

Workers' Compensation Attorney Mary Ann Stiles to be Featured on Close Up Radio

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- "Workers' Compensation was created to assist employees who get hurt on the job, to get medical attention promptly, to be paid lost wages, and to get them back to work after proper medical treatment," explains our guest. "The employer pays for that, but they get immunity from tort liability. There are ultimately a lot of players in the Workers' Compensation system including attorneys and doctors, and everyone forgets the original purpose. It is to protect the employee from injury and the employer from high premiums." Our guest maintains an extensive résumé of experience and accomplishments as a champion of Workers' Compensation in her native Florida. This is the story of Mary Ann Stiles.



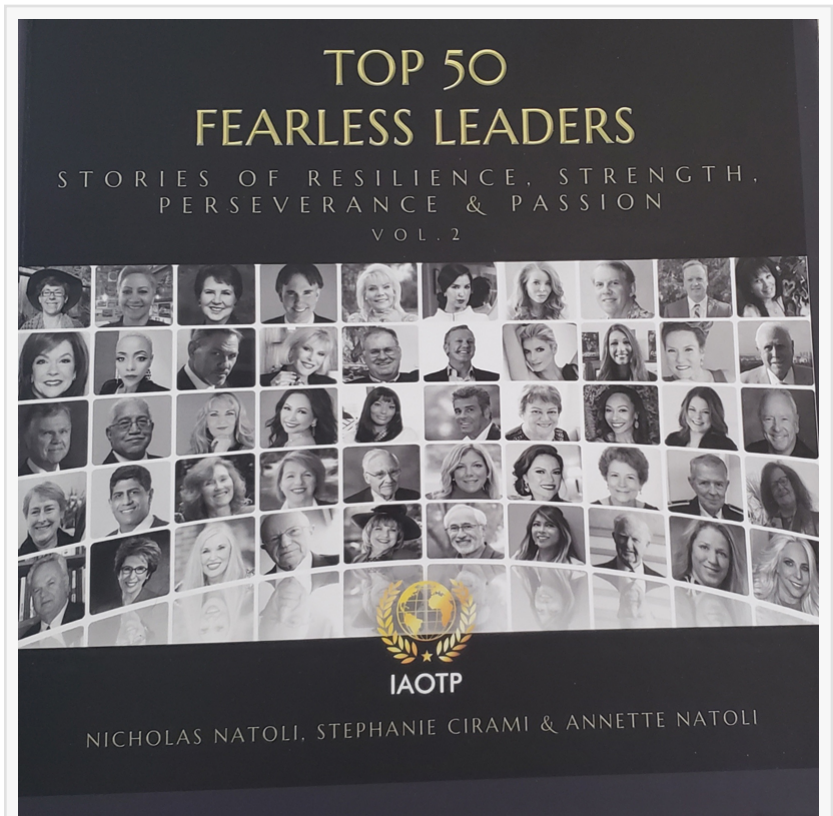
Mary Ann Stiles is a Workers' Compensation attorney who has earned the nickname, "the Queen of Comp" in Florida. Having been an attorney for forty-six years, she has maintained several legal practices related to Worker's Compensation, and as a lobbyist, has also affected legal change that has benefited both the employer and employee. "I have had a long and varied career," summarizes Mary Ann.

Mary Ann's most recent employment is for Construction Casualty Insurance, LLC, now CCI Insurance, and CompCorrect, Inc., where she serves part-time as general legal counsel and corporate counsel. CCI Insurance owns CompCorrect, Inc. Concurrently, Mary Ann also maintains her own law practice, Mary Ann Stiles P. A, where she represents employers on Workers' Compensation and other corporate matters. Before that, Mary Ann's career was spent as the longtime owner of Stiles, Taylor & Grace, a Workers' Compensation defense firm. The law firm

was in existence from 1982 to 2012. She had grown it to over one hundred employees, thirty-five attorneys, and seven offices. For many of those years, it was the largest woman-owned law firm in Florida.

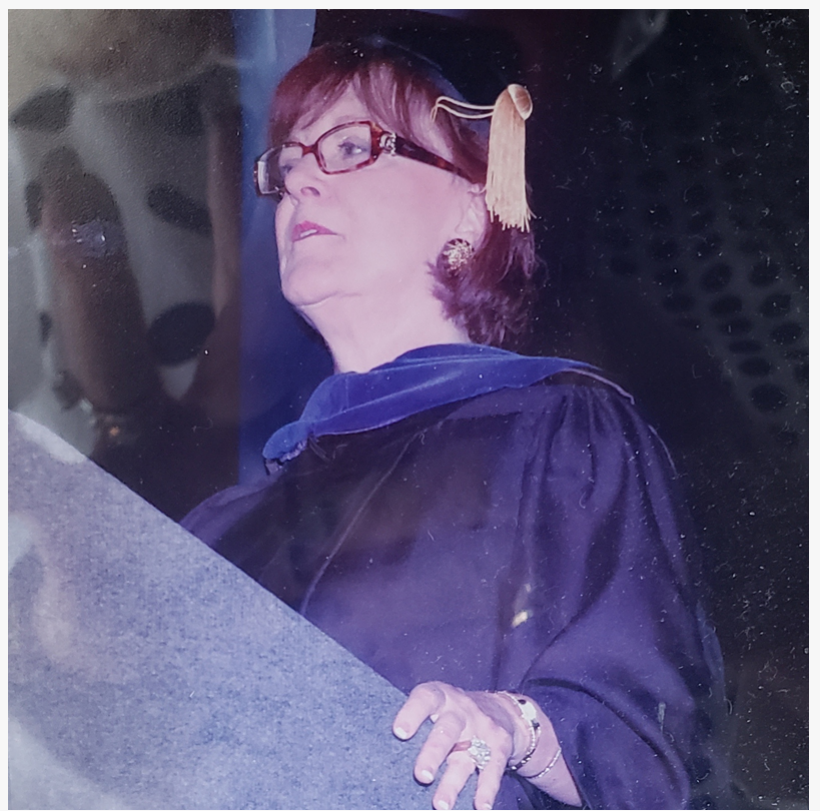
"When I was twenty-six years old, I decided that I wanted to go to college," recalls Mary Ann. "I already was a legal secretary from eighteen years of age until twenty-six. I enrolled at Hillsborough Community College, took classes at night and on weekends. When I graduated, I was working in a building where the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives and his staff were located. The Speaker offered me a position on a new workers' compensation committee to rewrite the Workers' Compensation law to make it more employee friendly. At 28, I took the job and enrolled at Florida State University with the assistance of a Presidential Scholarship. I was a full time student and worked part time for the Florida House. I assisted in the rewrite in 1974 beating out the business community. Then, at thirty years of age, it was on to law school in Washington, D. C." Friends would say to me: "You are going to be thirty-three when you finish law school so why bother?" I always responded: "I am going to be thirty-three anyway so why not turn thirty-three with a law degree?".

"After finishing law school, I became a vice president, general counsel, and lobbyist for Associated Industries of Florida," adds Mary Ann. "It was a very powerful lobbying group for business, and I initially handled all aspects of lobbying relating to business but ended up handling primarily Workers' Compensation. We had a major rewrite in 1979 to attempt to bring down premiums that were sky high at the time.



Because of my work with Associated Industries, it became a powerful position for me. Later, they started Associated Industries Insurance Company, which offered low-cost Workers' Compensation insurance. I eventually became its General Counsel also. While I did make some enemies along the way, they still respected me. At least, I hope that they did."

"I was the first woman representing the business community on a full-time basis," notes Mary Ann. "I was the first in a lot of other things. For instance, many, many times, the only woman in the room. I was the first woman to be named to the Florida Workers' Compensation Hall of Fame. I also was one of first of two women inducted as



a Fellow into the American Bar Association College of Workers' Compensation. Prior to that, At HCC, I was recognized as an outstanding alumni. At Florida State, I was inducted into their Circle of Gold, which is their Hall of Fame. I tried to be a leader for women in everything that I have done. I had a fire in my belly and wanted to be at the top of my profession. I had to work hard – often twenty hours a day. I gave up a lot of personal things including relationships and children, just so I could become successful in my career. I made myself an expert in Workers' Compensation."

"Thank goodness I had a mentor in Tallahassee who taught me the ropes by the name of Jon Shebel," adds Mary Ann. "He was a lobbyist that taught me everything about the legislative process. He also taught me how to think like a corporate person, rather than just an individual. Jon just happened to be the head of Associated Industries of Florida that I had helped beat with the 1974 amendments. When I completed law school, he made me an offer that I could not refuse. I also learned to play it forward, I have mentored a lot of women lawyers in my career. There were few and far between women mentors for me."

One of her most significant accomplishments occurred in 2003, where she helped to draft a major rewrite to Workers' Compensation. Having taken three years to put it through the legislative process, it has, over the years resulted in a 70% premium reduction for Worker's Compensation. There have been no rate increases or any major rewrites to the workers compensation law since then. Employees needed to be treated and paid promptly. Also, if any legal action was required, it had to happen fast and not over a two-or three-year span. It not the injured workers did not receive timely benefits; and, claims were loaded down with expensive

penalties and interest and unnecessary legal fees.

"I am proud to have helped many businesses and employees," declares Mary Ann. "I have helped employers afford Workers' Compensation. I have helped employees get prompter, faster medical attention, and wage benefits."

My current baby is CompCorrect owned by my client CC. The two owners of CCI prepared an AI program that helps the system by working with the employer to achieve the 2003 amendments intent."

As for the future, Mary Ann desires to be appointed to a national, corporate board of directors as a woman representative. She is also working on a book. Its working title is To the Hard Road, which provides a personal memoir of Mary Ann's life. The "hard road" referenced in the title is based on the fact that she lived on a dirt, unpaved road in her native Florida for many years. She lived back in the woods, and only lived in a house that had indoor plumbing, running water or electricity after she was ten years of age.

"If you want to accomplish something in this world, you absolutely can," concludes Mary Ann. "You can go after anything and be anything that you want to be. The American Dream is not dead. You just need that fire in your belly to accomplish your dream. Do not listen to people who tell you 'No.' You need to go after your dream. This is America, and we can still be successful and happy."

Close Up Radio will feature Mary Ann Stiles in an interview with Doug Llewelyn on Friday June 7th at 2pm Eastern

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