

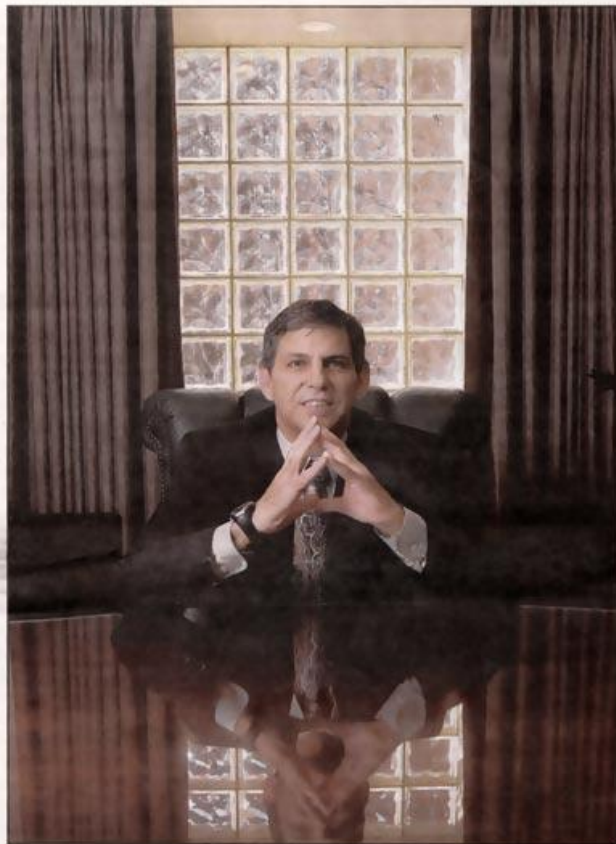
Valparaiso Lawyer Steven Langer named 2009 Trial Lawyer of the Year

Local attorney awarded prestigious honor for community work

[Times Article](#)

By Heather Augustyn - Times Correspondent

Posted: Wednesday, November 11, 2009 12:00 am



JON L. HENDRICKS | THE TIMES
Valparaiso attorney Steven Langer recently was named 2009 Trial Lawyer of the Year by the Indiana Trial Lawyers Association.

VALPARAISO | Steven Langer long has been devoted to the community. But it is his work as a trial lawyer, representing the community, that recently earned Langer an award as 2009 Trial Lawyer of the Year from the Indiana Trial Lawyers Association.

The award is given annually to an attorney who upholds the honor of the legal profession and works to protect the rights of injured people. Langer was selected based in part for his involvement in medical malpractice litigation that set precedent in Indiana for allowing patients to recover for injuries suffered when a physician negligently recommends a surgery.

A lawsuit against an area doctor who recommended exploratory surgery that resulted in a mistake that required the removal of a 41-year-old woman's reproductive organs, examined procedures that set precedent for future cases.

When the doctor discussed the risks of the surgery, it was in the pre-operative room

right before the operation, Langer said. He said a doctor instead must obtain an informed-consent form prior to each procedure. A doctor must sit down and explain the risks, benefits and alternative types of treatments.

Establishing these legal precedents is critical to the safety of the community, he said.

"A patient has the right to make an informed decision on what to do with their own body, and they can't make an informed decision if they don't have the information," he said.

Serving the community is nothing new for Langer, who began his work in Valparaiso as a child in his family's business, the iconic Fetla's store.

Langer helped out in store, which sold just about everything, when he was in sixth grade.

Langer went to Valparaiso University School of Law and reared his family in Valparaiso. He has been married to his wife, Diana, for 25 years and his son, Rob, is a sophomore at Indiana University and daughter, Sara, is a senior at Valparaiso High School and will attend Indiana University in 2010.

Langer is president of the College of Fellows, a group of the top lawyers in Indiana representing consumers in the state of Indiana, and he and Diana founded the Porter County Reading Foundation in 1998.

"Our son Rob is dyslexic and at the time there were no teachers in Porter County to help teach our son, so we had to bring teachers in from out of the state," he said.

"We wanted to help others by providing teaching instruction so all children can learn to read. We've probably put on 20 workshops with 500 teachers and 3,000 students and offer summer reaching program."