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The Mottley Law Firm

BRIGHT SPOTS IN DARK DAYS

CHRONICLES OF AN ETERNAL OPTIMIST

Is your glass half full or half empty?

If you regularly peruse the news, it's easy to feel pessimistic about the state of global affairs. Closer to home, many of our fellow Americans struggle with everything from financial hardships to the devastating effects of natural disasters. Understandably, many of us are finding it difficult to keep our spirits high, but it's a goal I work to achieve every day.

People who know me well describe me as an eternal optimist — an interesting characterization as I write this cover article for March, which happens to be National Optimism Month. My friends and colleagues often kid me about my positive outlook on life. I suppose I'm a rarity in my profession, as lawyers are generally taught to be skeptical, even cynical. Being negative has never been in my nature.

Sometimes, people who are not natural optimists will say, "I'm not being pessimistic; I'm being realistic." *Yeah, right.* It is not unrealistic to be an optimist. In fact, optimists are realistic in acknowledging the benefits of thinking positively that pessimists refuse to see. I'd argue that optimists have a firmer grasp on reality and the rewards that often come from maintaining a positive attitude despite the odds. Pessimistic self-preservation is our greatest hurdle to achieving our greatest successes.

"If you don't embrace risk now and then, you're not genuinely taking advantage of what life offers."

That said, being an eternal optimist does have its hazards. Over the past six months, I've had to turn down several cases that significantly challenged my glass-is-half-full philosophy. I was initially tempted to take them, but I realized they all had inherent difficulties that would likely have led to defeat. As optimistic as I am, I've also suffered the consequences of ignoring my cautionary intuition in the past. As disappointing as it was to turn down these opportunities, I simply couldn't agree to pursue them.

What did I learn from those experiences? Was the takeaway not to be an optimist and never take risks? Not at all. Part of being an optimist means recognizing opportunities in adversity, setbacks, and losses. Even when you get burned spectacularly by a decision or a missed opportunity, you will



learn something valuable. If you don't embrace risk now and then, you're not genuinely taking advantage of what life offers.

If you're a natural cynic who avoids taking risks, you know the outcome: **nothing.** But if optimism guides your decision-making, you have a 50-50 shot of things working out. Cynicism may be helpful in the short term, but you may miss out on amazing chapters of your life in the long run. Not all risks pay off — and it's in your best interest to say no to things occasionally — but some risks ultimately provide you with more than you could have imagined.

As we near the end of the first quarter of 2025, it's up to us to consider the positive things in life and bring light to our homes, offices, communities, and everyday interactions with others. Perhaps we've been hit with so much bad news lately because the universe is clearing out all the negative stuff now so we can enjoy a pleasant remainder of the year. Perhaps more challenges are right around the corner. Either way, how we think matters. Only we can decide whether our glasses are perfect just the way they are.

—Kevin Mottley

Green Thumbs in Training

How to Make Gardening a Family Adventure

There's nothing better than spending time with your kids outside, enjoying an entertaining, creative, and informative activity. But sometimes, these activities are hard to coordinate. Thankfully, gardening appeals to parents and kids from all walks of life. All you need is a dedicated area in your yard or patio and seeds, and you're ready to get started.

Let your kids choose the plants.

This is arguably the most crucial part of igniting your children's interest in gardening. If you pick out the fruits, veggies, and flowers you want to grow and invite your kids to help plant, water, and pick, they may lose interest quickly. Instead, include them in the process from the get-go. Take them to the store and let them pick out seeds or plants. Encourage them to choose produce they already enjoy eating, making it even more fun for them! Just be sure their choices can grow in your area during the current season.

Make space and plant together.

After choosing your seeds, you must ensure your garden is ready to sustain life. Dedicate a section of your lawn or patio to your gardening efforts and start laying soil or filling your planters. Help your children transplant their seeds or young plants directly into the area. Now, put them in charge of caring for the plants by checking on and watering them. You may want to follow behind to ensure they aren't over or under-watering.

Make it fun and informative!

You can get your kids more involved by encouraging them to research their plants and track their growth. They can even look online to see how their plants should be developing. Soon enough, those fruits and vegetables will be ready to eat, and you should let your children pick anything ripe when possible. Seeing the fruits of their labor (literally) will make this experience even more enlightening and enjoyable for them.





BREAKING THE GRIP OF TIME

The Cutting-Edge Science of Slowing Aging

Over the last century, vast improvements in public health have led to nearly doubling the average human lifespan. Now, researchers are targeting even greater gains to slow the aging process and prevent dementia.

At Columbia University, one research team is using animal models to explore techniques to change brain activity in areas that coordinate circadian rhythms. By improving sleep, scientists believe they may be able to reduce the risk of dementia, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. Other researchers are analyzing lab data from patients' medical records to calculate biological age and assess its value in predicting health risks and improving care planning.

At Yale University, scientists are studying rodents that live long lives to determine the metabolites that may slow the aging process. Researchers are also looking at how to slow the organ damage caused by inflammation or changes in blood supply, which are common problems in old age.

New technologies such as genome sequencing and machine learning have helped spur advances in aging research. At the Buck Institute

for Research on Aging near Novato, California, scientists are analyzing large data sets from fruit flies and humans to identify the central metabolites that shape the lifespan in both species. They have identified one metabolite, threonine, as a potential therapeutic for interventions in aging. Artificial intelligence and systems biology enabled these researchers to skip testing mice, which is usually essential in determining whether discoveries apply to humans.

Aging research has evolved in both scope and purpose. The latest efforts bring together scientists from many fields who have seldom collaborated. The initiatives reflect a growing awareness that disease is not necessarily part of the aging process. Rather than simply increasing people's lifespan, scientists focus on improving the "health span," or years lived free of disability and disease.

The goal is to keep older people around longer and maximize seniors' natural generativity — the natural human desire at later stages of life to improve the world and support younger generations. Researchers also hope to reduce the burden of disease, as people over 65 are on track to outnumber those 18 and younger within the next decade.

Trailblazers in Law

WOMEN WHO REFINED THE BENCH

With March being Women's History Month, I'd like to honor and spotlight the first two women to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. Their stories of persistence and the pursuit of justice will continue to serve as examples for future generations.

Justice O'Connor's Landmark Legacy

In September 1981, Sandra Day O'Connor made history as the first woman nominated to serve on the Supreme Court. This honor, bestowed upon her by President Ronald Reagan, followed her groundbreaking stints as the Assistant Attorney General of Arizona and the majority leader of the Arizona State Senate. She served on the Supreme Court from the fall of 1981 until her retirement in 2006. During her tenure on the bench, her influence was felt in some of the most controversial cases in U.S. history. She co-wrote the joint opinion in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992), reaffirming *Roe v. Wade*.

Additionally, she was 1 of 5 judges who denied a recount in the 2000 presidential election between George W. Bush and Al Gore. Justice O'Connor passed in 2023 at 93.

Justice Ginsburg's Groundbreaking Glory

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, nominated to the Supreme Court by President Bill Clinton in 1993, followed Justice O'Connor's extraordinary trail. Born in 1933, she had a history of paving the way for women in the legal profession long before she became the second woman on the bench of our nation's highest court. While a student at Harvard Law School, she was 1 of only 9 female students in a class of 500. Despite facing gender discrimination at various points in her career, her tenacity paid off when President Jimmy Carter nominated her to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in 1980.



Ginsburg's time on the Supreme Court, which lasted well into her 80s, was marked by her fierce defense of women's rights. In addition to writing the court's opinion in *United States v. Virginia* (1996) — which protected the admission rights of qualified women at the Virginia Military Institute — she worked with President Barack Obama on the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 to address gender-based pay disparities in the workplace. Justice Ginsburg passed away in 2020 at 87.

—Kevin Mottley



FROM TRAUMA TO TRIUMPH

Brian Injuries and the Law

Of all the cases we handle here at Mottley Law Firm, those involving traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) are among the most emotionally challenging and legally complex. How does a TBI affect a person's quality of life, and how can they or their loved ones seek justice for what has occurred? Here is a brief overview of the realities surrounding brain injuries and the legal avenues available to those in need.

The Trials of Trauma

An individual can sustain a TBI in a variety of ways, including slip-and-fall accidents, intentional violence against them, and motor vehicle collisions. TBI victims often struggle with depression, emotional instability, poor appetite, speech and communication issues, memory loss, and decreased motor skills — frequently leaving their loved ones to manage the overwhelming logistics of coordinating and paying for ongoing medical care. Further, medical professionals often misdiagnose or completely overlook TBIs, leading some victims and those closest to them to dismiss a serious condition as a minor, temporary situation.

Peace After Pain

If you or a loved one has sustained a TBI, you do not have to navigate these personal and legal challenges alone. Mottley Law Firm specializes in TBI cases and understands the importance of approaching these matters with commitment, empathy, and care. We work with our clients to maneuver through the nuances of Virginia laws, provide legal guidance, and relieve the stress of seeking recovery. In addition to negotiating with insurers, we work to gather critical evidence to support your case, including photos, medical and police reports, surveillance videos, and witness statements. If we cannot reach an appropriate settlement through negotiations with an insurer, Mottley Law Firm is prepared to go to court to represent our clients' interests and fight for compensation and relief.

Please contact us today to learn more about how our expertise can help provide a sense of peace and a path toward a renewed enjoyment of life.

—Kevin Mottley

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SUDOKU



HOMEMADE SHAMROCK SHAKES

Inspired by TheKitchn.com



No need to make a McDonald's run for this refreshingly minty treat. Make your own St. Patrick's Day Shamrock Shakes at home (They're even better than Mickey D's!)

INGREDIENTS

Milkshake

- 1 pint vanilla ice cream
- 2/3 cup whole milk
- 1/2 tsp peppermint extract
- 8 drops liquid or 4 drops gel green food coloring

Toppings

- Whipped cream
- Green sprinkles
- 2 maraschino cherries

DIRECTIONS

1. Put 2 tall drinking glasses into the freezer to chill.
2. Allow ice cream to slightly soften for 10–15 minutes.
3. In a blender, add milk, peppermint extract, green food coloring, and softened vanilla ice cream.
4. Blend on lowest setting and work up to medium speed for 1 minute or until smooth and pourable.
5. Pour evenly into frosted glasses, and top with garnish of your choice. Serve immediately.