

Daily Journal

www.dailyjournal.com

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2024

Generation to Generation

Abbey, Weitzenberg, Warren & Emery PC can trace its history back more than a century.

By Shane Nelson

Special to the Daily Journal Staff

Trial attorney Scott R. Montgomery used to dress up as a lawyer for Halloween when he was a kid.

“I’d take my father’s briefcase. ... And I’d have my hair slicked back,” Montgomery said with a chuckle. “I’m surprised anyone gave me any candy.”

Montgomery said that as early as age 3 or 4 he was already emulating his father - Santa Rosa family law attorney Robert A. Montgomery - carrying around a yellow legal pad and asking questions like, “What’s your legal problem?”

“I always wanted to be just like my dad,” Montgomery recalled.

A 2011 UC Law San Francisco graduate, Montgomery spent a summer clerking at Abbey, Weitzenberg, Warren & Emery PC in Santa Rosa and then joined the civil litigation trial firm after he passed the bar.

“I’ve never worked anywhere else,” Montgomery said.

In 2023, Montgomery won a \$24.8 million jury verdict on behalf of three children who were sexually assaulted by their foster father after being recently housed with him and his wife by a placement agency contracted by *Sonoma County. C.F. et al. v. Alternative Family Services Inc.*, SCV264540 (Sonoma Co. Super. Ct., filed May 31, 2019).

“I just started crying when they were reading the verdict,” Montgomery recalled. “It was a moment where I realized all the effort, all those hours you spent at the office, all that time you spent trying to



From left: Michael Green and Scott Montgomery | Gary Wagner / Special to the Daily Journal

learn this craft, ... it comes to fruition. When that verdict came in, it was really something.”

Much of what 17-attorney Abbey, Weitzenberg, Warren & Emery PC now handles are contingency-based, plaintiffs-side personal injury, medical malpractice, wrongful death and products liability matters, but Montgomery routinely takes sexual abuse cases involving children. He said the *C.F. v. Alternative Family Services* verdict was especially gratifying.

“I believe in my heart of hearts that they had really done wrong to these kids,” Montgomery said of the foster placement contractor. “The agency had done wrong by putting them with him, with this kind of monster, and they were strident and steadfast throughout

the proceeding through closing argument that we were wrong and that they had done everything right.”

Roots certainly run deep at Abbey, Weitzenberg, Warren & Emery, a firm that’s been around for more than 100 years, according to shareholder Michael D. Green.

“It’s been in Sonoma County forever,” Green said. “It’s just one of these old-time, small-town firms that’s gone generation to generation.”

Not long after he completed his legal degree at University of Denver College of Law in 2000, Green joined the Santa Rosa boutique, and like Montgomery, he’s never worked anywhere else.

“I feel like I made a good call,” Green said.

Green regularly represents plaintiffs in medical malpractice, trucking accidents, products liability and civil rights cases. In September, Green won a \$26.2 million jury verdict for his clients in an obstetrical malpractice case involving a mother who gave birth to twins. *Quinley Bright v. Matthew Pride, M.D.*; Sutter Medical Group of the Redwoods, SCV265779 (Sonoma Co. Super. Ct., filed April 12, 2019).

“We tried it against a zero offer, so that felt pretty good,” Green said. “Essentially, there was a delay in performing a C-section, and one of the twins suffered a cord prolapse and a hypoxic injury as a result. She had some lifelong issues that went along with that. It was a very challenging case.”

Santa Clara trial attorney James J. Zenere opposed Abbey, Weitzenberg, Warren & Emery on a separate matter in the past, and said the firm has a good reputation.

“They’ve had some very good results,” Zenere said. “So clearly, they know what they’re doing.”

Zenere tried a case against Montgomery a few years ago and described him as a “very good attorney.”

“He definitely believes in his

case, and I think he 100% fights for his clients,” Zenere said. “In addition to that, as an opposing counsel, he’s professional and easy to work with. He’s not one of these attorneys who is cantankerous or just difficult for the sake of being difficult. He’s actually an easy guy to work with, very flexible. Just a good professional.”

Montgomery described Green, meanwhile, as a terrific mentor, no-

ting the two have tried several cases together over the years. And Green was in an equal hurry to praise Montgomery while also thanking his own longtime mentors at the boutique: W. Barton Weitzenberg and Patrick W. Emery.

“I really feel lucky,” Green said. “I think this firm has had a good tradition of excellence in terms of trial work, and I think it’s really been passed from generation to generation.”

Speaking of their work on behalf of plaintiffs, Green and Montgomery also expressed similar sentiments.

“I like sticking up for the little guy, and I like representing real people clients as opposed to big companies,” Green said. “I really like helping people that have been put in a bad situation by others.”

news@dailyjournal.com