

Gordon Ball Selected as Finalist for Public Justice's 2019 Trial Lawyer of the Year Award

June 2019

We are honored to announce that Gordon Ball, Co-Lead Counsel in the ***Hale v. State Farm case*** and his team have been selected as Finalists for Public Justice's 2019 Trial Lawyer of the Year Award. Each year this prestigious award is presented to the firm who made the greatest contribution to the public interest through precedent-setting, socially significant case over the past year. The Trial Lawyer of the Year Award will be presented in July 2019 at the Public Justice's Annual Gala and Awards Dinner on the USS Midway Museum in San Diego.

Gordon Ball and Co-Counsel currently represent 4.7 million State Farm policyholders in an unprecedented racketeering and mail fraud case, ***Hale v. State Farm***, against State Farm.

In 1999, ***Avery v. State Farm*** was filed accusing State Farm of using lower-quality automotive parts from non-brand manufacturers to repair the vehicles of about 4.7 million policyholders, which resulted in a \$1.05 billion dollar verdict against State Farm. Mr. Ball's clients allege that State Farm recruited, funded, and elected a candidate, Justice Lloyd Karmeier, for the Illinois Supreme Court whose vote overturned the policyholders' \$1.05 billion verdict against State Farm. Ball and team filed a motion requesting that Justice Karmeier recuse himself from the case, however, he refused to do so.

In 2009, for the first time in history, the United States Supreme Court held that the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment applied to the refusal of a trial judge to recuse himself in ***Caperton v. A.T. Massey Coal Co.***

Based upon that decision, Ball and two of the original Co-Counsel, Don Barrett and Pat Pendley decided to continue their investigation of State Farm's involvement in Karmeier's election. They did so by hiring two, retired FBI agents to go to Illinois and attempt to find out how State Farm recruited and elected Judge Karmeier. The retired agents found new evidence revealing that State Farm had funneled millions of dollars to Karmeier's campaign through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and the Illinois Republican party. With this new evidence, the original team in ***Avery v. State Farm*** filed a motion in the Illinois Supreme Court to lift the mandate. The court refused to do so.

In 2012, Gordon Ball, Pat Pendley and Don Barrett then filed a new case in the Southern District of Illinois, ***Hale v. State Farm***, alleging State Farm engaged in a RICO conspiracy. The new action was directed to State Farm's illegal recruitment and election of Judge Karmeier. After Ball, Pendley and Barrett succeeded in winning the Motion to Dismiss filed by State Farm, the original ***Avery v. State Farm*** lawyers joined the RICO case and a nationwide class was certified in ***Hale v. State Farm***.

The case survived throughout multiple appeals and summary judgment motions, including three appeals to the Seventh Circuit. In 2018, the case was set for a six-week trial. After a few short days of trial and prior to Justice Karmeier testifying, the case settled for \$250 million dollars.

The firms involved in the ***Hale v. State Farm*** case are: Gordon Ball, Co-Lead Counsel, Clifford Law Firm, Co-Lead Counsel, Pat Pendley, Don Barrett, Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein LLP, Much Shelist, Thrash Law Firm, and Hausfeld, LLP.