

# **dbr** **DAILY BUSINESS REVIEW**

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## **MOST EFFECTIVE LAWYERS 2020**

**F**or many years now, the Daily Business Review has recognized exemplary performance by attorneys who deliver positive results for their clients.

In the 16th annual edition, nearly four dozen attorneys in 21 categories are honored for their handling of litigation, transactions and public interest law.

The year had a decidedly lopsided feel with courtrooms closing and the coronavirus pandemic spawning an instant recession and putting the brakes on transactions. But the high-caliber attorneys being honored with awards treated the public health crisis as another opportunity for achieving success.

Of special note, this is the first time I can recall a posthumous award, which this year goes to Andrew C. Hall for a solid decade of litigation groundwork before others at his law firm obtained a remarkable settlement for victims of the USS Cole bombing in 2000.

Overall, the competition exemplifies the range, robustness and resilience of South Florida's legal community. Congratulations to all who submitted nominations and everyone recognized this year for their exceptional work.

— **Catherine Wilson**  
**Managing Editor**

## **Podhurst Orseck Team Leads \$844M Plane Crash Settlement**

**Steven Marks, Kristina Infante and Pablo Rojas  
Podhurst Orseck**



**Steven Marks**

**Kristina Infante**

**Pablo Rojas**

An \$844 million settlement was reached for 43 victims of a crash involving a plane chartered by the Brazilian soccer club Chapecoense.

Podhurst Orseck attorneys Steven C. Marks, Kristina Infante and Pablo Rojas reached the agreement for more than half of the 71 people killed in the crash less than two years after filing the negligence and wrongful death lawsuit against the owners.

In 2016, the team was on a LaMia Bolivia flight heading to the finals of the Copa Sudamericana. The lawsuit claimed the pilots skipped a planned refueling stop and didn't alert air traffic controllers to the jet's low fuel level until they were placed in a holding pattern for a third time.

That's when the plane experienced a complete electrical failure and crashed in the mountains near Medellin.

Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Martin Zilber entered final judgments last summer. The settlement awarded \$5 million to \$30 million, with the largest amount going to goalkeeper Jakson Ragnar Follmann, who survived the crash but lost a leg to amputation. He was one of only six survivors.

Litigation remains pending against insurers.

The law firm has been known for its aviation work for decades, and its attorneys are recognized with a Most Effective Lawyers award for the latest crash settlement.

### **Describe a pivotal moment in the case:**

**Steven Marks:** We were able to successfully demonstrate to the court that the efforts all parties had made for over a year to reach these agreements and convince the court that we had achieved a final agreement, which was sufficiently concrete and definite in its terms that it should be enforced.

Our efforts to seek justice on behalf of our clients have taken several years. In the end, the court's final decision to enforce settlement agreements that entitle our clients to judgments totaling over \$866 million in damages was a significant victory for those families.