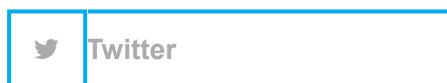




Civil defense bar honors Raleigh's Sammy Thompson

By David Mildenberg Posted July 19, 2018 In Blog

Share this story:



For decades, many North Carolina insurers and hospitals have relied on Samuel "Sammy" Thompson to defend their interests in court. In recognition of his success, the North Carolina Association of Defense Attorneys recently named Thompson, a partner at Raleigh law firm Smith Anderson, as its first recipient of the Award for Excellence in Trial Advocacy.



Smith Anderson

Samuel (Sammy) Thompson

A mutual friend told me this about Thompson: “Sammy Thompson isn’t just a pretty good guy — he’s a great guy. A character, a raconteur with a concussive laugh, and a marvelous storyteller with a swagger and a melodious drawl, which is part of the key to his extraordinary success.”

We asked Thompson a few questions about his career.

Why did you receive this recognition now? I was a founding member of [the association] and have been an active participant ever since by being a frequent speaker and attending meetings. In addition, I have been the president and served on the board of directors. This was a decision of the awards committee approved by the board of directors (I am not on either). They are fellow defense lawyers who know me and my practice. At the award presentation, the presenter said the award would be called “the Sammy.”

What have been the keys to your success in the courtroom? I am very competitive. I consider every case my Super Bowl. I have “a stomach for the battle.” I like to win.

What is the longest jury trial in which you were involved? Six weeks.

What was the biggest amount of money at stake? \$50 million.

How did you come to handle cases in 85 of the state’s 100 counties? I have represented some insurance companies all over the state.

What have you concluded about North Carolinians/jurors in that process? The jury system works well if you have 12 jurors. I never agree to a verdict of less than 12. Most jurors rise to the occasion and take their responsibility seriously. Collectively, a jury has a lot of common sense and the vast majority of the time gets to the correct result.

How have you fared in trials involving former U.S. Sen. John Edwards? He is a very skilled trial lawyer and I have been very fortunate so far in not losing a jury verdict to him.

Have you always represented businesses, physicians and hospital interests? Any plaintiffs cases mixed in? I have been privileged throughout my 50-year career to defend health care providers when they have been accused of committing medical malpractice. This includes hospitals and their employees, doctors and their practice groups, and insurers of health care providers. I have also had the opportunity to represent the North Carolina Medical Society with respect to tort reform issues before the N.C. legislature.

