How an Expert Witness Can Help Your Personal Injury Case

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Most people think of witnesses as individuals who observe events and then testify about them in court. Another type of witness testifies about technical, scientific, or specialized subjects. These are known as expert witnesses. If you are the plaintiff in a Charleston personal injury lawsuit, an expert witness could provide valuable assistance.

The key difference between an ordinary (or fact) witness and an expert witness is the subject matter they are qualified to talk about in court. A fact witness can generally be anyone who has personal knowledge of the relevant facts of the case. This information is picked up simply by what they see, hear, or otherwise detect. While these witnesses are necessary in laying out the facts of the personal injury lawsuit, they may not be competent to testify about topics that require professional expertise or specialized knowledge. That is where expert witnesses come in to play

Consider an automobile accident. A fact witness could be a pedestrian who happened to be walking on the sidewalk when they saw one car slam into another. The witness can discuss specifically what he or she observed; for instance, details about the vehicle that crashed into the plaintiff. An expert witness, however, can dive deeper into the evidence obtained from the accident scene and offer an opinion based on their expertise. For example, an accident reconstruction expert can analyze tire skid marks and give an opinion as to whether the defendant was speeding. There are also cases in which fact witnesses are not available, so the case will turn on forensic evidence retrieved from the wreck.

A plaintiff's expert witness can explain to members of the jury what the evidence means and how it relates to important issues in the lawsuit. In turn, this information can help establish the defendant's negligence, which is an essential part of the case. Some examples of what a personal injury expert witnesses may testify to in court include:

- A detailed explanation of the events leading up to the accident
- The long-term physical or health effects of the injury on the victim
- Safety measures that could have been implemented to prevent an accident

Here are some of the different types of expert witnesses:

Medical experts. These individuals may talk about the nature of the victim's injuries and what they mean for the victim's long-term prognosis and recovery. Present and future medical costs are a major factor in the amount of compensation that accident victims demand in court.

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Accident reconstruction experts. They explain how the accident happened based on the forensic evidence. Some topics include the speed and trajectory of the responsible driver's vehicle.

Vocational experts. Lost wages and lost future earning capacity are also part of the damages that a plaintiff will demand. The vocational expert can discuss what impact the injury will have on the victim's ability to earn a living, plus his or her career prospects in light of the accident.

An expert witness can also refute claims made by expert witnesses who are hired by the defendant. Your attorney will review the evidence and discuss how an expert could bolster your claims.

Rosen Hagood's personal injury attorneys have an established network of personal injury expert witnesses in South Carolina, credible expert witnesses are crucial in presenting compelling cases in court. When there is a lot on the line, and you deserve a law firm that knows how to fight, give us a call to find out more.

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