

# Daily Journal

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## W<sup>TOP</sup> Women Lawyers 2023



### Christine D. Spagnoli

Greene Broillet & Wheeler LLP

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El Segundo

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Personal Injury, Wrongful Death  
& Product Liability

**C**hristine D. Spagnoli is a consumer advocate specializing in plaintiff-side auto defect litigation as a partner at Greene Broillet & Wheeler LLP. She has been with the firm for almost 40 years.

"We just had our 50th anniversary, so I'm a new lawyer compared to the firm," she laughed.

Spagnoli is on the boards of the American Association of Justice, the Rand Institute for Civil Justice and Loyola Law School, where she graduated cum laude in 1986. She was inducted into the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles Hall of Fame in 2018.

She is known for a record \$4.9 billion verdict in 1999 against General Motors over a defective fuel tank that caused a car to burst into flames following a rear-end collision, badly injuring two adults and four children.

In March 2023, another rear-ender tragedy led Spagnoli to be among the first lawyers to use a new California law that allows a decedent's estate to collect damages for pre-death pain and suffering.

She negotiated a \$5 million settlement from a landscape company's insurer plus a confidential amount from Fiat Chrysler LLC after a man's Jeep Grand Cherokee stalled on a Sacramento freeway and was hit from behind by a landscaper's pickup. Driver Anthony Anaya, 19, survived the

crash but was unable to escape the flames from a ruptured fuel tank. *Anaya v. FCA LLC et al.*, 34-022-00314171 (Sacramento Co. Super. Ct., filed Jan. 9, 2022).

"California was one of the few states that did not recognize claims for people not instantly killed in accidents," Spagnoli said. "That changed at the beginning of last year, just as we were about to file. It's an important remedy, and I believe I was among the first to use it."

Spagnoli is prepping for a January 2024 wrongful death and product liability trial in New Mexico over a horrific freeway accident that killed three and injured three — all members of a family together in a car that was struck head-on by a motor home whose left front tire failed, causing the driver to lose control and veer into oncoming vehicles. *Furman v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.*, D-101-CV-2018-00697 (N. Mexico Co. of Santa Fe 1st Jud. Dist., filed March 5, 2018).

Lengthy procedural delays as Goodyear unsuccessfully contested the venue slowed the case. "A nightmare," Spagnoli said. She added that the G670 tire, whose tread separated, has serious design flaws. "But now I'm going back to Akron [Ohio] to take some depositions" from Goodyear, she said. "I'm chuggin' along, and I intend to keep it that way."

— John Roemer