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Doing the Right Thing

Attorneys at Northridge insureds firm Kantor & Kantor LLP aren't in it just for the money.

By Shane Nelson

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Longtime plaintiffs' attorney Glenn R. Kantor spent the early years of his career defending insurance companies sued for denying health and disability claims.

"I very quickly learned to hate it – hate it, hate it, hate it," the Kantor & Kantor LLP founding partner said. "I hated defending the insurance companies because half the time they were right, but half the time, I thought the cases I was defending them in they were acting horribly."

Kantor mentioned an early dispute in which he defended an insurance company that denied treatment to an infant, born with a hole in her heart, because the father forgot to mail a postcard.

"It was just a postcard saying he wanted his new baby covered – not money, not a missed payment, just a postcard," Kantor recalled. "And I just told myself, 'I hate doing this.'"

Kantor decided to make a change in 1992, joining forces with a colleague to represent insureds, and the two subsequently handled a range of matters resulting from the Northridge earthquake. That partnership dissolved amicably years later, according to Kantor, and in 2004, he said he teamed up with



Nicole Tyau / Daily Journal

Andrew M. Kantor, left, and father Glenn R. Kantor

his wife, founding partner Lisa S. Kantor, "to basically do nothing but represent individuals against insurance companies."

"In 2004, we had five, six lawyers," Glenn Kantor recalled.

'It's really a pleasure to deal with someone like that because you're getting down to what the legal disputes are, and you don't have any lawyer-to-lawyer acrimony.'

— Los Angeles defense attorney Martin E. Rosen

"We now have 21 in five states: Washington, Oregon, Nevada, New Jersey and California."

Headquartered in Northridge, the firm's focus has expanded over the last 16 years, according

to Glenn Kantor, who said the shop now represents healthcare providers and hospitals suing insurance companies as well as handling some property, casualty and pension work.

"But it's all still individuals, primarily against either insurance companies or ERISA government pension plans," he explained. "And we do no defense work."

Kantor & Kantor has not, however, been shy about hiring former defense attorneys. Last January, the firm welcomed partner Stacy M. Tucker, who spent the previous two decades representing a large insurance company in ERISA, disability and other bad faith cases. Tucker opposed Glenn Kantor numerous times over the years, but the two have been good friends for some time.

"I used to joke with my client about how he could be very Jekyll and Hyde," Tucker said of opposing Kantor, chuckling some.

"Glenn was never not on his game," she continued. "But

sometimes, he was much more reasonable, and we would be able to reach an amicable agreement pretty quickly. Then there would be times where we'd come in expecting that, and he would absolutely refuse to budge. ... But he always very strongly felt that his client deserved a fair shake."

Tucker said she always admired Kantor's unflinching commitment to his clients, and joining the shop and switching sides has been an excellent experience. Although the original plan was for Tucker to continue handling ERISA and other health-related bad faith matters, she said she has been focusing the past year largely on property cases related to fires in Northern California, "representing a ton of wildfire victims who've had their insurance canceled after the fire based on technicalities."

Tucker noted the firm has also recently taken on a COVID-19 business interruption case, involving a client with insurance coverage that featured a virus endorsement. Many folks have reached out to the firm in recent months with business interruption matters related to the pandemic, according to Tucker, but she said the shop was waiting specifically for a case featuring a virus endorsement claim.

"There are some people who went out and actually got a virus endorsement, which spe-

cifically covers viruses," Tucker explained, referring to what she described as hundreds of COVID-19 business interruption cases filed across the country. "Despite that, insurance companies are denying those, saying it's not that kind of virus. Or they're saying there has to be physical damage caused by the virus or that the virus has to be caused by a covered cause of loss, which would be a fire or wind storm. Viruses cannot be caused by those things, so this is illusory coverage. ... So we wanted a virus endorsement [case] to try to make an argument on that and see where that goes."

Most certainly a family affair, Kantor & Kantor has also earned a tremendous amount of recognition for the work Lisa Kantor has done representing clients with eating disorders denied treatment by their insurance company. And son, associate Andrew M. Kantor, who joined the firm in 2015, has since created his own niche, representing clients denied coverage for chronic fatigue syndrome, or ME/CFS.

Like his father, Andrew Kantor opposed Tucker a number of times before she switched sides and joined the shop early last year.

"She's the only lawyer on the other side who ever scared me," Andrew Kantor said, laughing,

"She was the only lawyer who could take what I thought was pretty much a slam dunk – maybe not a winner, but a great settlement kind of case – and make it look silly. She was the only one who would ever have me going into a mediation happy and then leaving annoyed. When we had the opportunity to hire her, I was very enthusiastic."

Los Angeles defense attorney Martin E. Rosen, who's been opposite Glenn Kantor more times than he can remember, said Kantor & Kantor is extraordinarily knowledgeable in the areas of ERISA and denied treatment claims.

"They're very aggressive on behalf of their clients, but they're also very reasonable to work with," Rosen said. "It's really a pleasure to deal with someone like that because you're getting down to what the legal disputes are, and you don't have any lawyer-to-lawyer acrimony."

Palm Desert defense attorney Daniel W. Maguire, who has opposed Glenn Kantor more than 100 times in the past 30 years, described him as incredibly hardworking and trustworthy.

"Glenn does have a tendency to get up on a soap box, but that's because he's passionate, and I respect that," Maguire said. "Above all, he's always got his clients' interests first. ... And

It might not be in his firm's best interest to take a case, but he nevertheless will take some of these cases because the client just needs some representation. I never got the sense he was in it for the money."

At 63, Glenn Kantor admitted he doesn't need to work anymore, but he said he continues to practice simply because he loves the job.

"We take it seriously that we are helping people," he explained. "Sometimes we make a lot of money helping people who are getting a lot of money. Sometimes we make no money helping people who desperately need it and can't find help anywhere else. We really pride ourselves on taking the cases that aren't necessarily lucrative but somebody really needs help."

Kantor was also quick to mention working alongside his wife and son has been a tremendous joy.

"Right after my son started, potential clients would call and get him and realize no, they really wanted me," Glenn Kantor recalled. "But he's now developed an expertise in what we do to a point where people call today and they get me and they say, 'No, no, I wanted Andrew Kantor. He's the lawyer I was told to talk to.' I really take a lot of professional pride and fatherly pride in seeing what he's developed."