

AZA Pro Se! ISSUE 4

IN THIS NEWSLETTER



AZA Storms Through the Pandemic



Video: Why Hire AZA



The Rocker Turned Trial Lawyer



AZA Among Top 20 Best US Midsized Firms for Employment



A Fallen Friend and the Firm Defended



AZA Hangman Game

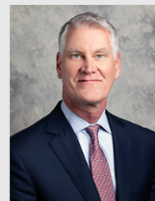


What Our Clients Said About Us This Year

AZA Storms Through the Pandemic Hires, Trials and Growth

Some slowed down. We sped up. We never cut staff or salary, no furloughs, no layoffs. Instead, we hired eight new lawyers. They are Alex Dvorscak, Joshua H. Harris, Alex R. Hernandez, Steve Jugle, Omar Marawi, Monica Moussighi, Colin B. Phillips and Ian Marshall Sander. You can see them all [here](#).

In addition to those eight, AZA will be growing its appellate practice in January with the addition of a new Of Counsel: the highly respected **Harris County Civil District Judge Daryl Moore**. The firm's lawyers are ecstatic to bring the experience, temperament, knowledge and company of a judge hailed as one of the best in the courthouse.



We tried several cases. Some by Zoom. An in-person jury trial ended in August. A six-person Arkansas jury awarded a \$9.4 million verdict on behalf of AZA client Southeastern Emergency Physicians, LLC, an affiliate of TeamHealth Inc. The jury found that commercial insurance companies systematically tried to strip the 120 emergency clinicians in the physicians' group of most of their pay. Read about this win in *The Texas Lawbook*: [Six Days Notice, Six Witnesses, Six Jurors, 150 ER Doctors, Two Ticked Off In-House Counsel and a \\$9.4M Verdict](#).

This case was another example of our parachuting abilities: We were hired

six days before trial. Now we will be doing more work for TeamHealth Inc. In fact, our overall workload has expanded during the pandemic as we focus not only on the energy sector and intellectual property but also on more healthcare cases.

A few other pandemic-time victories:

- **APPELLATE** The Texas 14th Court of Appeals ruled that an AZA client can proceed to trial against a Chinese company and its Houston-based employee for theft of trade secrets. The appellate court found that a Harris County trial judge did not err by denying a special appearance by the China-based company.
- **SETTLEMENT** The Houston City Council has settled an employment discrimination lawsuit filed by a longtime AZA client, a female Houston firefighter. The highly publicized case started in 2009 when racist and sexist slurs were scrawled across her belongings, including on a photo of her deceased daughter. It ended not only in a monetary award, but also with changes to the way the city educates supervisors and handles discrimination in the fire department.
- **TROs** We won many TRO hearings to the benefit of our clients. For example, we won nine TROs in one recent six-week period, including two that barred a competitor from talking to customers it had in common with our clients and one that stopped an arbitration.

VIDEO – Why Hire AZA?

We're proud of our work. In this short video, we explain why you should hire us to do your legal work.



[Watch Our Latest Video](#)

It's Only Rock 'n' Roll, But This Lawyer Liked It



AZA trial lawyer **Foster Johnson** knows the thrill of hearing his band's song on the radio for the first time while driving across the Golden Gate Bridge with his brother, a fellow band member.

He also knows what it's like to have a video and three rock 'n' roll albums made; to play to crowd of 3,000; and to be on a stage where Hendrix, Joplin and the Stones once played.

And he knows what it's like to end the rock-star dream and use his initially sizable royalty payments from the songs he wrote to pay for Stanford Law School.

"Maybe it's from being onstage, maybe it's from the creativity of writing music, maybe it's from the mushrooms consumed while in the band, but he is a legal genius and comes up with the most bizarre, unconventional ideas that have done miracles for our clients," AZA co-founder John Zavitsanos said of Johnson.

READ MORE

AZA Among Top 20 Best U.S. Midsize Firms for Employment



AZA continues to get high grades from its associates. The firm is ranked among the top 20 midsize law firms for 2021 by Vault, the widely respected career guide and job-ranking service that relies on surveys of law-firm associates.

In Texas, the firm ranked No. 4 among midsize law firms. Nationally, the firm ranked 19th. As one of the best firms to work for, AZA made the top 10 list in the categories of career outlook and selectivity. The firm is listed among the top 15 for job satisfaction, quality of work, hours and compensation.

READ MORE

A Fallen Friend and the Firm Defended

AZA defended a friend in a lawsuit on a deathbed promise. Then the firm defended itself against the same lawyer who sued the dying man. AZA and karma prevailed.



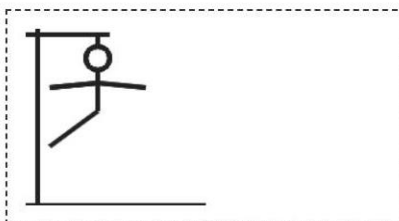
The sad tale started in 2017 when lawyer Jimmy Williamson, a friend of AZA co-founder John Zavitsanos, was in the hospital less than two weeks away from dying of cancer. Houston lawyer Lance Kassab chose this distasteful time to file a lawsuit against the dying man. Mr. Kassab alleged Mr. Williamson and other attorneys improperly solicited victims of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico as clients.

Horried by this action, Mr. Zavitsanos decided to represent the Williamson estate pro bono with firm associate Patrick Yarborough. After motions ripped the case apart bit by bit, there was nothing much left when Harris County District Judge Scot Dollinger dismissed the last few plaintiffs in mid-2019, finding that they were never clients of Mr. Williamson's and the other defendant lawyers and that the remaining claims were also barred by the statute of limitations. The final dismissal of the case is featured in news coverage by *Texas Lawyer* in [Houston Lawyer Fulfills Deathbed Promise to Attorney-Friend Facing Barratry Allegations](#)" (subscription required) and by Law360 in [3 Houston Attys Get Deepwater Horizon Barratry Case Tossed](#)" (subscription required).

Mr. Zavitsanos told *Texas Lawyer* that he was glad for his late friend, Mr. Williamson, that the case was fully dismissed. "I gave Jimmy my word this guy [Mr. Kassab] would never receive one penny and that I would protect his children," Mr. Zavitsanos said of his deathbed promise to Mr. Williamson. "I feel Jimmy's reputation is now back intact as one of the great trial lawyers of Texas."

It appears to the AZA lawyers that Mr. Kassab was so annoyed by seeing his case dissolve little by little over the years, he looked for some way to both maintain and increase his power and influence, as Mr. Zavitsanos said.

A Hangman Game - Just Because



Promise you'll send me the next AZA Newsletter.

CLICK HERE

”

What Our Clients Said About Us This Year

Clients praised AZA to *Chambers USA*, Best Law Firms in 2021 by *U.S. News & World Report* and sometimes to us. Here is a sample of what we love to hear:

“(They) are the very best civil trial lawyers in Texas. They are experts at litigation strategy, and the timely and effective execution of that strategy. They are very thorough, and they conduct discovery in a manner that is focused on its best use at trial. They are truly my ‘go to’ firm for any complex civil litigation matter.” CEO of a sealing products company

AZA **“is staffed with the smartest, most hard working and ethical lawyers** I have ever worked with. They handled my case with dedication and we beat the socks off of our opponent.” CEO of a janitorial services company

“They are strong, professional and aggressive litigators who are willing to stand up and fight for their client.” - Told to *Chambers USA* researchers

AZA **“is a fantastically run firm,** the best I have ever worked with. And I have hired a lot of law firms recently.” CEO of an energy sector company

“They are very talented guys and most importantly, they are winners.” Told to *Chambers USA* researchers

AZA has **“the sharpest lawyers I’ve ever worked with within any practice area,** not just commercial litigation. The way ... the team thinks, operates and executes is unmatched.” Told to Best Law Firms

“There are a number of well-reputed IP firms in North America. But, if you want a true partner that can deliver a viable IP strategy and litigation expertise that ensures concrete results, you need to engage AZA. Unlike other law firms, AZA is a business and IP strategic partner they are smart, aggressive, efficient, and strategic. AZA is our go-to trial firm.” CEO of a publicly traded company

AZA “lawyers are well-known for being able to parachute in to complex cases that are in trouble and heading into trial. **They are as smart, hard-working and collegial as any lawyers I have ever worked with** and they do what it takes to win, always adhering to the highest ethical standards.” Told to Best Law Firms

AHMAD
ZAVITSANOS
ANAIPAKOS
ALAVI
MENSING

AZA



1221 McKinney, Suite 2500
Houston, Texas 77010
(713) 655-1101

[Unsubscribe](#)

