

As Seen In ... *Forbes*, May 19, 2008

Nelson & Hammons, APLC

Representing Victims of Medical Malpractice

When a Louisiana woman suffered brain damage during a routine surgical procedure that left her a quadriplegic, her family hired a lawyer. Unable to determine the cause of the woman's condition, the attorney did not know if a legitimate claim could be made for medical malpractice. He turned to the Shreveport law firm of Nelson & Hammons, APLC for advice.

"I got a neurologist who determined that the patient's head and neck had been malpositioned during the procedure, putting pressure on the carotid arteries," says John Hammons, president of Nelson & Hammons. "That reduced blood flow to the brain, resulting in massive brain damage, which went undetected during the surgery."

It was the kind of case that might never have gone to court without Hammons' insight. But with his help, the victim was able to collect sizeable damages that will cover her ongoing medical needs.

As one of Louisiana's leading medical malpractice and nursing home negligence lawyers, Hammons is often called upon by individuals, as well as by other lawyers, to assist them in the most difficult of cases. Indeed, such cases in Louisiana require a unique combination of knowledge and experience, because of rigid timetables and confusing procedures that can sabotage a claim.

Hammons should know. The AV-rated attorney served on the Governor's Commission on Medical Malpractice in the early 1980s, which provided him with significant insight into this area of developing law.

"In Louisiana, the laws are full of traps," he says. "A lot of lawyers haven't read the whole statute and don't understand its intricacies. In this state, the healthcare and insurance industries are far more protected than anywhere else."

Louisiana is the only state where medical malpractice damages are capped at \$500,000, regardless of the scope of injuries or a victim's loss of income. But Hammons says that, depending on circumstances, it is sometimes possible to obtain larger settlements or judgments.

As an example, he points to a case in which an infant died after being administered the incorrect drug for a liver condition. Because the original mistake by a pharmacist continued to be

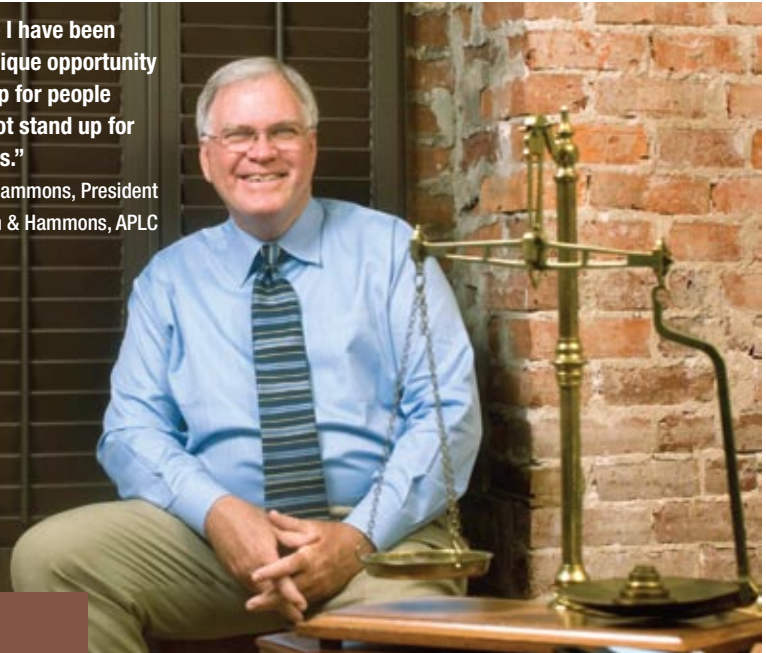
overlooked by doctors and nurses, Hammons argues that the child's parents are entitled to damages from multiple claims.

"We settled with the hospital for the pharmacy error, and are now proceeding against 20 physicians who made a continuing error at various times," he says.

Hammons, who works exclusively on a contingency basis, was among the first lawyers in Louisiana emphasizing the handling of medical malpractice cases three decades ago. He has been at the forefront of precedent-setting cases, and is often invited to speak before legal and medical groups. He says he considers his work to be not just a job, but a calling.

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—John Hammons, President
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"Some cases I've handled have resulted in changes in standards of medical care," he says. "I feel like I have been given a unique opportunity to stand up for people who cannot stand up for themselves."

For more information, call 800-619-6444 / 318.227.2401 or visit www.nelsonhammonsllaw.com.

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