



Mayra M. Fornos, Esq.

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Profile

Mayra Fornos, Esq. is an accomplished litigator and trial attorney with three decades of experience handling a wide range of civil matters, with expertise in the fields of catastrophic personal injury, including spinal cord injuries, vehicular accidents, premises liability, products liability, elder abuse and dependent adult care abuse, wrongful death, medical malpractice, employment discrimination, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), sexual harassment/abuse, family law and business disputes.

This experience, combined with Ms. Fornos' unpretentious pragmatism, resolute work ethic, professionalism, and personable demeanor, has garnered the deep respect and appreciation of her peers from both the plaintiff and defense bars as well as the court. Her background and wealth of experience have compelled her to focus her talents on dispute resolution, and her resultant approach to the mediation process is guided by her commitment to providing litigants a forum to resolve disputes in an efficient and effective manner.

Ms. Fornos' strong, positive approach to settlement is based upon bringing the stakeholders together in an atmosphere of reciprocal trust and fair conduct. She believes in the importance of establishing a platform of safety and trust among the parties, fostered by a deep dive into the facts of the case, in order to facilitate mutually beneficial resolutions. Ms. Fornos has been successful parlaying her keen legal acumen, her empathetic mindset, and

her innate interpersonal skills to reach fair and judicious outcomes regardless of the complexity or difficulty of the case. Her careful and thoughtful practice of striving to walk in the shoes of each litigant has served her clients well.

Ms. Fornos has been unwavering in the development of her skills in alternative dispute resolution. She has served as a Settlement Officer and Mediator for the Los Angeles Superior Court in addition to receiving extensive training in mediation and conflict resolution from the Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution at Pepperdine University School of Law, earning certificates in *Mediating the Litigated Case* and in *Elder/Dependent Adult Care Mediation*. She has participated as a judge and coach for the Straus Institute's Mediator Competition, in addition serving as a judge for the American Association for Justice (AAJ) 2021 Virtual Student Trial Advocacy Competition.

Ms. Fornos is fluent in Spanish and draws upon a unique multicultural perspective, along with her respectful and patient approach, to effectively serve clients of many different backgrounds.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Personal Injury
- Premises Liability
- Products Liability
- Elder Abuse/Dependent Adult Care Abuse
- Wrongful Death
- Sexual Harassment/Abuse
- Medical Malpractice
- Employment Discrimination
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Family Law
- Business Disputes

EDUCATION

- Juris Doctor, University of West Los Angeles School of Law
- Bachelor of Business Administration, California State University of Long Beach

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

- Fornos Law Firm, APC, Founder
- Nelson & Fraenkel, LLP, Former Of Counsel

AWARDS AND HONORS

Ms. Fornos has been listed in Best Lawyers in America since 2011, Super Lawyers since 2012, and was named one of the Top 50 Women Attorneys in Southern California. She is a recipient of the President's Award from the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles (CAALA), in addition to being a finalist for Advocate of the Year by the Women's Caucus of the Consumer Attorneys of California (CAOC). The Westside Chamber of Commerce Women's Network awarded Ms. Fornos with its prestigious "Women of the Year Award". For her decades of steadfast legal work to improve the lives of individuals with catastrophic

injuries and those in the disability community, Ms. Fornos received the *Chairpersons Award* from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities, in addition to the *Ed Roberts Independent Living Award* from the Dale McIntosh Center.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS & PUBLICATIONS

Ms. Fornos is frequently sought out as a speaker and moderator for legal seminars, as well as for expos and events for the injured and disabled community, including being a frequent legal lecturer for the Don Knabe Wellness Center’s “Law & Resource Day” at Rancho Los Amigos Rehabilitation Center, and for the Abilities Expo. She has also authored numerous legal articles, including *The Disability Rights/Personal Injury Crossover Case in Public Accommodations* (CAALA Advocate Magazine); *Corralling the Evidence* (CAALA Advocate Magazine); and *Winning Your Case with Written Discovery* (CAALA Advocate Magazine). Additionally, Ms. Fornos has been featured in the Daily Journal; Los Angeles Times; Culver City Observer; CAOC Forum Magazine; CAALA Advocate Magazine; Wheel:Life Online Magazine; and OYA Online Magazine. For a complete list of her speaking engagements and articles, please visit her website at www.MayraFornos.com.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In 2008, Ms. Fornos founded Ralph’s Riders Foundation in honor of her late husband. Ralph’s Riders Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization which inspires and assists individuals with spinal cord injury and other life-altering injuries to achieve their highest level of independence, health, and personal fulfillment. She also serves on the Boards of Global Mobility, a non-profit organization which supplies wheelchairs to developing countries; Familia Unida, a non-profit providing services to the Spanish-speaking disability community; and Infinite Flow, an inclusive dance company. For many years, Ms. Fornos served on the Board of Project Support for Spinal Cord Injury/WYNGS, whose mission was to help rebuild lives after spinal cord injury.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Los Angeles County Bar Association
- Beverly Hills Bar Association
- Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles (CAALA), Emeritus
- Consumer Attorneys of California (CAOC)
- Association of Southern California Defense Counsel (ASCDC), Affiliate Member
- Loyola Law School, Civil Justice Program Steering Committee
- California Women’s Law Center, Former Board Member
- Culver City Disability Advisory Committee
- Los Angeles Trial Lawyers Charity, Founding Friend
- South Bay Bar Association
- Southern California Mediation Association
- American Association for Justice (AAJ)

Representative Cases

ADA

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- A disabled quadriplegic went to a restaurant to meet his friends accompanied by his service dog. Defendant restaurant refused to allow him to enter the restaurant with his service dog. Plaintiff sued the restaurant for violations of the American Disabilities Act.
 - A disabled quadriplegic visited defendant's strip club in celebration of a friend's bachelor party. Although the club permitted him to enter the establishment, they refused to accommodate him when he attempted to engage in another room/stage of the club claiming they could not accommodate his kind of disability. Plaintiff sued the strip club for violation of the American Disabilities Act.
 - A boy who was born with a physical disability causing disfigured arms, visited defendant amusement park with his teacher and friends from school. When plaintiff attempted to ride defendant's roller coaster, defendant refused to let him ride because he allegedly could not hold onto the restraining bar. The boy's teacher informed the attendant that he could, in fact, hold on. The attendant refused, and when plaintiff spoke with the office, was further refused. Plaintiff, who during the suit against the amusement park, demonstrated his agility and ability to throw a frisbee. As a result of plaintiff's lawsuit, the amusement park changed its policy and procedures, and implemented safety harnesses that are appropriate for individuals with similar kinds of disabilities.
 - A quadriplegic photographer visited defendant art museum to see a particular exhibit. Defendant refused to permit plaintiff to enter the exhibit claiming his wheelchair would dirty the floor. Defendant called security guards and humiliated the plaintiff in front of other patrons. Plaintiff sued defendant for violating his rights under the American's with Disabilities Act.
 - Plaintiff attended a show at a small theater that lacked handicap seating and was unable to accommodate her wheelchair. Defendant theater placed plaintiff on a sloping aisle behind individuals who stood in front of her and blocked her view of the play. Defendant asserted it was structurally impractical to make changes to the theater that would have reasonably accommodated her wheelchair. Plaintiff introduced expert testimony showing the opposite.
 - In litigating a deliberate denial of access of plaintiff's service dog to a restaurant facility, defendant's franchisor and franchisee hotly contested who was liable for the discriminatory act. The operator of the establishment litigated the case aggressively and filed a motion for summary judgment, which was successfully opposed.
 - Defendant retail establishment refused to permit plaintiff, a child with a physical disability, to enter its childcare area. Complicating the matter were claims of associational liability claims for damages for the child's relatives, as well as defendant's assertion that the requested injunctive relief would create a "fundamental alteration" to its business. Nevertheless, plaintiff achieved recovery and a change in defendant's policy.
 - Plaintiff while visiting a major event venue was forced to travel on unpaved pathways and outdoor areas to get to his destination. Plaintiff's wheelchair caught on objects on the unpaved pathways and outdoor areas, causing his wheelchair to become mired in mud and immovable. Plaintiff sustained injuries and damages. Plaintiff brought an action under the American's with Disabilities Act for lack of proper access to the Venue.

Elder Abuse

- Plaintiff was undergoing rehabilitation at a nursing facility. While there, she developed stage four bed sores. She sued the facility, claiming they failed to turn her and adequately care for her. Defendant denied liability.
- Plaintiff was walking across a busy street to a commercial shopping center when he was struck by two cars. Defendant driver's both asserted the plaintiff was not in a crosswalk and that he was not visible due to his dark clothing. Plaintiff alleged had the defendants not been speeding or distracted, would have had ample time to see him and avoid striking him.
- While plaintiff was walking across the street, she was struck by defendant's vehicle making a right turn. She suffered orthopedic injuries. Defendant challenged that the plaintiff had darted off the curb into the street, and that he had his turn signal indicating his plan to turn right.
- Plaintiffs sustained serious orthopedic injuries when defendant's vehicle made an unsafe left turn, causing a T-bone collision. The plaintiffs, each elderly, sustained serious injuries including a fractured wrist, multiple rib fractures, and a torn rotator cuff. Defendant claimed plaintiffs sped through a red light; Plaintiffs claimed their light was green.

Employment Discrimination

- Plaintiff, a single mother of two children and an immigrant, was lured by a supervisor under the pretense of "training" to drive with him to a different location. The supervisor took plaintiff to a motel where he raped her, then threatened her and her children if she spoke out. The employer defendant claimed the abuse occurred outside of the course and scope of his employment. Plaintiff asserted improper hiring, retaining and training.
- Plaintiff applied and was hired by a major oil company for an engineering position. When the employer discovered plaintiff suffered from type 1 diabetes, they rescinded their employment offer, despite plaintiff's superior qualifications and lack of actual safety limitations. The plaintiff sued for employment and disability discrimination.
- Plaintiff was fired from her employment by defendant government entity when defendant discovered she was pregnant. Defendant claimed plaintiff was performing substandard work.

Government Entity

- When defendant's bus driver stopped short of the established bus stop, plaintiff, who was confined to a wheelchair attempted to exit the bus via the handicap ramp. Due to a large number of people exiting the bus down the ramp, plaintiff could not see that the ramp ended immediately in front of a bus bench. Plaintiff attempted to swerve to miss the bench, but the wheelchair tipped over the edge of the ramp ejecting plaintiff off the wheelchair. Plaintiff struck her head and seriously injured her shoulder. Plaintiff sued the bus company for negligence and improper training of its employee driver. Defendant challenged the nature and extent of plaintiff's injuries.

- Defendant bus driver did not know how to properly secure plaintiff, a disabled patron in a wheelchair. After getting frustrated, defendant bus driver chose to continue driving without securing the chair. When the bus came to an abrupt stop, plaintiff was thrown injuring her shoulder and hip and severely limiting her mobility. Plaintiff claimed negligence and inadequate training of the driver.

Personal Injury

- Plaintiff was struck by a taxicab while crossing a street on a rainy evening. Plaintiff alleged defendant taxicab driver failed to slow before turning right, striking her and fracturing her leg and seriously injury her wrist. Plaintiff claimed due to the complications arising from her injuries she was unable to perform her job as a flight attendant for multiple years. Defendant's, taxi company and driver, claimed the plaintiff crossed the street on a red light and was distracted on her cell phone.
- Plaintiff, who drove a special adapted van due to his spinal cord injury, was severely rear-ended by defendant. Plaintiff alleges that he sustained another spinal cord injury reducing his ability to function. Defendant disputed the nature and extent of his injuries, claiming the plaintiff did not sustain a new injury nor was his ability to function further compromised.
- Plaintiff was riding his bike when a car entered the bike lane and struck him. Plaintiff suffered a broken ankle and a torn meniscus in his knee. Defendant claimed plaintiff had swerved into his lane, and disputed liability.
- Plaintiff sustained a fractured wrist and soft tissue injuries when he tripped and fell on a sidewalk that was not flush. Defendant argued the condition was open and obvious, occurred in daylight with good visibility, and that plaintiff, who had walked on the sidewalk many times throughout the years, was familiar with its condition. The case favorably settled.
- Plaintiff, a hand model, suffered a finger amputation as a result of a vehicle collision with defendant's car. Defendant challenged the extent and amount of plaintiff's emotional distress damages.

Premises Liability

- Plaintiff visited her parents' home where defendant cable company's workers were performing an installation. While walking down a hallway, plaintiff fell through the crawl space defendant had been accessing during the installation. Plaintiff sustained severe fractures to her leg and arm. Plaintiff claimed the installation workers had left the exposed crawl space unmarked and unguarded. Defendant's claimed that the crawl space was open and obvious, and the plaintiff was aware that they had been accessing the crawl space for the cable installation.
- After slipping and falling on a wet surface in a major grocery store, plaintiff sued grocery store for injuries she sustained to her hip and wrist. Defendant claimed that it had no notice of the water spillage and that it had properly inspected the accident site in a timely manner. Defendant disputed the nature and extent of plaintiff's injuries.

- Plaintiff, a wheelchair user, shopping at a pet shop was traveling the aisles and came across aisles that were too narrow due to products that were left on the ground waiting to be stocked onto shelves. At the end of an aisle, plaintiff realized the aisle was too narrow to make a turn and backed up and while doing so his wheelchair struck a product sticking out of the shelf causing his wheelchair to tip over. Plaintiff hit his head and suffered a concussion and a higher neck injury in his spinal cord than he originally had, causing additional loss of function. Defendant argued plaintiff's pre-existing condition had not been aggravated and that he had not sustained further injury to his spinal cord nor additional loss of function.
- Plaintiff was riding her bike to school on the sidewalk against the flow of traffic. As defendant pulled out of his employer's driveway, defendant struck plaintiff ejecting her from her bike. Defendant was operating an employer vehicle during the course and scope of his employment. Plaintiff sustained a spinal cord injury causing permanent partial paralysis. Defendant's argued plaintiff violated the vehicle code by riding on the sidewalk against the flow of traffic.
- Plaintiff, a minor, was playing with friends in his backyard when he chased a ball into the abutting alley. While chasing the ball, plaintiff was struck by defendant's vehicle, sustaining serious injuries to his arm, leg and face. Defendant claimed plaintiff darted out in front of the car. Plaintiff claimed defendant was speeding and should have been able to see and avoid striking him.
- Plaintiff fell down the stairs at a small hotel injuring his back and neck. Plaintiff claimed there was inadequate lighting and was unable to see the steps. Defendant countered that the lighting was sufficient, and that the plaintiff was not paying attention while hurrying down the steps.
- Plaintiff suffered significant injuries including a fractured arm and injuries to her neck and back after tripping and falling down the stairs of her apartment building. Among her claims, plaintiff asserted defendant's, owner and property maintenance companies, violated building codes for railings and steps. Defendant's countered that she had lived in the apartment for a long time, had used the stairs many times and was used to the railing and stairs. Defendant's claim comparative negligence on the part of the plaintiff.
- While exiting an elevator at her employment, plaintiff tripped, sustaining significant back injuries. She sued her employer, asserting the elevator was not flush. Defendant asserted plaintiff excessively treated her injuries, her injuries were pre-existing, and it had no notice of the dangerous condition. Plaintiff, however, contended the injury aggravated a preexisting injury, as well as causing additional injury.
- Plaintiff, an elderly woman, trips while exiting an elevator that was not flush with the ground. She asserted she sustained significant soft tissue injuries, and a decline in the quality of her life due to pain. Defendant countered that it lacked notice of the condition, and also challenged the extent of plaintiff's injuries.
- Plaintiff is the able-bodied wife of an individual who has physical handicaps. After showering in their handicap accessible hotel room, plaintiff tripped on the rubberized shower guard that was improperly secured to the bathroom floor. She fell, suffering a torn rotator cuff, a wrist fracture, and facial injury. Defendant claimed it had no notice of the unsafe condition, and it also challenged the extent of plaintiff's injury, asserting she had a preexisting shoulder injury.

- Plaintiff rode his mountain bike onto a mountain bike park trail and hit an obstruction, incline and/or other hazard or defect, causing his bike to unexpectedly stop, ejecting him onto the trail. Plaintiff sustained a spinal cord injury and paralysis. Defendant alleged assumption of the risk and a signed waiver.

Products Liability

Plaintiff rode in the back seat of a friend's vehicle. The driver, who was speeding, lost control on a winding road, went through a railing and rolled-over multiple times. Plaintiff alleged that although he wore a seatbelt, it unlatched while the vehicle rolled, causing him a catastrophic spinal cord injury, as well as, a head injury and multiple fractures. Plaintiff alleged the seatbelt was defective. Defendant seatbelt manufacturer denied the seatbelt was defective, claiming the seatbelt had never been recalled. Defendant further argued that liability should rest solely on the driver.

Wrongful Death

Plaintiff crossed a busy street to join his family at a birthday celebration. Defendant pulled out of a commercial driveway, turned left, failed to see plaintiff walking in the middle of the street and struck him. Plaintiff suffered a traumatic brain injury before dying. Plaintiff's survivors sued the driver for negligence. Defendant countered that plaintiff was not in the crosswalk and was not visible due to wearing dark clothing.

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Fee Schedule

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