

Daily Journal

SEPTEMBER 4, 2024



James J. Yukevich

Yukevich Cavanaugh
Los Angeles

James Yukevich has more than 100 jury trials under his belt representing Fortune 500 companies.

His journey into law was inspired by his high school debate coach, Coach Bruno, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

“It was a lot of fun, challenging and I was good at it. Incidentally, my debate partner was my high school girlfriend!” Yukevich said.

In a high-profile case, he and his team are currently defending a wood products company at the center of the Mill Fire in Northern California. The plaintiff claims that the entire town was burnt down due to Yukevich’s client allegedly failing to cool ash, which could have started the fire that destroyed more than 100 homes.

“The Mill Fire in Northern California caused a lot of property damage, but our client’s product didn’t cause it,” he said. “We got the case four days before the fire site was going to be bulldozed and put an attorney/expert team on the ground in 48 hours.”

Recently, Yukevich successfully defended American Honda in a case involving an allegation of a defect in Honda’s seats, which allegedly caused a customer to sustain paralysis. *Gardner v. American Honda Motor Co. Inc.*, 30-2020-01172206 (O.C. Super. Ct. filed Nov. 30, 2020).

Honda emerged victorious, scoring a complete defense verdict with Yukevich and his

colleague Cristina Ciminelli as their lead defense counsel. The plaintiff, James Robert Gardner Jr., was left paraplegic after his Honda CRV was rear-ended by a Chevrolet Camaro traveling at high speed on the 91 Freeway. Despite the restrictive standards laid out in *Romine v. Johnson Controls Inc.*, which limited the use of expert testimony, Yukevich’s defense strategy led to a favorable outcome for Honda.

“The Gardner Honda case which I tried in February and March was challenging because the judge kept out all of our testing and government approvals based on the consumer expectations test,” he said. “In a case where the plaintiff was rendered a paraplegic due to an allegation of seat back defect, the jury had to align the bending and breaking of the seat back with what an ordinary consumer would expect. Not an easy task. The first case of its kind in the last 15 years.”

In addition, Yukevich and his team are representing Six Flags Great Adventure in a case involving fireworks that caused a major explosion, killing one and injuring several.