

Verdicts

& Settlements

The Buzz BY ED KIMBLE

Chairman of the Boards

Rick Kraemer is the man with the Billion-Dollar Boards. That's not how much they cost; it's the size of the verdicts they've inspired jurors to award.

Kraemer's Executive Presentations provided the winning graphics for Michael J. Piuze's \$3 billion verdict in *Boeken v. Philip Morris* in early June, the first smoking-and-health case ever tried in Los Angeles. Two years ago, he provided exhibit boards for Brian J. Panish's \$4.9 billion verdict in *Anderson v. General Motors*, a product-liability case about exploding fuel tanks on passenger cars.

Is this guy magic?

"In a word, it's legal malpractice not to use Rick Kraemer," says Tom Girardi, the Girardi & Keese partner with at least a billion dollars in verdicts and settlements to his credit, including the \$333 million settlement with Pacific Gas & Electric in the chromium-6 water-contamination case that made Erin Brockovich famous in the movie by the same name.

"The fellow is the most imaginative. He has the greatest ability to respond on short notice," Girardi says. "I've been in cases where the defendant made a closing argument, and over the noon hour he made some quick blowups so I could come in at 1:30 and show how the other's guy stuff wasn't very good. There are few people like him who are so dedicated."

Panish has relied on Kraemer and his Mid-Wilshire staff of 13 graphic designers and assistants ever since his \$22 million win in a Metropolitan Transit police case in 1995. "He's worked with me on almost every big verdict I've had in the past six years.

I can't say enough about how responsive they are," Panish says, in chorus with every high-powered trial lawyer The Buzz contacted about him.

"He's always quick to try to solve a problem," says Garo Mardirossian, who used Executive Presentations exhibits most recently to win a \$2.35 million verdict for victims of an exploding water heater.

"Having worked with a lot of lawyers, he's got good insight about how things work and how best to deliver a story to a jury," Mardirossian says.

Kraemer is far more modest.

"I hired good people who are dedicated to getting the work done," he says.

Kraemer hails from the Midwest and founded Executive Presentations in 1986 after his employer left him stranded in Los Angeles. Kraemer was a salesman for an Atlanta-based turnkey graphics computer company that went belly-up soon after transferring Kraemer to Los Angeles.

Kraemer bought his demo equipment rather than send it back to Atlanta and set up shop with the help of two graphic designers with ties to the company: Keith Dick and Denny Clark. Both men are still with Executive Presentations today.

Kraemer, who has an MBA, has a decidedly business slant on what it takes for a trial attorney to win a jury over.

"I believe that what lawyers are doing is they are marketing," Kraemer says. "They're selling to the jury the facts and the law."

"They're really packaging a case like you package a product. Their cases are

really products. You're selling the case, the ideas, the emotion and the logic."

Kraemer has become a fixture on the L.A. trial scene, not only as a result of Executive Presentations' work for so many of the city's attorneys, both plaintiff and defense, but also by virtue of his ubiquitous photography.

Kraemer attends almost every event hosted by Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles, the Association of Southern California Defense Counsel and the American Board of Trial Attorneys, snapping photos all over the place.

"The other stuff he does for the legal community, all without charge," Girardi says. "He runs around to every darned legal event taking pictures [and] giving them to people who were there."

He's been the American Board of Trial Attorneys' official convention photographer for years, turning him into a world traveler, as the organization has put on its big annual events in Spain, Italy, England and Hong Kong.

More recently, Kraemer has also become a cameraman for Championship Auto Racing Teams, flying around the United States to snap photos of its 22 races.



Rick Kraemer wins chorus of kudos from L.A.'s highest-powered trial lawyers.