

M. SCOTT GEMBERLING

SENIOR COUNSEL



AREAS OF PRACTICE

Hospitality & Liquor Liability
Miscellaneous Professional Liability
Employment Law

CONTACT INFO

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2000 Market Street, Suite 2300
Philadelphia, PA 19103

ADMISSIONS

Pennsylvania
1981

EDUCATION

Widener University Delaware Law
School (J.D., 1981)

Pennsylvania Western University,
Clarion (B.A., 1974)

Pennsylvania State University
(M.Pssc. [course credits completed
for Master in Psycho Social
Science], 1976-1978)

HONORS & AWARDS

AV® Preeminent™ by Martindale-
Hubbell®

Litigation Counsel of America
Fellows

Pennsylvania Super Lawyers
2005-2021

OVERVIEW

For over 40 years, Scott has focused a significant portion of his practice on the defense of liquor liability, professional liability (legal, accounting, employment, D&O, non-profit, HOA) and significant exposure excess insurance claims. Scott has tried over 100 jury cases to verdict, many involving dram shop, medical and dental malpractice and product liability matters.

In addition to his law practice, Scott has lectured extensively to various claims and trial lawyer associations concerning liquor liability, early mediation and/or settlement negotiations and trial tactics. He serves as the National Litigation Coordinator for high-exposure liquor liability, professional liability and excess claims cases for a number of national insurance companies. Scott has actively defended liquor liability, casualty and professional liability claims in a variety of jurisdictions including Florida, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Oklahoma, Michigan, Minnesota, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, New Jersey, Connecticut, California, Washington, Arizona, Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas and Colorado.

Scott previously served on the faculty of the Pennsylvania Bar Institute for its annual Tort Law Update Program lecturing attorneys on subjects including dram shop liability and the admission of evidence of alcohol in civil cases. He has served as a judge pro tem in Delaware County (1997-2002), co-chairman of the Delaware County Civil Trial Practice Committee (1998-2002) and a member of the Delaware County Judicial Advisory Committee.

Scott graduated from Clarion University of Pennsylvania in 1974 and completed master's credits toward a Master of Psychosocial Science at the Pennsylvania State University from 1976 through 1978. He concluded his legal education at Widener University School of Law in 1981. Scott began his career with Marshall Dennehey as a law clerk in 1979 and continued employment with the firm following his admission to the Pennsylvania Bar in 1981.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Dram Shop Cases Are Perfectly Suited for Early Mediation

Philadelphia - Headquarters
Hospitality & Liquor Liability
February 22, 2019

ASSOCIATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS

American Board of Trial Advocates, Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter

Delaware County Bar Association

Delaware County Judge Pro Tem (1997 – 2002)

Delaware County, Judicial Advisory Committee (1998-2002); Co-Chairman, Civil Trial Practices Committee (1998 – 2002)

Pennsylvania Bar Association

Pennsylvania Defense Institute

Philadelphia Association of Defense Counsel

Philadelphia Bar Association

YEAR JOINED

1979

CLASSES/SEMINARS TAUGHT

Dram Shop, The Toxicology and the Law, National Academy of Continuing Legal Education, August 1, 2024

Dram Shop, The Toxicology and The Law, National Academy of Continuing Legal Education, December, 2020

The New Fair Share Act and Dram Shop Liquor Liability, Markel Insurance Co. and Markel International Insurance, August 2011

Recent Developments in Dram Shop Litigation, Pennsylvania Association for Justice, April 2010

Mealey's Retail Hospitality Liability Conference, Las Vegas, Nevada, October 2005

Annual Symposium on Alcoholic Beverage Law, National Alcohol Beverage Control Association, Inc., Arlington, Virginia, March 2004

Dram Shop Liability, Insurance Society of Philadelphia, December 2003

Tort Law Update, Pennsylvania Bar Institute, August 2008

Liquor Liability, Philadelphia Trial Lawyers Association, November 1999

Liquor Liability Seminar, Pennsylvania Bar Institute (Pittsburgh, Mechanicsburg and Philadelphia), 1999-Present

Tort Law Update (Evidence and Expert Witnesses), Pennsylvania Bar Institute, 1995-Present

Evidence of Intoxication, Philadelphia Bar Education Foundation, December 1995

Defending Liquor Liability Cases, Philadelphia Trial Lawyers Association, June 1992

Dram Shop Liability, Pennsylvania Trial Lawyers Association, Winter 1991

American College of Forensic Psychiatrists, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1999

PUBLISHED WORKS

"*Dram Shop Cases Are Perfectly Suited For Early Mediation*," *The Legal Intelligencer*, Liquor Law Supplement (page 6), February 22, 2019

"Appellate Bailout in Pennsylvania Dram Shop Case," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 18, No. 1, March 2012

"Recent Dram Shop Developments," *The Pennsylvania Bar Association Quarterly*, Vol. 70, No. 3, July, 1999

"Direct vs. Circumstantial Evidence of Visible Intoxication in Dram Shop Case - Kelly Hotel Continues The Trend," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1999

"Direct vs. Circumstantial Evidence of Visible Intoxication in Dram Shop Case - Kelly Hotel Continues The Trend," *Pennsylvania Law Weekly*, July 19, 1999

"Defense of Contributory Negligence In A Dram Shop Case Involving An Adult Consumer of Alcohol," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1999

"Defense of Contributory Negligence In A Dram Shop Case Involving An Adult Consumer of Alcohol," *The Legal Intelligencer*, June 14, 1999

"Dram Shop Liability," *Pennsylvania Bar Institute* No. 1999-2074

"'After Hours' Service of Alcohol Not A Basis For Liability Under PA Dram Shop Act," *Defense Digest*, October 1995

"Estate of Boudwin v. Dino's Lounge, et al.: A Dram Shop Act Case," (Co-Author), *American Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 1994

"No Social Host Liability for 'Minors'," *Defense Digest*, Summer 1992

"The Dram Shop Act in Pennsylvania: Strategies for the Defense," (Co-Author), *American Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1992

PRO BONO ACTIVITIES

Advisory Board of the Nerney Leadership Institute at Cabrini College, Advisory Board, 2014-2016

National Advisory Board, United States Liability Insurance Group

RESULTS

Successfully Defended Appeal Sustaining Objections of Improper Venue

Appellate Advocacy & Post-Trial Practice

Product Liability

October 3, 2025

We successfully defended the plaintiff's appeal of a trial court decision sustaining preliminary objections on the grounds of improper venue. This case involved the death of a 19-year-old woman at a university who fell down an 11-story trash chute in an off-campus condominium building. In this mixed negligence and product liability case, we represented two of the multiple defendants, the condominium association and the building management company.

SIGNIFICANT REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

In *Hiles v. The Brandywine Club*, 443 Pa. Super. 462; 662 A.2d 16 (1995), Scott represented the co-defendant liquor licensee, The Brandywine Club, in the wrongful death/survival claim of a husband whose wife was killed by the codefendant drunk driver, William Diviney, as she was driving to work at 6:30 a.m. on November 30, 1985. Following trial in Chester County, Pennsylvania, the jury rendered a verdict finding Diviney 100% liable and awarded Hiles \$925,000.00 with The Brandywine Club avoiding payment of the entire verdict under joint and several liability for any percent of negligence. The Hiles case has since provided the defining standard in Pennsylvania for licensee liability involving off-premises accidents caused by intoxicated adult patrons.

In *Pulliam v. Bakerstown Hotel*, 2004 Pa. Super. 116 (2004), the plaintiff was rendered quadriplegic as a result of a one-vehicle accident following his consumption of alcoholic beverages at the defendant bar. During jury trial in Butler County, Pennsylvania in 2002, the Court admitted evidence of plaintiff's juvenile drug rehabilitation records, prior DUI convictions and evidence that plaintiff's urine tested positive for marijuana and cocaine following the accident as "highly probative" of the plaintiff's life expectancy and tolerance to intoxicants. Plaintiff's Petition for Allowance of Appeal was denied by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in July 2005 and the case has since provided the standard by which evidence of plaintiff's prior drug and alcohol history may be admitted at trial.