

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **CONTACT**

Allison Fagan, [allison@rebuttalpr.com](mailto:allison@rebuttalpr.com)

### **The Milestone Foundation Announces 2026 Compassionate Counsel Honorees**

*Five distinguished plaintiffs' attorneys recognized for embodying fairness, empathy, and integrity in their service to clients*

**BUFFALO, NY** — Today, The Milestone Foundation, the only nonprofit organization providing fair and transparent litigation funding to plaintiffs, announced the honorees of its 2026 Compassionate Counsel Program.

Now in its fourth consecutive year, the Compassionate Counsel Program recognizes trial lawyers who go above and beyond in serving their clients, not only as skilled legal advocates, but as trusted guides through some of the most difficult periods of their clients' lives. Honorees are nominated by peers, clients, and organizations, and selected by a review panel evaluating each nominee against the program's core criteria: putting clients' wellbeing first, demonstrating empathy alongside legal skill, and upholding the highest standards of integrity in the pursuit of justice. This criteria collectively reflects The Milestone Foundation's mission and values.

"Trial lawyers who practice with compassion are the backbone of our civil justice system," said Rachel McCarthy, Executive Director of The Milestone Foundation. "The Compassionate Counsel Program exists to celebrate those attorneys and to inspire every member of the plaintiffs' bar to approach their work with the same humanity and commitment. We are proud to honor this year's remarkable group of honorees as we mark a decade of impact for the Foundation."

The honorees will be formally celebrated at the Foundation's 10-Year Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, July 25th at Avli on the Park in Chicago, Illinois.

The 2026 Compassionate Counsel honorees are:

- Daisy Ayllón | Romanucci & Blandin
- Kate Feroletto | Feroletto Law
- Rayna Kessler | Robins Kaplan
- John Reagan | Kisling Nestico & Redick
- Laura Yaeger | Yaeger Law

### **About the 2026 Compassionate Counsel Honorees**

#### **Daisy Ayllón | Romanucci & Blandin**

Daisy Ayllón is a Partner at Romanucci & Blandin, where she represents individuals and families in cases involving sexual abuse, medical malpractice, civil rights violations, and other

catastrophic injuries. Daisy chose plaintiffs' work because she believes working-class people, immigrant families, survivors, and people facing powerful institutions deserve excellent legal representation when they have been harmed.

She played a leading role in representing more than 200 women in the widely reported Ortega sexual abuse matters, which resulted in substantial resolutions for the survivors. Daisy also served as first chair in a \$15 million verdict against a school district for failing to protect a male student from sexual abuse by a teacher. She has played a role in other significant cases, including a \$40 million verdict for a child left paralyzed after a botched surgery and a \$35 million settlement for a girl injured at birth. For Daisy, "compassionate counsel" means pairing fierce advocacy with the patience, empathy, and care required to earn a client's trust and pursue justice with humanity.

### **Kate Feroletto | Feroletto Law**

Kate Feroletto is a nationally recognized trial lawyer and leader in personal injury and trucking litigation. A passionate advocate for injured individuals and their families, she is known for combining compassionate client representation with relentless advocacy against insurance companies and corporate defendants.

Kate serves as President of the Western Region Affiliate of the New York State Trial Lawyers Association and Dean of the NYSTLA Trial Lawyers Institute. She is a member of the Academy of Truck Accident Attorneys and has held national leadership roles dedicated to advancing the representation of victims of commercial trucking crashes. In addition to her litigation practice, Kate is a frequent lecturer, mentor, and educator on catastrophic injury litigation, traumatic brain injury cases, trial advocacy, and trucking accident law.

### **Rayna Kessler | Robins Kaplan**

Rayna Kessler is a Partner at Robins Kaplan and Deputy Chair of the firm's National Mass Tort Group. A nationally recognized leader in emerging mass tort litigation and advocacy for survivors of child sexual abuse, she has held court-appointed leadership roles in complex, high-profile matters including the Taxotere, Abilify, and Olmesartan multi-county litigations. She currently serves as MDL Liaison Counsel in the Exactech knee and hip replacement litigation in the Eastern District of New York.

In October 2025, Rayna secured a \$5 million jury verdict on behalf of a survivor of child sexual abuse against the Order of St. Benedict of New Jersey, which operates the prestigious Delbarton School in Morristown. The verdict is the first known in New Jersey against an entity of the Catholic Church for the sexual abuse of a minor, marking a significant milestone in institutional accountability litigation.

### **John Reagan | Kisling Nestico & Redick**

John J. Reagan is a Partner at Kisling, Nestico & Redick (KNR), where he devotes his practice exclusively to personal injury, wrongful death, insurance coverage, bad faith, and class-action litigation. He brings a rare dual perspective to plaintiff-side work, having spent more than a

decade as lead trial counsel defending national insurance companies, product manufacturers, and trucking companies — including being a shareholder for nearly ten years at one of Ohio's largest regional defense firms.

That background shifted when John took on a seriously injured motorcycle accident victim whose own insurer denied his claim. John secured a six-figure jury verdict well in excess of policy limits, then obtained an additional substantial settlement against the same carrier for bad faith claims handling. The experience reoriented his practice toward representing individuals, and he joined KNR in 2010. Since then, John has secured significant recoveries for clients in personal injury, wrongful death, and insurance bad faith matters.

### **Laura Yaeger | Yaeger Law**

Founder of Yaeger Law and Yaeger Legal Consulting, Laura Veronica Yaeger is a lawyer, consultant, educator, and nationally recognized leader whose career has been defined by a commitment to helping others. For more than 25 years, Laura has represented individuals harmed by defective medical devices, dangerous pharmaceuticals, toxic substances, and other forms of negligence.

A dedicated servant leader, Laura has devoted more than two decades of service to the American Association for Justice (AAJ). She currently serves as AAJ Parliamentarian and is a past Chair of the Women's Trial Lawyers Caucus, co-founder and past Chair of the LGBT Caucus, former member of the Executive Committee, and longtime member of the Board of Governors. She is also a graduate of AAJ's Leadership Academy and has served on numerous committees and leadership initiatives dedicated to strengthening the organization and expanding opportunities for others. Laura's contributions to the legal profession have earned her numerous honors, including the AAJ Harry Philo Award in 2021 for outstanding contributions to the civil justice system and the Richard D. Hailey Distinguished Service Award in 2025 for her years of exceptional service and leadership. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the Florida Justice Association.

### **About The Milestone Foundation**

The Milestone Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization providing an ethical funding solution to individuals pursuing justice after suffering a catastrophic incident. Through simple interest-only rates, attorney collaboration, and a mission-driven approach, the Foundation provides plaintiffs with fair access to the financial resources they need to pursue justice. For more information, visit <https://themilestonefoundation.org/>.

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