

# MAK NEWS

A MILSTEIN, ADELMAN & KREGER PUBLICATION

VOLUME 3 SPRING 2009

## GILLIAN WADE Full-Time Lawyer & Mother

Milstein, Adelman & Kreger associate Gillian Wade decided long ago that she wanted to have both a family and a career, and she knew that she didn't want to sacrifice either one. For professional women, the balance between personal and professional life has always been a challenge, especially when one chooses to dive head first into both. Is it possible to be both a full-time lawyer and a full-time mother, without sacrificing the quality of your



Gillian Wade

work and the quality of your time with your family?

For lawyers adept at balancing tests since the first year of law school, the results have been mixed. Gillian, whose fast rise at a prominent international law firm was fostered by long hours, late nights and many weekends, began to wonder whether she would have to abandon her dreams of raising a family while remaining on partnership track. So when she gave notice that she was leaving the firm to pursue plaintiff's work, Gillian raised more than a few eyebrows.

When the shareholder to whom she reported asked her why she was leaving, she responded honestly, "I want to have a family and a career." Chuckling, he replied, "well, you can't do that and work here." That comment crystallized the months of introspection that ultimately led to the decision to take the leap from "big firm" life, to "big risk" plaintiffs' litigation. Gillian realized that work/life balance was the formula that would allow her to reach her potential and knew she made the right choice to pursue plaintiffs' work as part of the complex consumer class action team at MAK.



Gillian—who graduated magna cum laude in 2003 from Pepperdine University School of Law—remarked, "I love the people I work with, I could spend my evenings and weekends with them, but here, I'm not expected to." In fact, having a balance between her hard work at the office, and her life with friends and family outside of MAK is how Gillian defines success.

"When you represent plaintiffs on a contingency basis, it's about working smarter, not harder—in other words, the billable hour is not what defines you," Gillian added. She certainly has accomplished a lot professionally since she joined MAK, including class certifications in cases where the firm represented firefighters in a wage and hour dispute as well as policyholders in a long term care insurance fraud case. She is also deeply involved in cases against banks for mortgage fraud and window manufacturers for poorly designed and manufactured windows.

For Gillian, the best thing about working at MAK is the opportunity to make meaningful contributions for her clients and then go home and actually live. At the office, in addition to her heavy caseload, she routinely participates in the firm's bi-weekly in-house yoga classes and also helped plan last year's attorney retreat to Laguna Beach. In her free time, Gillian enjoys hiking and spending time with her husband, also a lawyer. The balance she has always craved was at last, in hand.

Indeed, just days after finishing and filing an appeal in the Ninth Circuit, Gillian and her husband welcomed their first child, a son, in February. "That was a close one," she said laughing. So much for free time!

Having a family and being able to spend quality time with them and continuing to manage a flourishing legal practice, is what sets MAK's attorneys apart. With every passing day, Gillian knows that raising a family and working will be a challenge. But when creativity, organization, and strategic thinking are valued above your billable hours, it turns out, as Gillian notes, "well, you can do that and work here."

**Milstein, Adelman, & Kreger, LLP**

A full service plaintiff's litigation firm specializing in construction defect and consumer class action cases.

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## LEGAL TRENDS

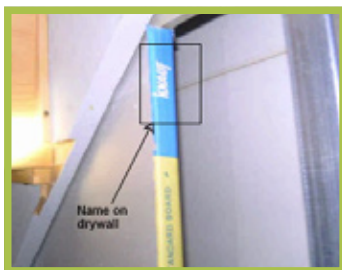
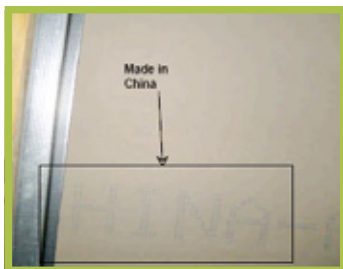
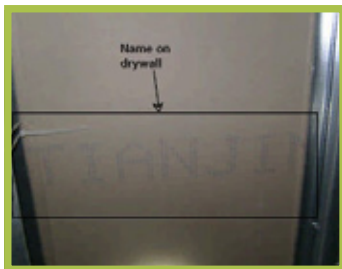
### MAK LAWYERS ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF CHINESE DRYWALL CASES THROUGHOUT THE USA

In what some have referred to as “potentially one of the biggest product defect cases in US History”, the attorneys of Milstein, Adelman & Kreger, LLP, in partnership with Plaintiff law firms throughout the country, are leading the way with a series of lawsuits against numerous builders who used defective drywall imported from China in the construction of homes.

Milstein, Adelman & Kreger, LLP currently represents many homeowners, Florida, California, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, who have or may have contaminated drywall imported from China installed in their homes. MAK has filed several lawsuits in Florida and many more are anticipated as more and more homeowners continue to contact the law firm. The attorneys currently represent thousands of homeowners in individual construction defect cases, and are also lead counsel in state and nationwide class actions.

While the investigation is still evolving, there are several factors which may indicate the presence of contaminated drywall imported from China. Our clients have reported the following symptoms which they suspect may be related to the presence of contaminated drywall:

- “Rotten Egg” or Sulfur smell in their homes;
- Corrosion of Heating, Ventilation & Cooling (HVAC) coils and related components;
- Corrosion of Electrical wires and/or plumbing pipes;
- Corrosion of Metal items inside the homes (Light fixtures, metal frames, etc.);
- Shortness of breath, skin irritations, dizziness, headaches, fatigue, insomnia, eye irritations, coughing and respiratory difficulties;



It is suspected that the drywall installed in many homes was imported from China between 2001 and the present. It is believed that the drywall was manufactured using waste products from coal plants in China and that it contains iron disulfide and other waste components. Many experts believe that the drywall is emitting harmful gases including Hydrogen sulfide, Carbonyl sulfide, Sulfur dioxide and Carbon disulfide which are potentially harmful to the buildings and to its occupants.

Environmental testing firms have confirmed that the gases being emitted by the drywall are causing damage to metal components. The only apparent way to properly remedy the problem is by carefully removing the contaminated drywall altogether and remediating the damage it has caused.

Below are some photographs of homes currently represented by MAK depicting the problems described above:



Severely corroded HVAC coil



Blackened ground wires



Close up of HVAC coil



Name of manufacturer

There is evidence that sulfuric acid is causing the deterioration of the HVAC coils and causing them to malfunction completely after just a short period of time. Homeowners are urged to check their HVAC systems, FAU units and electrical wires for signs of deterioration and corrosion.

For more information, call us toll-free at 800-983-5067 or visit our website: [www.maklawyers.com](http://www.maklawyers.com)

## RECENT RESULTS

### MAK IS PLEASED TO REPORT THE FOLLOWING FAVORABLE RULINGS AND CASE RESOLUTIONS:

#### Trial Court

Class Certification GRANTED in a California case involving service advisors employed at a major automobile dealer. The dealer misclassified the employees so as to avoid having to pay them overtime when they worked more than 8 hours in a given day. The ruling assures that the employees will be fairly compensated for their hard work when they are required to stay past the end of the regular workday. The case will now be scheduled for trial as class notice begins to be disseminated.

Preliminary Approval GRANTED in a nationwide case in which MAK represented a class of consumers against a diet supplement company for false advertising in the selling and labeling of their products.



#### Verdicts And Settlements

- Class action settlement on behalf of a nationwide class of consumers against soft drink manufacturer for false advertising in the selling and labeling of their products.
- Class action settlement on behalf of California consumers challenging food company's advertising practices.
- \$1,077,000 Complex multi-party construction defect litigation on behalf of residential homeowners in Sacramento.
- \$977,000 Complex multi-party construction defect litigation on behalf of residential homeowners in Chula Vista.

- \$963,000 Complex multi-party construction defect litigation on behalf of residential homeowners Fontana.
- \$928,000 Complex multi-party construction defect litigation on behalf of residential homeowners in San Diego.
- \$867,000 Complex multi-party construction defect litigation on behalf of residential homeowners Brentwood.
- \$850,000 Complex multi-party construction defect litigation on behalf of residential homeowners in Simi Valley.
- \$757,000 Complex multi-party construction defect litigation on behalf of residential homeowners in Sacramento.
- \$730,000 Complex multi-party construction defect litigation on behalf of residential homeowners in Santa Maria.
- \$714,000 Complex multi-party construction defect litigation on behalf of residential homeowners in Murrieta.
- \$710,000 Complex multi-party construction defect litigation on behalf of residential homeowners in Wildomar.
- \$709,000 Complex multi-party construction defect litigation on behalf of residential homeowners in Fontana.
- \$708,000 Complex multi-party construction defect litigation on behalf of residential homeowners in Rocklin.

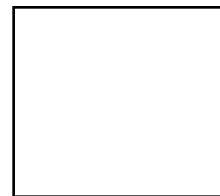


# MAK

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## MAK STAFF MEMBER OF NOTE



Lily Puleo

In this Edition, MAK honors senior legal assistant Lily Puleo. Originally from the Napa Valley, Lily joined MAK in 2007 after graduating with honors from USC. Lily comes from a family where the women are artists and the men are FBI agents, so other than working as a FBI sketch artist, her eventual career choice was always going to disappoint half the family. She was initially considering a career as a lawyer, but wanted to gain some real world experience in the legal field before applying to law school. With MAK's legal assistant internship program, recent college graduates are able to take time off in between college and law school to learn the inner workings of a real law firm.

She began as the legal assistant to partner Wayne Kreger and soon became senior legal assistant for the entire Class Action team. Lily soon realized that being a legal assistant would be more challenging and interesting than law school, and she took on more responsibilities at the firm including supervising the other class action assistants and training and overseeing new hires. She has also become a part of the firm's administration and human resources department. "Class action cases can be very exciting," Lily says. "There is always something going on and I love being in the middle of them all." Her family seems to have taken her career choice in stride, she says. "They're happy for me that I've found a place to work that I enjoy, though I still occasionally get "anonymous" emails about FBI hiring," she added.

In her spare time, Lily enjoys practicing yoga, watching reality TV and spending time with her dog Ruby.

## SPEAKING OF...

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### Mark Milstein:

#### West Coast Casualty Seminar

Anaheim, May 14  
Insurance Coverage in  
Construction Defect  
Cases - the Plaintiffs'  
Perspective

### Wayne Kreger:

#### Louisiana Association For Justice

Carmel, June 29  
Class Actions and  
Mass Torts In  
California

### Michael Fairchild:

#### West Coast Casualty Seminar

Anaheim, May 14  
Mediation in  
Construction Defect  
Cases

## MAK SUMMER ASSOCIATE PROGRAM

MAK is pleased to announce that we have completed hiring for our 2009 summer associate program. Six exceptional law students will be joining the firm starting in May. They will support the firm's class action and construction defect practices.

Unlike many other summer law clerk programs, MAK provides opportunities for real hands-on experience for its summer clerks. Many of them have later joined MAK as associates. We know they will have a rewarding and educational summer with us.

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