

**ORANGE COUNTY**

**JOURNALS**

# Attorney

Volume 239, 2026  
\$6.95

**Website Design and User Experience Will Make or Break Your Law Firm**  
Dan Martin & Keith White

**12 Reasons Your Law Firm Should Be Producing Industry Newsletters**  
Wayne Pollock

**Ignoring AI Search Visibility Is Your Most Expensive Mistake**  
Taylor Tufano

**Attorney of the Month**

**Brian Banner**  
**Banner Attorneys, APLC** Mission Viejo

**The Underdog's Advocate**

**California Courts Send Clear Message: AI Shortcuts Have Serious Consequences**  
Todd C. Toral, Logan Bac & Sadie Sohlt

**Does Your Law Firm Need a Logo?**  
The Modern Firm

**Who You Should Promote Within Your Law Firm**  
Kirk Stange

**What the Return of Bonuses Says About Competition for Top Talent**  
Connor Spicer



# THE UNDERDOG'S ADVOCATE

After surviving a devastating crash himself, Brian Banner built a law firm rooted in discipline, gratitude, and an unwavering commitment to clients who need someone truly on their side.

by Dan Baldwin



*Brian Banner, Founder*



# BANNER

## PERSONAL INJURY

“ I believe firmly that we stand out more than anyone else in our total focus on our clients. It’s easy to say ‘we put the client first,’ but our testimonials across the board prove it. Many people sign with us rather than bigger law firms because they feel like they know us and they’re confident they’ll get the attention they deserve and need,” says Brian Banner, founder of Banner Attorneys, APLC.

In 14 years, the firm has grown from a single attorney working from his kitchen table to an office with two attorneys and nine support staff ranging from receptionists to paralegals.

In addition to high-dollar verdicts and settlements, Banner finds genuine rewards in helping people who are suffering and in serious need of professional help. One of his cases involved a single mom who was a teacher seriously hurt in an accident. Her recovery required extensive neck surgery. The firm’s efforts resulted in the woman receiving a \$1.5 million settlement. She moved to the Inland Empire and purchased a home for her and her daughter, where they are living a safe, stable and happy life. “If you want to define a ‘feel good moment,’ that’s it,” he says.

Banner says, “We are a law firm, but we are really in the people business. Every day and with every client we prove that

lawyers are good people, too. It’s funny, but I hear from a lot of people that they’re shocked I’m a lawyer in the sense that I’m just a normal guy. I’m a regular guy; I just happen to go to law school. So, I’ve got a little bit of information, education to help them. That’s where I focus my practice—on people.”

*“Facing a sudden life-changing motor vehicle collision is one of the most stressful things I’ve experienced. I’m 48 and have never hired an attorney. I am so glad that I did. My advice if you find yourself in this situation is to contact Banner Attorneys immediately so you feel supported and can put your energy into healing and getting your life back in order. Their team is caring, personable, responsive, and will be on your side.”* —Rebecca P.

### A SUCKER FOR THE UNDERDOG

“I’m a sucker for the underdog. I get that from my parents,” Banner says. He grew up in a blue-collar family that moved around a bit before settling in Redlands in the Inland Empire. He inherited his dad’s concern for the less fortunate. Once while in the drive-through of a fast-food restaurant, his father saw a bully harassing a street person. His dad got out of the car and chased away the bully. His dad was also one of those men who were always working. When not on

the job, he worked in the yard, worked on the family car, and took care of whatever needed care. Watching and sometimes helping his dad taught Banner not only the value of work but the discipline necessary to do the work consistently and professionally. His care for people as people comes from his mother, who taught him the value of nurturing others.

## EMPATHY FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

That compassion came naturally, but a traumatic personal experience at age 30 rammed home the message. Two weeks before taking the bar exam, he was in a bad automobile collision. A 17-year-old driving a white Jetta in a 35mph zone crashed head-on into Banner's car. The airbags inflated, a protein shake spilled from its cupholder and was dripping from the ceiling, and the smell of smoke choked him. He made it out of his vehicle and sat down on the curb, dazed and jittery.

At first, he thought he was bleeding and that his car was on fire. The immediate trauma turned into long-term back, neck and shoulder pain. He also had burns on his left arm from the airbag deployment. He had a torn labrum in his left shoulder that needed surgery. His recovery required epidural injections, acupuncture and other treatments. The accident and recovery gave Banner insight and an in-depth look at the experiences many of his clients go through.

Recovery alone is exhausting. Combined with dealing with insurance companies and the legal system dramatically adds to that stress. Banner says, "I can be a little more patient and understanding. I tell them I've gone through medical procedures that are similar to some they have experienced. That wreck was, in a way, the famous blessing in disguise because the experience helped me to better understand them and what they're going through. I've been there, I tell them, and that helps create a genuine bond."

## NEVER WANTED TO BE A LAWYER

Banner never wanted to be an attorney. He was active in sports in high school and was offered a baseball scholarship to California State University, Northridge. He turned it down to go on a two-year mission where he served in Barcelona, Spain, where he became fluent in the language. After serving his mission, he attended UCI, where he earned a degree in Spanish literature and language.

While working at a bank, he met an attorney who offered him a job. He accepted and learned he enjoyed meeting clients, claims adjusters, doctors and others in and related to the legal profession. "It was exciting. Litigation in the courtroom was like a sport. I thought 'I can do this,' but I was intimidated about going to law school." He held back after graduating and spent two years selling real estate at an age-qualified community in Nevada. He soon realized that he was following the wrong career path. He was married with two children at the time.



*The Banner Attorneys team.*

He was accepted at California Western School of Law, which offered a two-year program. One of his most important lessons was learned in a class on property in which the instructor taught him the importance of recognizing that there are always two sides to every story. "I take a very methodical approach to a case, and to me, really understanding the other side's position is essential to success on our side of the table. That insight stuck with me and has been invaluable," he says.

Banner soon found work with a large firm, but just as soon found he was not suited for that environment. The work did not provide a sense of fulfillment. He wanted to experience really helping people in genuine need. "Life in a big organization was all about getting clients and getting fees, and not so much about taking care of clients and getting good results for them. I thought, 'Is this what I really want to do with my law degree?' It just didn't feel right, so I decided to open my own shop and serve clients the way they deserve to be treated."



The transition came with challenges. The biggest was creating, organizing, and managing an efficient and effective law firm with, as many young attorneys discover, no base in the business side of managing an organization. Suddenly, he was faced with a need for business forms, equipment, phone systems, networking, being his own receptionist and secretary, finding and hiring suppliers and staff, and promoting a law firm in a competitive environment.

“I had no clue what I was doing and, at first, it was scary to say the least. I realized if I stuck to my core values, maintained discipline, and continued to treat people as individual persons and not numbers, I would succeed,” he says. Fortunately, those ten years when he had worked in a law firm paid off handsomely. He already had a head start on learning how a law office should be set up, how it should be run, and how to be both an attorney and a boss.

The firm’s record of achievement in personal injury proves Banner’s point. For example, in recent years they have recovered more than \$10 million in verdicts and settlements. Cases include such successes as a \$650,000 auto accident settlement, a \$300,000 premises liability settlement, a \$250,000 property damage settlement, a \$240,000 car accident settlement, and a \$100,000 auto accident, which was the policy limit.

Banner is not a micromanager. He prefers to hire talented people who are self-motivated to succeed through serving clients and coworkers. “I set a good example, teach them what to do, and then let them use their unique skills. I may tweak something here and there along the way, but basically, I get out of the way and let them do what they do best—win.” His personal philosophy is to always look at the big picture. Living the “attitude of gratitude” lifestyle is a core value. “Every day can bring its own set of challenges, but if we focus on what

we're grateful for, the good things that are going on, then the bad things can't overwhelm us. Some of my hardest days are my most rewarding days because those challenges hand me puzzles to put together and fix."

## THE ALMOST DOG BITE CASE

Occasionally, a personal injury case breaks out of the arena of tragedy and trauma and enters into the realm of comedy. Banner's success in what he calls his almost a dog bite story illustrates the sometimes-humorous side of a very serious practice area.

His client lived with his son next to a neighbor who had an aggressive dog. The neighbor repeatedly warned the client against entering the man's backyard. "My dog is dangerous. He could kill you," and other disturbing warnings were given. The client took those warnings to heart. One day, as the father and son were returning from a trip and as they crossed the neighbor's front yard, they saw that the dog was on the neighbor's front porch. The dog leaped up and ran ferociously toward the now panicking father and son.

Instinctively, the father shielded his son and, in doing so, tripped over the sidewalk, fell back, and shattered his elbow. Just as the dog was about to reach them, a chain jerked him back. The dog would never have reached them—something they could not possibly have known at the time. The neighbor's insurance company claimed the neighbor was innocent of any damage because the dog was chained. Banner noted that the neighbor had repeatedly warned them of the danger the dog presented and that the father's reaction was a normal outcome because he was unaware of the chain. The fear was legitimate and the harm a natural result of the neighbor's negligence. The case settled for \$155,000.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Banner has expanded his firm with offices in Fontana and Hemet. He and his team are committed to the people and the communities they serve. His Banner Athletes supports disadvantaged youth through athletic events and races. Every fall, they host soup kitchens. They are involved in the Miracle for Kids program, which sponsors families in dire need. Members of the team go to the donation warehouse and pitch in on wrapping presents and other duties. They have been a financial sponsor for Mission Viejo High School. They sponsor the FFA program out of the new Hemet office. They are also making specific efforts to reach out to the Latino community. Banner and two-thirds of his staff are fluent in Spanish.



*Brian with his beautiful wife and inspiration, Sindy.*

Banner is an avid golfer and softball player. He enjoys Latin music and country and western. He and his wife Sindy are the proud parents of three sons and three daughters. They enjoy pickleball together, the beach, following the Angels baseball team, and traveling, especially to Latin American countries.

"I'm a big believer in karma and just being good. And I feel like I've been extremely blessed and taken care of by treating people the way I'd want to be treated. A lot of really good people have their lives turned upside down. And all they need is somebody to really treat them like a person, listen to them, and just give them the best care and compensation you can." ■

### Contact

Banner Attorneys, APLC  
25950 Acero, Suite 200  
Mission Viejo, CA 92691  
855-411-BANNER  
[www.bannersgotyourback.com](http://www.bannersgotyourback.com)