

Rising Star: Panish Shea's Robert Glassman

Law360 (August 13, 2018, 4:36 PM EDT) -- Robert Glassman of [Panish Shea & Boyle LLP](#) was responsible for getting a multimillion-dollar settlement for the parents of a teen with autism who died after being left in a scorching-hot school bus, and was also involved in child safety legislation that resulted from the tragic case, earning him a spot among the attorneys under age 40 honored as Law360's personal injury Rising Stars.

THE BIGGEST CASE OF HIS CAREER:

Glassman says it's a case that just resolved in June of last year — the case of 19-year-old Paul Lee, a nonverbal student with autism who died in 2015 one sweltering day when the bus driver failed to do a required sweep of the vehicle before he drove it back to the bus yard and locked it up. Glassman not only got Lee's family a \$23.5 million settlement; with his and his law firm's help and advocacy, the case led to the Paul Lee School Bus Safety Law, which requires all California school buses to be outfitted with child safety alarms and requires drivers to receive child safety training.

"Had the driver gotten up and done his required child safety sweep, this never would have happened," he said, noting the driver is serving a three-year prison sentence.

"It's rewarding and humbling to be a part of making child safety a reality in California," Glassman said. "Not only did we get compensation for the family, but just to help increase safety for kids is something that's important for me, especially as a new father — I have a 20-month-old daughter."

HIS PROUDEST MOMENT AS AN ATTORNEY:

Seeing the tragedy that was the Lee case being memorialized into legislation that honors his memory is the pinnacle of his career so far, Glassman says.

"Being up in Sacramento, the state capital, standing with the parents, discussing this law, being up there and helping make it a reality, making this law in Paul Lee's name be something that everyone is going to be protected by in California, was my proudest moment," he says. "These are arguably the most vulnerable people in our society. Somebody has to watch over them and be their guardians. When school districts screw up and pay fast and loose with the rules, it's good that we have a system to hold them accountable."

WHAT ABOUT PERSONAL INJURY LAW MOTIVATES HIM:

Glassman said that from the time he was a child, he knew he wanted to help people. He knew he wasn't quite cut out to be a policeman or a fireman, he said, so he became a lawyer.

**RISING
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
STAR**



**Robert
Glassman**
Panish
Shea

Age: 34
**Home
base:** Los
Angeles
Position: Associate
**Law
school:** Southwestern
Law School
**First job
after law
school:** Associate
at Panish
Shea & Boyle

"I've always been motivated to help the people — not the powerful," he said. "I think what motivates me is righting wrongs that could have been so easily avoided, providing relief and justice for families who have gone through a horrible circumstance through the negligence of others that could have been so easily avoided and preventable."

The attorney says he hasn't ruled out going into politics some day to continue serving the public in even bigger ways.

"It's an ongoing conversation I have with my firm and people in my life," he said, saying it was a logical progression from practicing law. "On a bigger level, you could make law. You could implement policy, be a politician and do good things for your community that way. So it is something I think about. I keep it in the back of my mind."

OTHER NOTABLE CASES HE'S WORKED ON:

Glassman secured a \$2 million settlement in the case of special education student Ethan Kalnins, who was attending an end-of-the-school-year assembly in his school's gymnasium on May 20, 2016, when he fell from the bleachers and fractured his left hip.

Kalnins, who has cerebral palsy and weakness on the left half of his body, required hip surgery, was hospitalized for a month and had to undergo rehabilitation. The attorney asserts that the gym bleachers were missing guardrails. As part of the settlement, the school district admitted liability in allowing the bleachers to be in a dangerous condition.

"Being able to represent and help a young man like Ethan during this difficult time in his life was very rewarding and satisfying for me as a lawyer," Glassman said. "We were able to get him enough money to take care of his medical needs for life while also ensuring that the school district made its school safer for students by putting up proper guardrails and barriers on the gym bleachers so no other student would get hurt like Ethan."

ON HOW THE PRACTICE AREA WILL CHANGE OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS:

Glassman said the advent of automated cars will change not only life as we know it, but law as we know it, as well.

"I think there will be a lot of changes in my field because of automated cars," he said. "That's going to really complicate liability issues in our cases. Can you hold the operator responsible if they don't have control over the car? How do you seek justice for people who do get injured by an automated car? That's going to be a huge thing."

— *As told to John Petrick*

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360

editors selected the 2018 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,200 submissions. This interview has been edited and condensed.