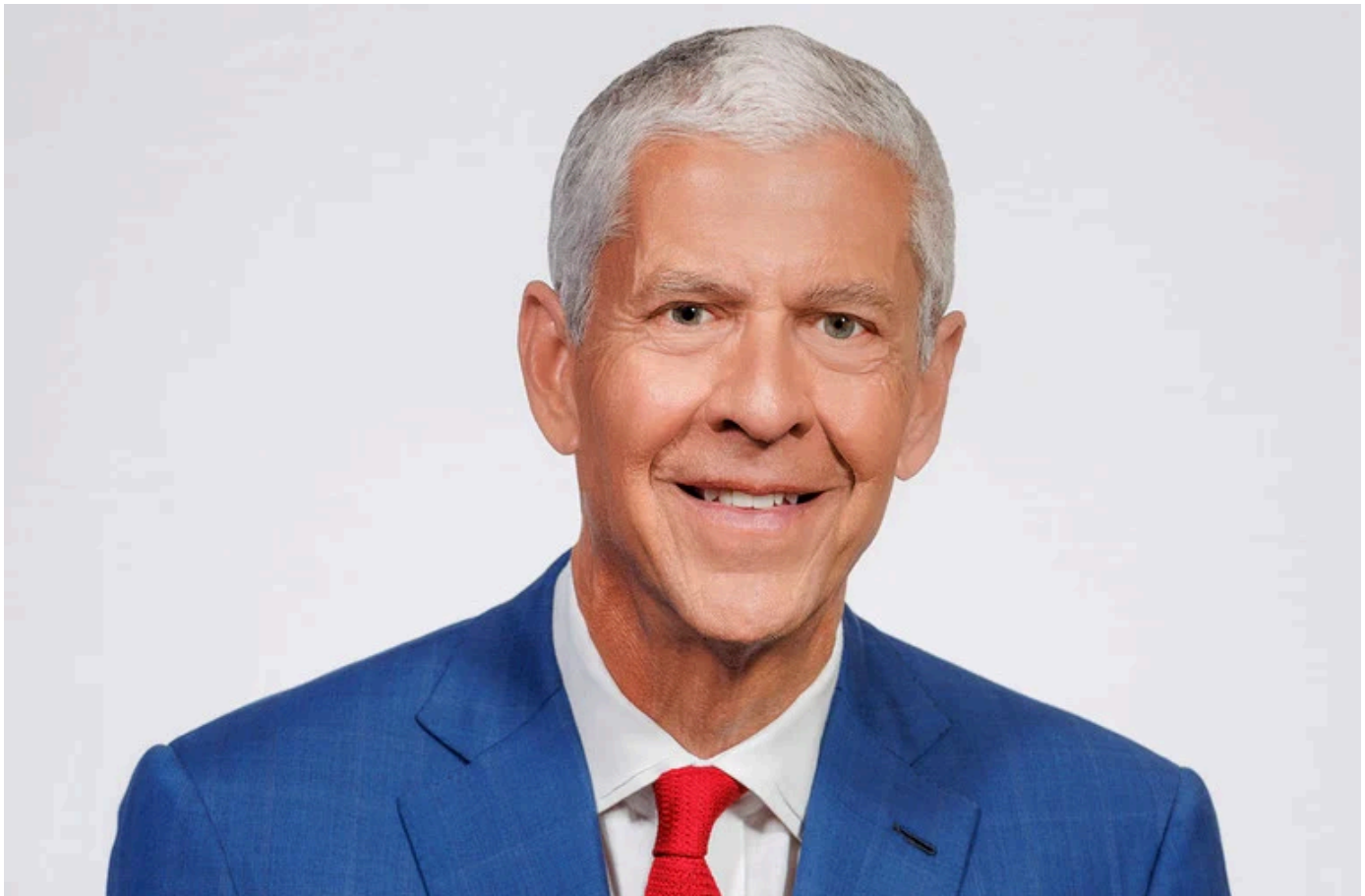


News **Damages**

Phila. Firm Secures \$49.5M Verdict Over Ethiopian Air Passenger's Death

The eight-member jury deliberated for two hours before awarding the family of Samya Stumo \$49.5 million in their suit against Boeing.

May 18, 2026 at 08:48 AM By  **Marianna Wharry**



Kline & Specter's Shanin Specter. Courtesy photo

A Chicago federal jury on Wednesday [awarded \\$49.5 million](#) to the family of a global health professional killed along with 156 other passengers in the 2019 crash of the Boeing jet flying as Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302.

The eight-member jury deliberated for two hours before unanimously awarding the family of Samya Stumo \$21 million for her experience on the flight, \$16.5 million for the family's loss of her companionship and \$12 million for the family's grief. The trial took place over the course of nearly two weeks in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois before U.S. District Judge Jorge L. Alonso.

"Samya was an exceptional young woman with a close-knit family who have suffered greatly by her passing," Shanin Specter, of Kline & Specter and of counsel for Stumo's estate, told Law.com.

Specter said he believes expert testimony from both parties describing the experience Stumo and the other passengers had before the crash left a reasonable impression on the jury. His team is planning to move for adding prejudgment interest to the verdict in the coming days; he said this will add about \$14.5 million to the verdict and bring the total award to \$64 million, Specter said.

Stumo, 24, worked for the nonprofit organization ThinkWell, and was a passenger on the flight from Ethiopia to Nairobi, Kenya, when the Boeing 737 Max 8 jet crashed six minutes after takeoff. Her estate filed suit against Boeing and alleged the aircraft was defectively designed and had the tendency to dive uncontrollably because of erroneous sensors. The crash occurred when a new flight control system automatically pitched the plane's nose downward in order to prevent stalling. The pilots were unable to control the aircraft, which crashed after takeoff in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Boeing did not contest liability and claims for punitive damages were dismissed against Boeing executives and the component part manufacturer. Only compensatory damages were available at trial.

The verdict for Stumo's estate is the second [to involve a Max 8](#), which was grounded after the 2019 crash. Specter and co-counsel Elizabeth Crawford, also of Kline & Specter, [previously won](#) a \$28.45 million verdict against Boeing in November on behalf of the family of a United Nations environmental worker who was killed in the crash.

"We are gratified for the opportunity to try the compensatory damages case," Specter and Crawford said in a statement. "Next, we will seek appellate reinstatement of the punitive damages claims against the Boeing executives and the component part manufacturers."

James Power, of Power Rogers in Chicago, also represented the estate.

Dan K. Webb, of Winston & Strawn, was lead counsel for Boeing.

Power and Webb did not immediately return Law.com's request for comment.