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# ATTORNEY AT LAW

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MAGAZINE®

SANDWEG & AGER  
P.C.  
LAWYERS



## JOHN AGER & BILL SANDWEG

ATTORNEYS OF THE MONTH

### DICKINSON WRIGHT FAMILY LAW TEAM

PRACTICE GROUP OF THE  
MONTH

### MAUREEN BEYERS

ARBITRATOR OF THE MONTH

### MICHAEL FAITH

MANAGING PARTNER

SPOTLIGHT

### MACQUEEN & GOTTLIEB PLC

BOUTIQUE FIRM OF THE  
MONTH

ATTORNEYS OF THE MONTH

# LAWYERS CHANGE MEDICAL MALPRACTICE

**BILL SANDWEG AND JOHN AGER ARE DEDICATED TO HELPING THE VICTIMS OF MEDICAL MALPRACTICE PERSONAL INJURY AND WRONGFUL DEATH. HARD WORK, ATTENTION TO DETAIL AND A TEAM OF PROFESSIONALS ENSURE BEST RESULTS FOR EVERY CLIENT.**



JOHN AGER AND BILL SANDWEG

# ING THE LIVES OF ACTICE VICTIMS

WRITTEN BY  
SUSAN CUSHING  
PHOTOGRAPHED  
BY ANDREW  
PAUL



**B**ill Sandweg and John Ager have over 70 years combined experience successfully representing plaintiffs in personal injury litigation. They are recognized as being among the best plaintiff's medical malpractice firms in Arizona. When asked to what they attribute their success, the veteran attorneys point to hard work and tenacity, along with a desire to make a difference in people's lives.

"We founded Sandweg & Ager to focus exclusively on helping the victims of personal injury and wrongful death, especially those who have been harmed by medical negligence," says Sandweg. "We have a reputation in the legal community as hardworking lawyers with an unwavering dedication to our clients and their interests."

"I think it's important to note that a significant number of our cases are referrals from other attorneys," Ager adds. "We are proud of that fact. It's an indication of the reputation we've earned for high quality work over a long time and that we have the respect of our colleagues."

## **CERTIFIED SPECIALISTS IN PERSONAL INJURY AND WRONGFUL DEATH**

Sandweg and Ager are both certified specialists in personal injury and wrongful death litigation by the State Bar of Arizona Board of Legal Specialization. However, when they first met nearly 25 years ago, Ager was still in law school and clerking for a mid-sized firm where Sandweg was a partner.

It's evident that Sandweg perceived something special in the young law student; perhaps even reflections of himself at that age. He had an opportunity to observe Ager's potential firsthand while working together. According to Ager, it was an experience that has impacted his legal career in the best possible way.

"I was working as a summer associate after my second year of law school," Ager recalls. "I worked a lot with Bill and he sort of took me under his wing. He gave me an opportunity to work on insurance defense cases doing some pretty advanced stuff. That work led to a job offer and gave me a great perspective and insight for the work I'm doing now."

"Bill was fairly straight forward about the practice of law and being a trial lawyer," he continues. "He told me in this business you'll either sink or swim. You're given enough rope to go out and hang yourself, but hopefully you learn fast and don't. The opportunities he made possible early in my career helped me develop in a way that would be very difficult for those who don't have a good mentor. Mentoring is so important, and I was extremely fortunate to have someone who was not only interested in helping me in that way, but who is also one of the smartest lawyers I know."

## **AN END AND A BEGINNING**

Their old firm disbanded in 2006. As Sandweg describes it, "The attorneys scattered, everyone going a different direction."

But it was the perfect opportunity for the two attorneys to strike out on their own. Ager had a decade of experience under his belt, most of it working closely with his mentor and friend. Sharing similar ideas and philosophies, they decided to open their own firm specializing in the area of law where they had both developed a reputation for doing top notch legal work on personal injury and wrongful death cases. Drawing upon their combined experience, they continued to focus their efforts on helping the victims of medical negligence. Since then, they have continued to hone their skills to with expert precision, while building an award-winning firm.

Building and sustaining an effective and successful medical malpractice firm requires more than office space and hanging out a shingle. In fact, it requires even more than two highly-skilled, veteran attorneys can provide. Sandweg and Ager understand that and have carefully recruited a full-time professional staff that includes a nurse consultant and a personal injury paralegal, who between them bring more than 60 years of experience. A physician, who is also a lawyer as well as their former partner, is "of counsel" to the firm and another invaluable member of their elite team. With these is formidable resources, their firm can handle virtually any case.

# AT A GLANCE

## SANDWEG & AGER P.C.

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### BILL SANDWEG PRACTICE AREAS

Medical Malpractice  
Personal Injury  
Wrongful Death

### EDUCATION

Juris Doctor, Arizona  
State University  
College of Law, 1974  
Bachelor of Science,  
Georgetown  
University, 1966



### HONORS

Best Lawyers in America  
Arizona's Finest Lawyers  
Southwest Super Lawyers

### PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American College of Trial Lawyers  
American Board of Trial Advocates

### RECENT PUBLISHED WORKS

Arizona Tort Law Handbook, Chapter 21, State Bar  
of Arizona, 2012

### JOHN AGER PRACTICE AREAS

Medical Malpractice  
Personal Injury  
Wrongful Death

### EDUCATION

Juris Doctor, University  
of Arizona College of  
Law, 1996  
Bachelor of Arts,  
University of  
California at Berkeley, 1991



### HONORS

Best Lawyers in America  
Arizona's Finest Lawyers  
Southwest Super Lawyers

### PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Board of Trial Advocates  
American Association for Justice  
Arizona Association for Justice

"There are some basic essentials you must have in order to take on the types of cases we do," explains Ager. "And truthfully, there's probably only a handful of firms in Arizona who have the same capabilities as we do. First of all, you have to be well capitalized, you need to be able to afford to do the cases. Next, you need to have the proper infrastructure in order to manage the cases. You need a full-time nurse consultant on board, and a physician who can offer advice on certain cases. We are fortunate to have a physician who is also an attorney, something that very few firms in the country enjoy."

"Naturally, you need to have sufficient office staff," he continues. "And, finally, you have to be trying cases. The insurance companies know which firms are willing to take a case to court and which ones aren't or can't. If you don't have a reputation for trying cases, and a successful track record overall, it can be difficult to obtain the full value of the case for your client when an opportunity arises."

"The adjusters, those who are ultimately responsible for these cases, pay very close attention to the various attorneys and how they handle themselves," adds Sandweg. "This is an area of the law where it's not enough to know the law, you have to understand the medicine. They are waiting to spot your weakness."

"One thing I learned in my very first malpractice case," he adds, "is that I'll never know as much as the doctor. But, I don't have to. I just need to know more than the doctor on the issues that are at stake in a case. And, for the medical aspects of the case, we have our own experts to help with that."

Their success speaks for itself. Not only do they have countless happy clients, they also have earned the recognition of their peers and independent rating agencies for being among the best lawyers in Arizona and the United States.

## PERFECT PAIRING

While they come from quite different backgrounds, Sandweg and Ager have a partnership that's very nearly perfect.

Sandweg attended the Foreign Service School at Georgetown University as an undergraduate. Following graduation, he received an Air Force commission and served five years as a jet pilot flight instructor before attending law school at Arizona State University, where he graduated magna cum laude and was senior editor on the Arizona State Law Journal.

A life-long Arizona resident, Ager earned his undergraduate degree at the University of California, Berkeley, where he double majored in rhetoric and social science with an emphasis in legal and political theory. He worked in education for two years before earning his law degree from the University of Arizona, where he was a member of Arizona Law Review and served as an extern to U.S. District Court Judge Hon. Richard Bilby.

It's a partnership that works because of a strong friendship, mutual respect and the fact that both Sandweg and Ager are dedicated and passionate about their work.

"It's hard work, there's no getting around that," says Sandweg. "It's like the old saying, 'the harder I work, the luckier I get.' But, even after all these years and all of the people we have represented, it's still extremely rewarding when you know you've helped someone and made a difference in their life."

"The folks we are helping, really need our help," adds Ager. "The money that we are able to get them is money that is going to make a significant difference in their lives. Truthfully, I can't recall ever having an unhappy client-win, lose or draw. I think that is because we shoot straight and go into each case giving everything we've got."