

# Getting a WINNING VERDICT In My Personal Life



**J.** Gary Gwilliam is the past president of the Public Justice Foundation and of the Consumer Attorneys of California. He was twice nominated for Trial Lawyer of the Year and a recipient of numerous awards and commendations.

Gary is a nationally recognized attorney and is frequently lectures on quality of life issues, stress reduction, and ethics. He has authored many legal articles, including “The Art of Losing” and has tried over 175 jury trials to verdict.

He presents an interesting view of trials as theater, where the plaintiff and defendant’s lawyers are viewed as actors performing in a play, rather than combatants in a dispute.

*Winning Verdict* provides memorable insight into the world of a trial lawyer and brings light to the dark corners of the legal profession.



## J. Gary Gwilliam

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By J. GARY GWILLIAM

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***The jury had reached a decision.  
My heart was pounding like crazy.***

My emotions ran from excitement to anxiety to fear. What had they decided? This had been the biggest and hardest fought case in my career – a trial against General Motors, the biggest corporation in the world. The gas tank in a pick-up truck had exploded when a reckless driver crossed the road and hit it. The pick up driver had died. His wife, my client, had lost her eight month old fetus.

I had been in practice for 15 years. I was a plaintiff's lawyer waiting for my biggest verdict. A junior partner in my firm. The senior partners had authorized me to spend a huge amount of money on the cost of the case — \$100,000.00, almost unheard of in 1976. All plaintiffs' lawyers wanted the big million dollar verdict in those days. I was ready. I thought I had tried a great case.

The jury walked into the courtroom. They announced their decision. "We find in favor of the defendant General Motors and award the plaintiff nothing...". I was stunned. I felt like somebody had knocked the wind out of me.

*I wanted to go off alone and get roaring drunk...*

***J. Gary Gwilliam*** is a trial lawyer who has tried more than 175 jury trials to verdict in his 40+ years of practice. The vast majority of them have been wins. However, he attributes most of his important life lessons to his defeats.

*In a compelling and open manner Gary shares the trials and tribulations of his personal, social, and professional life in a manner that changes the perspective of what it takes to make a good attorney as well as a loving human being.*

*Gary Gwilliam's book,*

*Getting a Winning Verdict in My Personal Life*, reads like a novel, a can't-put-it-down novel full of passion, danger, sex, secret thoughts and conduct, betrayal, accomplishment, glory, and perhaps most telling of all, humility—but it's all true.

Gary's book is irresistible, and not just to trial lawyers. Remarkably open and candid, it is a reflection of Gary himself, and a microcosmic, intimate view into the heart of man. From the opening paragraphs of a devastating defeat in the courtroom to the closing chapters of his poignant reunion with his "two dads" and his soulful fulfillment with his beloved wife Lilly, Gary's book is a touching and vivid recital of a diverse and fascinating life.

This man, born in Mormon country and raised in Oregon, Washington, and California, evolved through stages ranging from juvenile delinquent and gang member to the pinnacles of achievement in the legal profession; from the lowest points of alcoholism and dysfunctional family life to the loftiest levels of mutual respect and unselfish love. His accomplishments are mentioned without self-adulation. His weaknesses and failures are described without fear. He openly exposes to the world his heart and soul, so much so it is actually shocking to read. But the best thing about this wonderful book is that it makes you feel hopeful, renewed, and inspired.

*--Colin King, nationally recognized trial lawyer and past president of the Utah Trial Lawyers Association*



## ***More Praise for***

### ***Getting a Winning Verdict In My Personal Life***

**"This book is a page-turning, passionate, and life-affirming journey with one of America's most gifted trial lawyers. I feel more at peace having read his book and I am blessed to call Gary Gwilliam my friend."**

*--Leo Boyle, past president of American Association for Justice*

**"Gary Gwilliam has revealed new reasons for the affection and respect I feel for him as a trial lawyer and as a man. Never have I read a book so revealing about the personal and professional struggles of dealing with the demons and defeats, as well as the victories, of a long and successful life. *Winning Verdict* is Gary's greatest verdict and hopefully, it will be our greatest verdict as well. This book is a must read for everyone."**

*--Browne Greene, past president of Consumer Attorneys of Los Angeles and Consumer Attorneys of California*

**"In this remarkable book, Gary Gwilliam describes in elegant detail his hard-fought triumph over the sort of demons that plague many of us and his ultimate victory in emerging as a top-flight attorney."**

*--Jon Haber, CEO, American Association for Justice*

**"Unlike most lawyers, who rarely talk or write about their courtroom defeats, Gary Gwilliam not only talks about them, but begins this book by describing one of his most crushing and disappointing losses at trial. I highly recommend this immensely readable and enjoyable book, particularly to anyone who understands that life's pressures sometimes demand personal sacrifices."**

*--The Honorable Thelton E. Henderson, Judge, United States District Court, Northern District of California, San Francisco*

**"There are few books that so explode with energy, emotion, insight, and deep feelings that they immediately impact the life of the reader. It is the only book I have ever read where the author has me crying and laughing, all in the same paragraph."**

*--John F. Romano, past president of Academy of Florida Trial Lawyers*