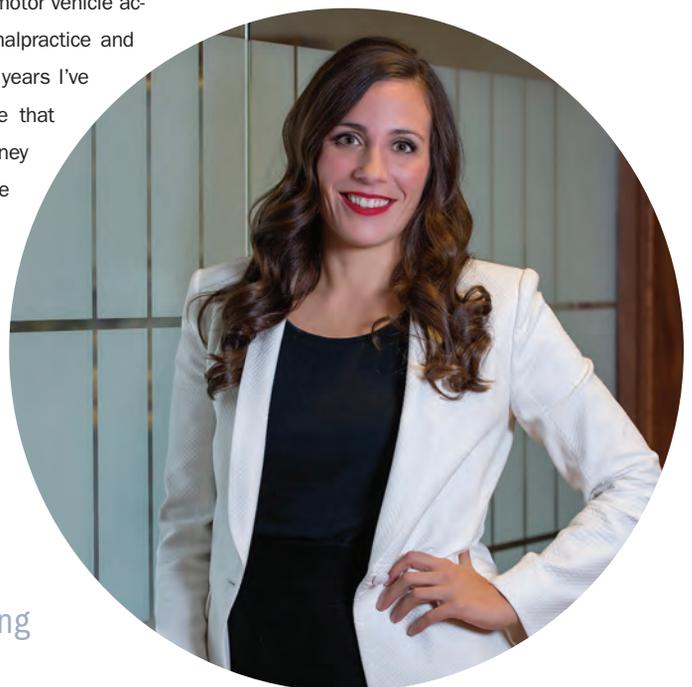
The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines advocacy as “the act or process of advocating or supporting a cause via a profession or work of a legal advocate.” This description and work is something that Kate Westad, a veteran attorney at Lommen Abdo Law Firm of Minneapolis, knows very well.

Interested in politics at a young age, Kate began looking toward a career in law while she was still in high school. “When I was growing up, I was fascinated by politics. In fact, I wanted to be President of the United States! As my college years approached, I thought perhaps I’d like to be a political science major and that led to thoughts of law school. As I was going through college I started recognizing that I really wanted to help people. I also wanted a career, not just a ‘job,’ but something that allowed me to make a difference. I saw a law career as a way to accomplish that goal. Once I made that decision, William Mitchell College of Law became my school of choice for law school.” Shortly after graduation, Kate became a member of the Lommen Abdo Law Firm team in 2002 with a focus on injury litigation.

“I’ve been practicing law for more than a decade now, and I am proud to say that my practice is very different,” Kate revealed. “I handle all types of personal injury litigation work, including motor vehicle accidents, premises liability, medical malpractice and products liability. But in the last few years I’ve become involved in a niche practice that is unique and important. As an attorney that handles vaccine claims with the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program in the Court of Federal Claims in Washington D.C., I repre-

sent claimants who have experienced significant injury or adverse reactions from vaccines. This is a relatively unpublicized program that was created to provide a no-fault, less adversarial way to get affected families the compensation that they need.”

Injury or extreme reactions from vaccines are actually rare, Kate noted, but it does happen, and those who are affected need to know that there is help available. “Vaccines are a routine part of our society’s preventative care that works toward the greater good of keeping everyone healthy,” she noted. “Vaccines are generally safe and prevent the spread of disease. But for some individuals, vaccines can cause significant adverse reactions. There are those rare cases when a vaccine can cause injury, chronic illness or serious conditions such as Guillain-Barre syndrome, Transverse Myelitis and Brachial Neuritis. Some cases can even include acute, severe and permanent aggravation of pre-existing conditions, other severe immune system-activated adverse reactions and even death. Through the National Vaccine



“I created FOCUS ON THE ROAD as a way to encourage a dialogue that will keep this issue in the forefront of everyone’s mind. We all need to have that very important conversation with our friends and loved ones; the conversation that reminds them that habits such as texting while driving need to stop.”



“I think as working moms, no matter what career we’re in or job we work, we just need to endeavor to do the best we can,” Kate affirmed...“Life is so short; your kids won’t always be small, and we just need to enjoy every moment to the fullest.”

Injury Program, vaccine manufacturers contribute to a fund to compensate children and adults with verified vaccine injuries.”

Only a small group of attorneys in the U.S. handles these claims; Kate is intensely proud to be part of that elite group. Claimants have only three years from the first onset of symptoms after receipt of the vaccine in order to make a claim, and this applies for both adults and children. The short time period makes identifying vaccine-related injuries and contacting a vaccine attorney, or referring persons injured by a vaccine to a vaccine attorney, all the more crucial in protecting the prospective claimant’s rights.

Kate wears many advocacy hats in her work; among these, she is a strong supporter and advocate in assisting women in all areas of personal injury litigation and family law disputes. She is listed as a 2014 Minnesota Super Lawyer, was on the Rising Stars list by Minnesota Super Lawyers from 2009 to 2013 and was chosen as an Up and Coming Attorney by *Minnesota Lawyer*. A long-time board member of Minnesota Women Lawyers, Kate is very involved in its mission of advancing women in the legal profession. She is a member of the Leaders Forum of the American Association for Justice and sits on the Board of the Minnesota Association for Justice.

As a result of her passion for preventing injuries, Kate created and launched FOCUS ON THE ROAD®, a public service campaign of traffic road safety that also draws attention to distracted driving. While the cell phone driving ban debate continues and legislation is cropping up on these issues, each and every individual driver can make efforts to remind themselves that distracted driving can be prevented.

“I hear tragic stories of people who have been seriously injured or killed on our roads and highways in automobile collisions all the time,” Kate confirmed. “Even more alarming is the number of drivers engaging in distraction driving, which can and does result in these very tragic collisions and deaths. I created FOCUS ON THE ROAD as a way to encourage a dialogue that will keep this



issue in the forefront of everyone’s mind. We all need to have that very important conversation with our friends and loved ones; the conversation that reminds them that habits such as texting while driving need to stop.”

Losing a loved one took on an entirely new meaning for Kate when, tragically, her husband Justin was killed in an automobile accident in August. This turn of events, though daunting and heartbreaking, has also given this committed attorney a new level of empathy for the clients she represents. “This unimaginable event and tragic loss has given me a new perspective on the work that I do. It’s made me personally consider how such unexpected tragedies impact the family, and this experience will undoubtedly connect me with my clients through a deeper level of empathy and understanding. In the end, it will make me better at what I do.”

As busy mom to Chloe, 12, Claire, 10, Carter, 8, and Camden, 4, Kate knows firsthand of the

elusiveness of the work/life balance. “I think as working moms, no matter what career we’re in or job we work, we just need to endeavor to do the best we can,” Kate affirmed. “I also surround myself with other supportive moms who just say it how it is, who don’t strive to exhibit some shell of perfection or to make it into a competition. I am also very lucky to be able to work for an amazing law firm that allows me to have a flourishing law practice, but also to have a life. Life is so short; your kids won’t always be small, and we just need to enjoy every moment to the fullest.” **HLM**

Learn more about FOCUS ON THE ROAD and the program’s advice about distraction driving on Facebook at facebook.com/pages/Focus-on-the-Road/74777592680 and on Twitter at twitter.com/focusontheroad. For additional information about the Federal Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, visit hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation/index.html. View Kate’s biography at www.lommen.com/Our-Firm/Attorneys/Kate-Westad.aspx.