

EXCELLENCE IN THE LAW

2011 UP & COMING LAWYERS

Andrew R. Dennington

When an uninsured man lost several fingers in a grisly accident with a power saw and ended up with more than \$120,000 in medical bills, Boston lawyer Andrew R. Dennington came to the rescue.

As a volunteer at Health Law Advocates, Dennington worked with hospital administrators and was able to shrink the man's crippling medical bills down to a more manageable \$6,000.

"It's not necessarily complicated legal work," says the 31-year-old associate at Conn, Kavanaugh, Rosenthal, Peisch & Ford. "You're really just helping someone move through the bureaucracy. It's just being an advocate."

Dennington, who dreamed of a life in law while still in elementary school, also does pro bono work with the Volunteer

Recently, Dennington and two colleagues represented a couple from El Salvador who worked at a South End inn and catering company. The inn had attempted to avoid paying the couple overtime wages by giving them sham promotions to salaried positions that carried the same duties as their previous jobs.

After a bench trial in Suffolk Superior Court, Judge Carol S. Ball awarded the couple more than \$100,000. Ball also commended Dennington's legal work in her written decision.

"It was great because it totally changed their life," he says of the Salvadorian couple. "They were able to buy a house afterward. It's just a very rewarding day when you're able to hand them a check like that."

As co-chair of the BBA's Public Policy Committee, Dennington played a significant role in drafting proposed changes to the attorney general's consumer debt collection regulations, which haven't been updated since the 1970s.

AG Martha Coakley accepted eight of the 10 changes, which include regulations that acknowledge advancements in technology, such as a provision that prohibits collectors from harassing debtors with text messages.

The amendments could become law later this year.

"It's great knowing that something you worked on might lead to new law," Dennington says.

Just five years ago, Dennington was a first-year associate walking into the old Middlesex Superior Court building in Cambridge to argue his first motion in



MERRILL SHEA

open court. The hearing started off with a strange buzzing sound coming from the microphones at counsel's table.

"I had a cell phone in my pocket and somehow it caused interference with the microphones," he says. "The clerk looked over at me and started smiling. But I went ahead and argued my motion."

Adding to the pressure on Dennington that day was the unexpected presence of Russell F. Conn, founding partner of Conn Kavanaugh. Dennington had no idea his boss was going to be in the courtroom.

"Luckily, he thought I did a good job," he says.

Dennington has come a long way since his first day in court. Now, instead of having to work closely with the firm's partners on most cases, he is being given more freedom to step out and make his own decisions.

"I feel like I'm coming into things, coming into my own," says Dennington, who was recently married. "I feel a lot more confident."

— PHILLIP BANTZ

AGE: 31

GRADUATED: Boston College Law School, 2006

POSITION: Associate, Conn, Kavanaugh, Rosenthal, Peisch & Ford, Boston

ONE THING ABOUT HIM THAT MIGHT SURPRISE PEOPLE: "In my first year of law school section, I was voted 'Best Dressed.'"

Lawyers Project of the Boston Bar Association. Through the project, he has helped several non-English-speaking workers recover hard-earned wages from unscrupulous employers.

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