

GUIDED BY ASPIRATIONS

BRAIN & SPINAL INJURY TRUST FUND COMMISSION
FY2006 ANNUAL REPORT



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RENEWING OUR MISSION

THE MISSION of the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is to enhance the lives of Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. Guided by the aspirations of people with traumatic injuries, the Commission supports lives of meaning, independence, and inclusion. As the state's Lead Agency on Traumatic Injuries, we:

Administer the Central Registry to identify those who are injured,
Distribute resources through the Trust Fund, and
Advocate for improvements in statewide services.

Adopted April 2006

"Guided by the aspirations of people with traumatic injuries" is, to me, the most compelling aspect of our new mission statement. This phrase is what has spurred the Commission to:

Revise our Distribution Policies, including increasing funding limits so awards can foster independence and make a real impact in a recipient's life.

Mail resource information to the 51,210 people who were identified by the 2005 Central Registry as being treated for traumatic injury in Georgia hospitals.

Recruit more than 200 people with traumatic injuries (and their family members) to our Advocacy Network to advance public policy initiatives.

Move to larger office space, allowing us to host a series of roundtable discussions on issues affecting people with brain and spinal injuries.

Because we are guided by our recipients, people with traumatic brain injuries (TBI) were invited to critique the Trust Fund at our annual retreat in April. One recipient, high school senior Nicholas Smith (pictured on cover), happily described how his award gave him the tools needed to improve his memory – and increase his employment options. Yet, his mother pointed out Nicholas would not have known about the award or applied for it without her help.

Unfortunately, this is the case too often: people with TBI are unaware of or unable to apply for Trust Fund awards. Our data show that people with spinal cord injuries (SCI) are now applying for awards at twice the rate of those with TBI.

This is of particular concern given that TBI is the leading cause of death and disability for anyone under age 45. People with TBI must receive more

help if they are to gain access to the resources that exist to serve them. This includes the Trust Fund. We are making this issue a top priority for the Commission.

As we enter our fourth year of distributing the Trust Fund, our rallying call is clear: More must be done for Georgians who sustain traumatic injuries.

More than 51,000 people were treated in Georgia for a traumatic injury in 2005, according to our Central Registry data (see page 15). However, the only money that our state designates to meet the needs of people with brain and spinal injuries is the Trust Fund – and its revenue has decreased by almost 20 percent in the past two years to only \$1.8 million for FY2006. The result?

There are times when 30-40 Georgians with brain and spinal cord injuries receive Trust Fund awards each month.

We refuse to be silent as this precious resource dwindles. In the coming year, the Commission will request a line-item in the state budget to increase Trust Fund revenue, increase the number of people with traumatic injuries who can educate legislators, and encourage Georgians to steward the Trust Fund.

As Samuel Johnson said, "Your aspirations are your possibilities." Our aspiration is that the thousands of Georgians with traumatic injuries live lives of meaning, independence, and inclusion. Help us make that a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristen E. Vincent". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kristen E. Vincent, *Executive Director*

THE COST OF LIVING WITH A TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

Whether the injury is the result of a car crash, a slip and fall, assault, or sports activity, the economic consequences of TBI can be enormous.

In the United States, the average lifetime cost of care for a person with a severe injury ranges from **\$600,000** to **\$1,875,000**.¹ (This does not include lost earnings of the injured person or family caregivers.)

The total cost of TBI to the nation is estimated at **\$56.3 billion** annually.²

1. Report of the NIH Consensus Development Conference on the Rehabilitation of Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury. National Institutes of Health, National Institutes of Child Health and Development, Bethesda, MD: 1999. 2. Thurman, D. The Epidemiology and Economics of Head Trauma. In Miller, L. and Hayes, R. eds. Head Trauma: Basic, Preclinical and Clinical Directions. New York: Wiley and Sons. 2001.

RECIPIENTS: LIVING INDEPENDENT,



As Allen Vigneaux walks beside his wife, Lucy, he gingerly places his hand on her back. In this tender gesture it's clear that his love for her after 30 years together remains strong. Take a closer look, however, and you may see that his is also a steadying hand.

Three years ago, a drunk driver hit their car head on. Lucy sustained severe head injuries that cause seizures. One lasting consequence is that she is unable to watch their grandchild by herself. Another is that Allen has had to change his career so Lucy is not left at home alone.

Nevertheless, they persevere with the help of a Trust Fund award. Allen, who taught Lucy to operate a Bobcat when he had a landscaping business, is redesigning their lives one step at a time.



MEANINGFUL LIVES

Six-year-old Nicholas Smith stepped off the curb in front of his grandmother's house at the same time a woman, blind with rage over a lover's spat, raced through his neighborhood.

Hours earlier, his mother Jennifer, 28, had kissed her precocious kindergartener good-bye before running errands. A divorced parent of three boys, she remembers her youngest son was enjoying peanut butter crackers when she left.

"The next time I saw him, he was in the hospital hooked to seven tubes. The doctors said he had three days to live," she says of the event 13 years ago. "The doctors wanted to do research on him because they had never seen someone so young with such a severe head injury."

Like many others with brain injuries, Nicholas beat the odds. Today, the 19-year-old is a popular, charismatic student at Tucker High School in Atlanta. In addition to part-time work at a restaurant and a hotel, he volunteers at North Lake Gardens Nursing Home.

"He assists the residents with whatever they need and then sits and talks with them," says his mom. "He really enjoys it and I think he may do this full-time in the future." For now, though, they are content to explore his options. His gift, she says, is his innate ability to connect with people.

"When he meets you, he starts talking. He breaks barriers and people feel free to be themselves," she says.

Nicholas continues to work on improving his short-term memory and how he processes information, although, his mother jokes, "He has problems remembering, but rarely forgets anything involving his girlfriend Regina or other things he's interested in."

Trust Fund awards used for tutoring and a computer designed to help him with memory issues have helped Nicholas make tremendous progress.

"I'm from a working class family and had never heard of assistive technology or computers for people with brain injuries," says Jennifer, who works as a legal secretary.

"The Trust Fund has made it possible for him to get tutored every Saturday; that's \$100/week I could not afford," she says. "I know the tutoring has placed him up a notch"

Jennifer says even his teacher has seen results. When they met for his IEP, the teacher compared Nicholas's work from the year before because she was so excited: it had never improved so quickly before.

Looking ahead, Jennifer sees Nicholas getting married and having children. In the meantime, she continues to push her son and herself (she aspires to be a lawyer who can help those who are less fortunate).

"Even in the darkest of times under the darkest of circumstances, if you dare to hope, anything is possible," she says, smiling at Nicholas.

WADE “DJ LOWRYDER” GALIMORE

For her **Sweet 16 party**, Wade Galimore’s daughter wanted a DJ – one that cost \$125 an hour. That was a whole lot more than Wade and his wife wanted to spend.

True to form, Wade turned an obstacle into an opportunity. “How hard could it be to DJ?,” he remembers thinking two years ago. And with that leap of faith, a lucrative hobby was born.

His daughter’s ‘awesome’ party has led to gigs at colleges and corporations and “it just keeps going,” he says, shaking his head.

Wade, or DJ Lowryder as he’s known to his fans, is the kind of man who brightens a room. Whether he’s getting the party started at a wedding or taking the members of his Wheelchair Survivors Foundation to a Braves game, Wade’s charisma is hard to ignore.

“I just have a heart for people,” explains the handsome 35-year-old, his eyes twinkling as he describes the support groups he and his wife have started since his spinal cord injury nine years ago.

“When we have events, 50-60 people come out, even people who aren’t in chairs,” he says. “Our motto is ‘Keep rolling’ because we don’t let anything stop us.”

A Trust Fund award helped open the door to Wade’s passion for music. And, in turn, he’s become a spirited steward of the Commission. Every day he encourages other people with spinal cord injuries to apply for an award and aspire to more joy in their lives.



THE COST OF LIVING WITH

The United States would save as much as \$400 billion on future direct and indirect lifetime costs by developing therapies for people with spinal cord injuries and preventing new injuries.

Average Yearly Expenses

Severity of Injury	First Year	Each Subsequent Year
High Quadriplegia (C1-C4)	\$710,275	\$127,227
Low Quadriplegia (C5-C8)	\$458,666	\$52,114
Paraplegia	\$259,531	\$26,410
Incomplete Motor Function at any level	\$209,324	\$14,670



*Our motto is
'Keep rolling'
because we
don't let
anything
stop us.*

A SPINAL CORD INJURY (SCI)

Source: The University of Alabama National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Estimated Lifetime Costs by Age of Injury

Severity of Injury	25 Years Old	50 Years Old
High Quadriplegia (C1-C4)	\$2,801,642	\$1,649,342
Low Quadriplegia (C5-C8)	\$1,584,132	\$1,003,192
Paraplegia	\$936,088	\$638,472
Incomplete Motor Function at any level	\$624,441	\$452,545

STEWARDSHIP: TAKING STEPS TO S



“It has been an education for me. Nothing in my experience, training or education has prepared me to deal appropriately with persons suffering head injuries. Unfortunately, I am called upon to make decisions with grave consequences affecting those with head injuries several times every year.”

~ Douglas Gibson, Judge, Ware State Court

Stewards are essential to our mission. And more Stewards are needed to help guide and support all aspects of the Commission. They broaden our reach; they sustain the Trust Fund; they enrich us with fresh perspectives and expertise. What we give in return is the opportunity to strengthen your community of people with traumatic injuries.

Mark Halvorsen was thinking life was good as he climbed onto the roof of his house to check the gutters.

The gregarious father of three had completed a triathlon the week before. His marketing job was challenging. Marriage to his high school sweetheart was happy. Then he sneezed.

At least, he thinks that's what happened seven years ago. No one knows what caused him to fall from his screened-in porch.

However, he is certain that, "I'm lucky to be alive," he says. "I was given last rites by my Irish priest."

Mark's ten-foot fall caused a severe traumatic brain injury (TBI) that forced him to relearn how to walk, talk and think. It also shifted his priorities.

Today, Halvorsen is an active volunteer. Every Tuesday, the former Navy diver goes to the VA Hospital to meet with veterans returning from the Gulf War with TBIs (the war's leading injury). On Fridays, he meets with members of the Toastmasters group he started for survivors of stroke and TBI in his hometown of Roswell, Georgia.

"We get together to give speeches so we're better at thinking on our feet," he says.

Mark is also a steward of the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission who enjoys advocacy initiatives.

"I want legislators to wake up to the fact that people need help with training and transition. This is especially true for professional people like myself who want meaningful work," he says.

Call 1-888-233-5760 to learn about becoming a Commission Steward. Opportunities range from helping others complete applications to advocating for the full inclusion of people with disabilities.

USTAIN THE TRUST FUND



Kyle Gordon's movie-star good looks and mild manner tend to lull people into thinking the tall, blonde 22 year-old doesn't have a care in the world.

Few would guess that five years ago, a tractor-trailer crashed into his pick-up truck causing such a severe traumatic brain injury doctors predicted he'd spend the rest of his life in a nursing home.

"When you look at Kyle, you can't see the brain injury," says his mother Debra. Nevertheless, she explains that he can't anticipate consequences and that he's easily led by people who are "up to no good."

That would explain why Kyle, once the most popular and promising student at Ware Magnet School, keeps getting arrested. Each offense is minor and stems from poor judgment.

When he was arrested for the third time, Judge Gibson, who has known Kyle since he was a child, jailed him for 63 days, saying to Debra, "I don't know what to do, but I've got to keep him there to protect him from himself."

Debra knew this was not the solution, yet this lack of options was nothing new.

"When I told my friends what was going on, they didn't get it," she remembers. The church didn't get it either. "The pastor took me aside and said that Kyle's behavior wasn't due to his accident. He said, 'You've got to know and believe that this has nothing to do with the wreck, these are his choices.'"

This lack of understanding and lack of resources is why Debra is such a forceful advocate today. In addition to launching a brain injury support group, she helps others apply for Trust Fund awards and educates local law enforcement on how to deal with people with brain injury.

"If more of our judges had knowledge about brain injury, fewer people would be in jail," says Debra. "They need to be routed to the right place."

Clearly, this mother is doing all she can for her only child, but she can't do it alone.

"People like Kyle need a life besides one with Momma, but there's no place for them," she says. "This state really needs residential programs, independent living programs where there's guidance for daily living. Kyle wants to get on with his life; I hope I can help him achieve that."

ADVOCACY: YOU ARE AN EXPERT.



Did you know the only money our state specifically designates to meet the needs of people with brain and spinal injuries is the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund?

That's why the Commission is uniting Georgians across the state. More people need to raise awareness about TBI/SCI issues in their

communities. More elected officials and decision makers need to know:

Traumatic brain injury is the leading cause of death and disability for anyone under age 45.

More than 51,000 Georgians sustained a traumatic injury last year.

The cost of living with a spinal cord injury during the first year alone ranges from \$209,324 to \$710,275, depending upon the type of injury.

Too many people with undiagnosed and/or untreated traumatic brain injuries are crowding our prisons and nursing homes.

Our Advocacy Network is identifying and training advocates from across the state. We are reaching out to find people in each of Georgia's 13 Congressional districts. People like Kiley Hays are typical of our new advocates: despite her lack of experience, she's willing to learn as



she goes, whether it's contacting elected officials, telling others about the Trust Fund, or advising the Commission about issues of concern.

Our Network is already making a difference. Last year, it was instrumental in helping to get \$3.2 million in state funding to provide services for 152 people through the Independent Care Waiver Program.



SPEAK OUT.



During the 2007 legislative session, our Advocates will focus on seeking \$500,000 in state funding to:

Assist an additional 75 to 125 Georgians with TBI & SCI each year

Provide more individualized assistance with applications for people with brain injuries

Address the decrease of 20 percent in revenue from DUI surcharge collections during a 37 percent increase in Trust Fund applications.

In addition, they will monitor: the collection of court fees (which fund the Trust Fund), the development of home and community-based services, and related federal legislation like the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Act and reauthorization of the Traumatic Brain Injury Act.

We encourage you to join us. An easy first step is to receive Network News, our free monthly virtual newsletter about the Trust Fund. Sign up at www.bsiff.state.ga.us.

Kiley Hays never imagined she'd be an advocate.

The soft-spoken 26-year-old lives in a small, rural town and has a full schedule studying for her psychology degree at nearby Thomas University. Besides, she says, "I'm shy in a group of people."

Yet, the first time Kiley went to Washington, D.C. to call on her Representative, she succeeded in advancing legislation.

This legislation – the Medicaid Community Attendant Services and Supports Act – directs long-term Medicaid dollars to individuals in the community. That way people with disabilities can choose to have their attendant services provided in their homes, rather than being forced to stay in nursing homes or other large institutions. This issue is especially important to Kiley, who has lived at home since becoming paralyzed from the neck down at age 14 by a former boyfriend who stalked her, shot her, then killed himself.

After learning about the legislative process at the national Spinal Cord Injury Summit in Washington, D.C. last year, Kiley, accompanied by her family and attendant, went to visit her Representative. They spent a long, hot summer afternoon waiting in his office, not knowing if he'd have time to see them.

Near the end of the day Representative Sanford Bishop appeared.

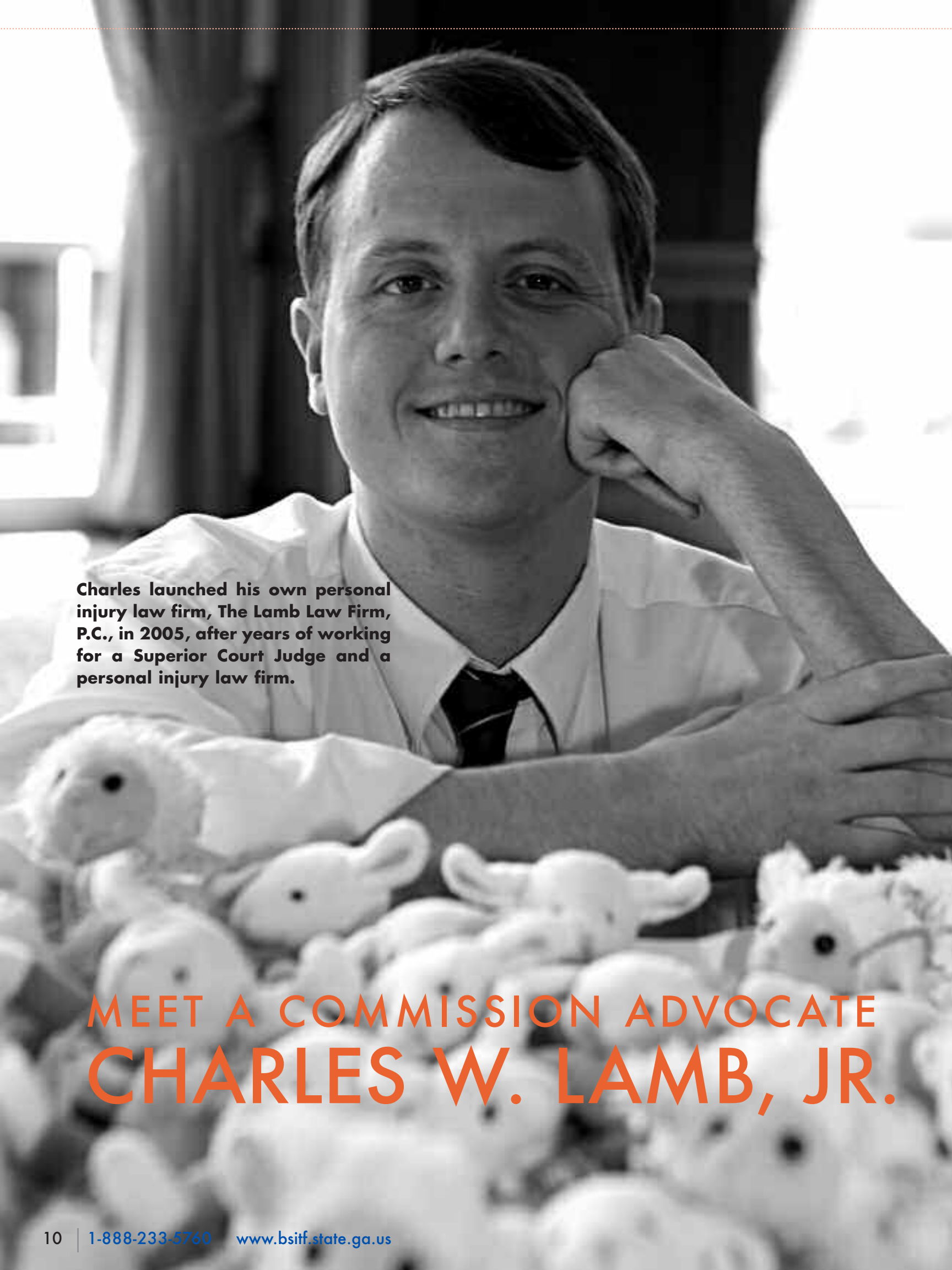
"I was really nervous because I didn't know what to say," she recalls. "I explained the Trust Fund to him and that we had been trying to get this legislation passed, but so far we didn't have any luck.

"I told him how important the bill was to me, that I go to school every day, and I live a life as a normal as I can. But, if I didn't have my parents and attendants, I would be stuck in a nursing home. What kind of life would I have if I was stuck in a nursing home?"

To her surprise, Representative Bishop didn't hesitate after listening to her; he said he'd do anything to help. Since then, Kiley has lobbied legislators at the Georgia Capitol and participated in Georgia's first Spinal Cord Injury Summit.

Her advice to new advocates? "Don't be nervous. Everyone's nervous at first, but I went in there and held my head up high," she said.





Charles launched his own personal injury law firm, The Lamb Law Firm, P.C., in 2005, after years of working for a Superior Court Judge and a personal injury law firm.

MEET A COMMISSION ADVOCATE CHARLES W. LAMB, JR.

“I really believe that I can make an impact now that I’m involved with the Commission. I can be a voice at a level that can be heard, rather than one simply crying out in the dark.”

What makes you different from other personal injury lawyers? Someone else may tell you they care and understand, but I do. I sustained a C6-C7 incomplete spinal cord injury in a 1989 diving accident, and even though I can walk, I still have sensory and physical limitations at and below the level of injury.

I can relate to the physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual challenges faced by seriously injured individuals. And I’ve handled hundreds of personal injury cases. I know that money can’t make you whole, but if certain things aren’t paid for, that can cause an incredible hardship.

What advice do you have for people who were injured years ago? Get involved in helping others in whatever way you can. You can relate to others with disabilities and deliver a message of hope in a way that non-disabled people can’t.

As a member of the executive Board of the Albany Advocacy Resource Center, a member of the board of the Southwest Georgia Therapeutic Riding Center, and a former member of the ABA Commission on Mental & Physical Disability Law, I have found nothing as rewarding as advocating for and interacting with other individuals with disabilities.

How were you injured? When I was 18, I dove into the shallow end of the pool at the apartment complex where my dad lived. The pool wasn’t well marked or maintained. I remember being faced down in the water and needing to lift my head up but not being able to. Fortunately, I had a friend there who saved my life.

How are things for you today? Because I can walk, I sometimes feel like I’m in between worlds. That is, I’m not in a chair but I’m not “able-bodied.” I continue to have bladder and bowel issues and manual dexterity issues. I still have significant expenses for catheters and medications. But, I’m really grateful to be alive and to have finally found, in working for and with injured people and with otherwise-disabled individuals, a sense of purpose for which I had searched for years.

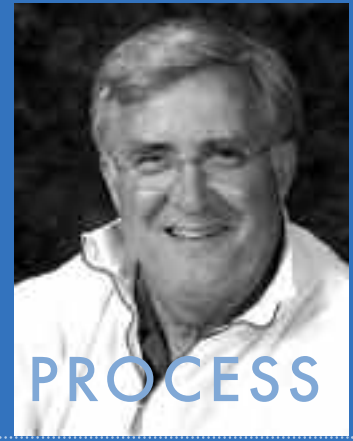
What do you do for fun? I love to read and to solve crossword puzzles.

How do you help the Commission? When I joined the Commission’s Advocacy Network in early 2006, I contacted several legislators to make sure that legislation made it to the floor for a vote. That was new for me. I’ve done advocacy work in the past but I haven’t gone out and talked to legislators before.

That’s one of the neat things about the Commission: there is a public policy agenda for the year, so you know which legislative issues are important.

In mid-2006, I began to participate in the Commission’s Leadership Development Program. I serve on the Finance Committee and have a special interest in making sure that the DUI surcharges that provide funds for the Commission are collected and remitted. Because other entities receive funds from DUI surcharges, I want to ensure that these funds are distributed on a percentage-wise basis as they are collected rather than where the entity falls on a list. (For more information about this, see page 13.)

Why should people with brain and spinal injuries become involved with the Commission? Even though you can holler and yell in the disability community, often the people you need to reach – the people in positions of power – don’t hear you unless they or a family member have a disability. People with brain and spinal injuries are in a unique position to reach out to legislators and to the community.



CORRECTING THE COLLECTIONS PROCESS

Taking on the administration of the Central Registry for Traumatic Brain and Spinal Injuries has proven significant for the Commission. Areas of great unmet need are being identified as we tally the extent of spinal cord and brain injury in Georgia each year.

This is what we know:

More than 51,000 people were treated in Georgia for mild to severe traumatic brain or spinal cord injuries in 2005 alone.

The Trust Fund is the only money Georgia specifically designates for people with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries.

The Trust Fund revenues have dropped almost 20 percent in the past two years.

Nevertheless, the Commission is committed to making a lasting impact in the lives of people living with traumatic injuries. That's why, despite decreasing collections, our Commission voted to increase Trust Fund award amounts this year.

This means Shirley in Macon, who sustained a traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, was able to use her \$10,500 award to equip her bathroom with a roll-in shower. In the past, she would have been awarded up to \$5,000, a fraction of what was needed to complete the job. The same is true for James in Dallas. He applied for a Trust Fund award after sustaining a spinal cord injury, and thanks to a larger award, he could afford to modify his car.

That's the good news. The bad news is that our revenues are down for the second year.

To remedy this situation, we are aggressively seeking ways to maximize our resources. During the upcoming legislative session, we will ask the General

Assembly for \$500,000 to cover operational costs of operations like the Central Registry, an unfunded mandate.

Approval of this funding request will extend Trust Fund dollars to an additional 75 to 125 Georgians per year; provide information on available services and supports to the more than 51,000 Georgians who sustain a traumatic injury each year; help people with traumatic injuries transition out of state hospitals, nursing homes, and other institutions, in fulfillment of the Olmstead decision; and improve data reports to policy-makers and state agencies to assist with long-term planning of state services and funding.

Support for this request is urgent given the drop in collections. (To learn more about this situation, please see page 16.)

Ultimately, the General Assembly needs to improve the court fees collections process to sustain the Trust Fund. Our priority this year is to urge the General Assembly to do so.

Please join us.

Sincerely,

Rusty Kidd, Chair (2006)

PINPOINTING THE NEED: HOW THE CENTRAL REGISTRY WORKS

The **Central Registry for Traumatic Brain and Spinal Injuries** is the state's only program that keeps an accurate count of how many Georgians sustain a traumatic brain injury and/or spinal cord injury each year.

The Central Registry was created by the General Assembly in 1982 to address the needs of people with traumatic injuries, particularly those in rural areas who were dying because of lack of care.

In the course of distributing the Trust Fund, the Commission saw the need for improved data on traumatic brain and spinal injuries in Georgia.

In the past, the Central Registry identified only a fraction of all injuries. The Commission partnered with the Department of Labor, Division of Rehabilitation Services to identify ways to enhance the Registry. As a result of this partnership the Commission worked with legislators to pass SB 582, which transferred operation of the Central Registry to the Commission on July 1, 2004.

Within one year of assuming operation of the Registry, the Commission made significant procedural changes, resulting in the first accurate picture of the incidence of traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries in Georgia.

For example, under previous administration, the Central Registry showed 2,401 traumatic injuries in Georgia for 2003. But, the Commission identified an astounding 45,080 new traumatic injuries in Georgia for 2004. And then 51,210 traumatic injuries for 2005.

As we correct this severe undercount, we anticipate that the Commission will:

Provide better information about resources to the newly injured.

Increase access to and awareness of the Trust Fund.

Make strategic policy recommendations to improve services for Georgians who have been injured.

Seek federal and private grant funding.

Partner with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to improve research and prevention initiatives.



Central Registry data may help other state agencies and organizations determine:

At what age is **Shaken Baby Syndrome** diagnosed most often?

Which areas of the state have the highest number of individuals with traumatic brain and spinal injuries, and what are the causes of those injuries?

How many traumatic injuries are due to violence/assault?

TRAUMATIC INJURIES ON THE RISE



The Central Registry keeps track of the brain and spinal cord injuries treated at Georgia hospitals. During the two years the Commission has administered the Central Registry, a vast undercount has been identified and corrected.

This year's Registry found that more than 51,000* Georgians were treated for brain and spinal cord injuries during 2005, an increase of more than 10,000 from the previous year.**

Almost all of these individuals went from the emergency room to their homes – many with little or no information about their injuries. That's why we sent brochures to the 45,000 people who were treated for mild head injuries at Georgia hospitals last year. More people need to know that symptoms of head injury might not be apparent until months after the trauma occurs. And that resources exist to help.

**Includes people treated in outpatient clinics such as Ambulatory Surgeries.*

***One potential, though unconfirmed, explanation for the increased incidence data is the evacuation of hospitalized patients from the Gulf Coast to Georgia hospitals during Hurricane Katrina, as well as the number of evacuees who incurred injuries during evacuation and were initially treated here.*

data highlights

As you can see, data is grouped according to whether someone was treated at an emergency room (ER) or admitted to a hospital.

HOSPITALIZATIONS

Motor vehicle accidents continue to be the leading cause of hospitalization for all traumatic injuries (40%), followed by falls (33%) then violence (7%). These percentages are similar to those from the year before.

This year, reported hospitalizations for SCI declined significantly for almost all age groups, but especially for those ages 15-24: 64 SCI in 2005 vs. 112 in 2004.

EMERGENCY ROOMS

The vast majority (99%) of Georgians – 42,812 people – who sustained a traumatic brain injury in 2005 were treated and released by ERs.

Typically, the causes are falls (40%), car accidents (22%), being struck by an object or person (18%), or violence (10%).

The most dramatic change in data was for those aged 55-64, who experienced a 5% increase in car accidents from the previous year.

For more detailed information about the Central Registry, see: www.bsif.state.ga.us

Data from January 1 to December 31, 2005

TOTAL INJURIES: 51,210*

		Hospitalization Data		Emergency Dept. Data	
		TBI Only	SCI Only	TBI + SCI	All TBI
BY AGE	0-4 years	343	**	**	7,323
	5-9 years	190	**	**	3,601
	10-14 years	224	8	**	3,122
	15-24 years	1,295	64	30	8,605
	25-34 years	770	84	16	5,075
	35-44 years	756	111	21	4,504
	45-54 years	723	103	15	3,289
	55-64 years	536	91	**	2,190
	65-74 years	462	50	**	1,664
	75 years +	1,101	61	**	3,450
	Missing	2	0	0	0
BY SEX	Female	2,338	172	24	19,106
	Male	3,981	409	80	23,718
	Unknown	1	0	0	1
BY RACE	Asian	52	**	**	444
	Black	1,527	184	36	12,130
	Hispanic	457	34	**	3,040
	Multi Racial	280	21	**	996
	White	3,932	325	57	25,348
	Other	8	**	**	105
	Missing / Unknown	64	12	1	762
TOTAL		6,320	581	104	42,825

* This includes the 1,380 people treated in and released from outpatient clinics such as Ambulatory Surgeries.

** Less than 6

TRUST FUND COLLECTIONS

OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As of June 30, 2006, the Trust Fund awarded \$5,755,022 to Georgians in need. More than 1,500 people used these funds to improve their lives and increase their independence.



HOW WE DID IT

Currently, the Trust Fund is supported entirely by collections of a 10 percent surcharge on Georgia's driving under the influence (DUI) fines.

In FY 2006, the General Assembly approved an appropriation of \$3 million dollars to the Commission.

The Commission sought and received a \$100,000 federal grant to support the Central Registry and Advisory Committee.

A record amount – \$2,072,884 – was awarded; \$609,547 (20.3 percent) was used for operating costs.

Serving 1,500 Georgians is honorable, however, we are concerned that more is not available for the more than 51,000 Georgians who sustain a traumatic injury each year.

COLLECTIONS HISTORY

The Trust Fund is the only money Georgia specifically allocates for people with brain and spinal injuries.

When collections began in 1999, after passage of SB110, courts throughout Georgia collected \$122,710. During the next few years, Trust Fund collections steadily increased as more courts learned of the new surcharge and began to remit funds. Even so, the Commission knew that many courts were not remitting funds.

In FY04, the Commission partnered with the Administrative Office of the Courts to identify and provide training for almost 600 of these courts. As a result Trust Fund collections rose to an all-time high of \$2,250,724.

However, for the past two years, collections have declined. Collections for this year were \$1,789,337 – a drop of \$200,000 – or 11 percent from the previous year.

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LIST

Given the complexity of the court fees collection process, it's difficult to pinpoint one cause of the Trust Fund revenue decline. However, the Commission believes that a key factor is the partial payment priority list. This list determines which organizations are paid when a defendant provides only partial payment of a fine.

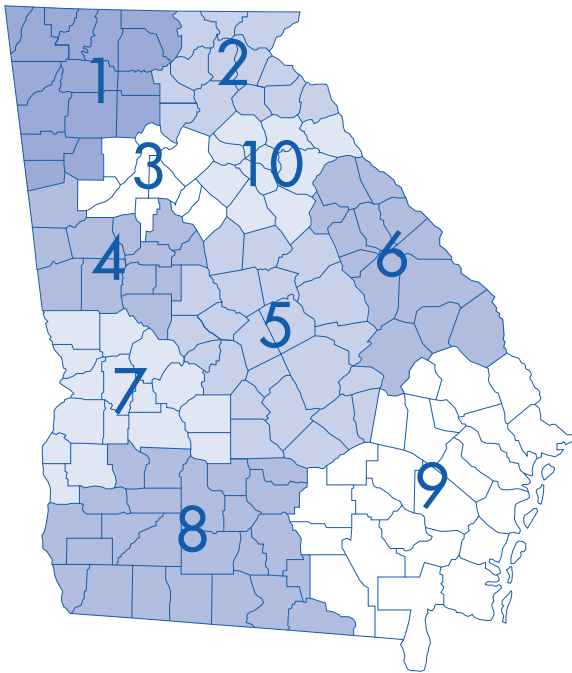
The Trust Fund is ranked near the bottom of these priority lists (e.g., 12 of 14 for Superior and State Courts and 12 of 13 for all other courts). This means that if a defendant does not complete payment of his fine, as is often the case, the Trust Fund receives no revenue from the surcharge.

We are making every effort to correct this situation. The Commission met with the Georgia Superior Court Clerks Cooperative Authority (GSCCCA), the state agency charged with oversight of the collections process. However, GSCCCA said it lacks the statutory authority to improve the system or to assist in increasing revenue for the Trust Fund.

The court fees collections process is broken and the General Assembly must fix it.

TRUST FUND DISTRIBUTIONS

AWARDS BY REGION



Region	Number Awarded	Percent of GA Population	Percent Awarded
1	61	10.2%	10.6%
2	42	5.1%	7.5%
3	205	38.5%	35.0%
4	54	7.5%	10.2%
5	50	7.4%	9.5%
6	53	5.2%	8.5%
7	15	4.3%	2.0%
8	29	7.1%	5.0%
9	34	9.8%	5.7%
10	34	4.4%	5.9%
Total	577	100%	100%

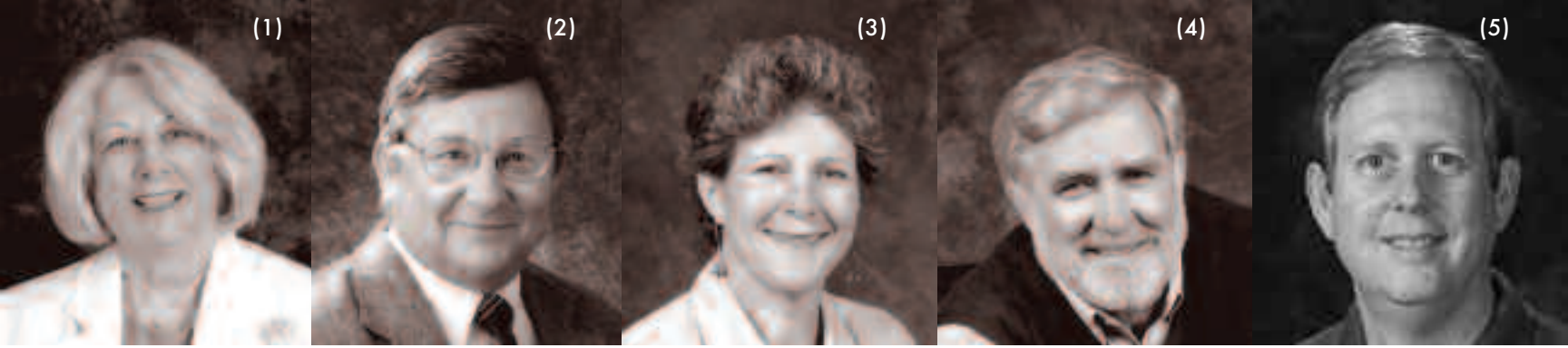
AWARDS BY INJURY TYPE

TBI	\$658,990.97	32%
SCI	\$1,303,132.00	63%
TBI/SCI	\$101,594.00	5%
Total	\$2,063,716.97	100%

AWARDS BY TOP CATEGORIES

Transportation	17.55%
Durable Medical Equipment	16.44%
Home Modifications	11.37%
Personal Support Services	8.90%
Housing	8.41%

Our proudest accomplishment to date is having awarded \$5,755,022 to Georgians who need it most.



OUR COMMISSION MEMBERS

Our Commission Members are a dedicated, diverse group of individuals from around the state. Each one is committed to improving the effectiveness of the Trust Fund by overseeing its operations and disbursements. The Commission comprises 15 members, ten of whom are appointed by the Governor and five by state agencies. To ensure a breadth of experience and opinion, the Commission's statute requires that at least seven of the 15 members be people with traumatic brain or spinal injuries or family members of people with these injuries. Other members include representatives of the medical profession and other experts.

Annette Bowling (1) has served on the Commission since the Governor appointed her in 2000. She is the Executive Director of the Albany Advocacy Resource Center and is also involved with the Georgia ARC Network and the Commission on Mental Health/Mental Retardation/ Substance Abuse (MH/MR/SA). She has served on the Georgia Rehabilitation Advisory Council, the Georgia Department of Medical Assistance Consumer Advisory Committee and many other boards.

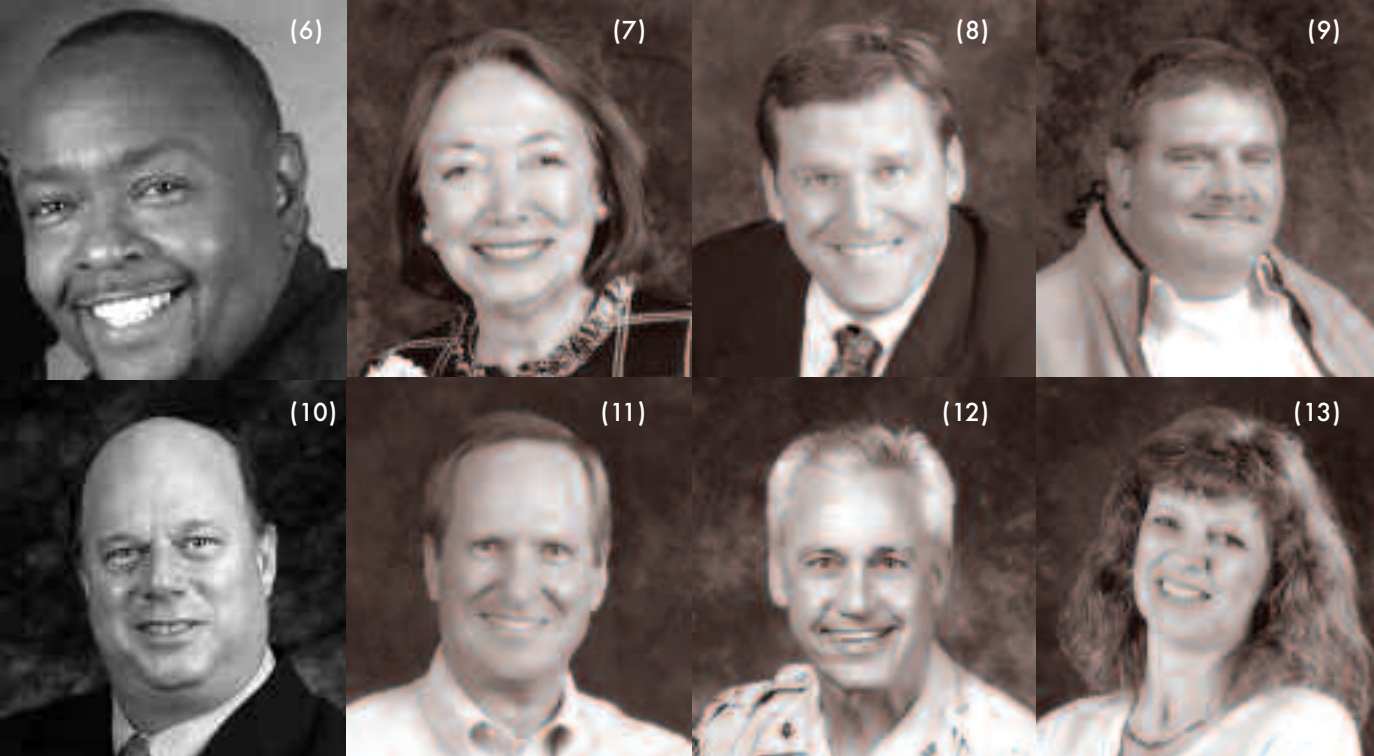
J. Hunter Hurst (2), *Treasurer*, was appointed by the Department of Community Health in 2000. He is Executive Director of the Georgia Infirmity, Inc., a provider of home and community-based services, and the Georgia Infirmity Non-Profit Housing Corporation, a provider of affordable housing options for elderly and disabled persons in Savannah, Georgia. Hunter has worked in home- and community-based services for nearly 25 years.

Susan Johnson (3), *Vice Chair*, was appointed by the Governor in 2004. She serves as the Vice Chair of the Commission and as the Chair of the Advisory Committee. Susan, the Director of Brain Injury Services at the Shepherd Center, has published and presented at national and regional conferences on brain injury issues and held leadership positions with the Brain Injury Association of America and the Brain Injury Association of Georgia. Trained as a speech language pathologist and certified case manager, she has developed and advocated for programs and services for people with brain injury and their families for 25 years. Susan is married to Mark Johnson, a C-5 quadriplegic, who is a nationally recognized advocate for people with disabilities.

Rusty Kidd (4), *Chair*, was appointed Chairman of the Commission by Governor Perdue in 2004. A native Georgian, Rusty consults with state and local governments on behalf of associations and businesses that range from the Georgia Association of Home Health Agencies to Merck. Rusty's other Board positions have included the Shepherd Center and Habitat for Humanity.

Steven K. Leibel (5), an attorney at Casey Gilson Leibel P.C., has been practicing law since his graduation from the Emory Law School in 1980. Best known for winning the highest jury verdict in Georgia history – \$776 million in a wrongful death lawsuit arising out of the tragic murder of the Sheriff-elect of DeKalb County, Georgia – Mr. Leibel has also been named a Georgia Super Lawyer for three years in a row by his peers. Steve is active in the community serving as: a Municipal Court Judge in Duluth and Snellville, Georgia and on the Boards of: The Marcus Institute, Chestatee Regional Hospital, First Citizen's Bank, The NCMA Atlanta Chapter and the Dahlonega and Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce.

Carl H. McCrae (6) serves as Interim Director of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program at the Georgia Department of Labor. He began his career as a counselor intern at the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency while studying for a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Carl's longstanding interest in people with Traumatic Brain Injuries has led him to develop unique and unconventional ways of assessing people with TBI. Other vocational rehabilitation positions include serving as the first Statewide Program coordinator for TBI with the Georgia Division of Rehabilitation Services, work at Goodwill and the Private Industry Council.



Estelle Lee Miller's (7) passion for this field grew after her daughter, Linda Jean, experienced a traumatic brain injury. A Charter Member of the Commission, Lee was appointed by the Governor in 2000. She is active in numerous organizations including the President's Council on the 21st Century Workforce, Skills Gap committee; the World Committee on Disability; the Georgia State Rehabilitation Council and both the Georgia and the National Rehabilitation Associations. Lee has been honored twice for Distinguished Contributions toward the Full Employment of People with Disabilities by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and has many other awards for her work. An attorney and consultant, Lee lives in Columbus, Georgia.

John O'Connor (8), *Secretary*, was appointed by the Department of Education (DOE) in 2005. As Education Program Manager with the DOE, John manages professional development initiatives designed to increase the educational performance of students with and without disabilities. Currently, he is the director of the Georgia State Improvement Grant. Before joining the DOE, John taught special education, focusing on students with orthopedic impairments.

Justin Pressley (9) was appointed by the Governor in 2000 as one of the founding Commission members; he served as the Trust Fund's first Treasurer after working for Bank of America. Justin, a disabled entrepreneur, created Disability Media Group, Inc., an Internet consulting business in 1999. Currently, he is building ChoiceCare, LLC to assist Medicaid recipients with self-directed care. Justin was injured in a motorcycle accident in 1988, which resulted in C4-5 quadriplegia. He also serves on the Boards of Our Neighbor, Inc., and the North Georgia Health Systems.

David W. Renz (10) was the first Chairman of the Commission having been appointed by the Governor in 2000. He brings a wealth of personal (he's a T-8 paraplegic) and professional experience to the organization. He has held positions such as Dalton Whitfield Disability Awareness Chair and Deacon at First Presbyterian Church.

Michael Ray Smith (11) served as Director, Environmental Health and Injury Prevention Branch, Division of Public Health, Department of Human Resources, the agency that appointed him to the Commission in 2005. He has been involved with injury prevention programs in public health for more than 20 years. He contributes to many organizations, including the Executive Committee of the Georgia Traffic Records Coordinating Committee and the Agroterrorism Subcommittee of the Georgia Homeland Security Working Group.

Keith Edward Sorrells (12), a major with the Georgia State Patrol, has worked in law enforcement for more than 30 years. His postings have included working at headquarters and the Governor's Mansion. He joined the Commission in January 2004 as a representative of the Department of Public Safety.

Shree Denise Strickland (13) became her son Jeremy's caregiver after he was injured in a motorcycle accident in 1999 and sustained both traumatic brain and spinal injuries. She was appointed to the Commission by the Governor in 2005. Shree currently works as a secretary for her husband. They have five sons and live in Bowdon, Georgia.

Mitch Warnock (not shown) was appointed to the Commission by the Governor in 2003. He is an attorney living in Dublin, Georgia and has a spinal cord injury.

APPLYING FOR A TRUST FUND AWARD

The Trust Fund welcomes applications from Georgians who have sustained a traumatic injury and have exhausted all other resources. We are continually reviewing applications (you can submit one via our website, www.bsif.state.ga.us). We strive to respond within three months of a completed request.

Please be aware that our revenues – which come from DUI fine collections – are declining, while our applications have doubled. For example, 56 applications were received in February 2005 compared to 18 applications in February 2004. This means hard decisions must be made.

Increasingly, awards must be limited to people at risk for institutionalization, isolation, illness, or similar situations.

If you have exhausted all other resources, we encourage you to apply. You may be eligible for as much as \$15,000 in some instances due to new distribution policies adopted in July.

Keep in mind all applicants must demonstrate how their award will increase their independence, have long-term benefits and promote their inclusion in the community.

ELIGIBILITY

To be considered for a Trust Fund award, an individual must:

Be a resident of Georgia

Have sustained a traumatic brain/spinal cord injury

Have exhausted all other resources

FOUR STEPS TO AN AWARD

Apply online at www.bsif.state.ga.us or call toll-free (1-888-233-5760) for an application.

Distribution staff reviews application and works with you to make sure it is complete.

Distribution Committee recommends awards to Commission members who vote to approve. This takes approximately eight to 10 weeks from receipt of your application.

The Commission makes award recommendations to Governor Sonny Perdue; these should be reviewed within two weeks. After his review, the Commission notifies all applicants about their award status.

We are committed to improving the quality of life for the more than 51,000 Georgians who sustain a traumatic brain and/or spinal injury each year. So, call us (1-888-233-5760) if you are unsure about applying. We are happy to help you find the resources you need.



(Left to right): **Dionne White**, Administrative Assistant; **Anna Santiago**, Director of Distribution; **Lori Rosichan**, Distribution Program Associate; **Dionna Littlejohn**, Executive Assistant; **Leslie McNely**, Financial Officer; **Kristen E. Vincent**, Executive Director

THE COMMISSION AT-A-GLANCE

We have popular support. In November 1998, Georgia voters overwhelmingly approved (by 73 percent) a constitutional amendment to create a Trust Fund for people with brain and spinal injuries, paid for by a surcharge on drunk driving fines. This landmark legislation won by a margin of greater than 2-to-1.

We keep track. As the new administrators of Georgia's Central Registry for Traumatic Brain and Spinal Injuries, we collect quarterly data about the number of injured Georgians. One of the many benefits of having accurate information is that we are now able to provide the newly injured with a resource guide for all state services. This is especially important given that the majority of patients are discharged to their homes and may not know about other available resources.

We are guided by those with firsthand knowledge. Unlike other state agencies, more than half of the people who serve on the Commission must have a brain or spinal cord injury (or be a family member).

We connect people to their communities. Too often the assumption is that an injured person will spend their life in an institution. Our goal is support people in the community.

Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal injuries deserve lives of independence and inclusion, lives rich with vision and possibilities. Trust Fund awards change lives. Even modest financial support can be the spark that ignites a dream.



Brain & Spinal Injury
Trust Fund Commission

Support

I feel more comfortable with support,
Bearing which is a sort,
Of comfort,
It's to your advantage from being hurt.
We all need someone that is concerned,
In you, I've learned,
The one that should be interested is you
yourself,
Then it's time to find a compatriot.
I find this an obligation,
To fulfill your life and appease,
I know that it will please,
It's such a relief to know there's definite,
Security in your life, to fit,
Your requirements in life.

From *Genuine Reflections: A Collection of Poems* by Deborah Wellbrock,
Trust Fund Recipient and Steward
www.RecoveryInPoetry.com



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