

## *What You Can Expect At Your Disability Hearing:*

### *Inside the ALJ Hearing at ODAR*



As many Social Security Disability claimants know, most disability applications are denied with the initial application and appeal. Most cases, that are approved, are actually awarded at the hearing level where the claimant attends an Administrative Law Judge Hearing at the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review (ODAR) with his/her representative. In the Atlanta area, there is currently an average of 24 month waiting period from the time you ask for a hearing date till you actually attend a hearing. By the time your hearing date approaches, you will have plenty of questions about what will go on during the hearing. To help alleviate some

of that anxiety, the following is meant to help answer some questions and give you a better understanding of what to expect.

On the day of your hearing, we always have our clients and their hearing representative meet one hour prior to the hearing at the hearing office. The purpose of this is to prepare the client for his/her testimony regarding their limitations and symptoms so that it is fresh in their mind right before the hearing.

Once you are in the hearing room, there are typically five individuals - you, your representative, the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ), the hearing reporter, and a vocational expert (some hearings also include a medical expert). The hearing room is a small room conference room, and you will be sitting directly in front of the judge across a long table. Your representative will be to one side, and the vocational expert will be to the other. The hearing itself is informal and not open to the public; however, you will be placed under oath.

The purpose of the hearing is to have an open conversation with the judge regarding what your symptoms are and how they are limiting you from going back to work. The judge and your representative will ask you questions in order to get your testimony on the record. The testimony is recorded through audio only - so be sure to speak up! The purpose of the vocational expert (VE) is to give occupational testimony by characterizing your past work by physical and mental skill level. The VE also gives testimony based off of the functional limitations that are found in your file and stated at the hearing. He/she will answer hypothetical questions for the judge and your representative. Basically, this means that questions will be posed to the VE about whether or not you can perform certain job functions in particular jobs.

The length of the hearing varies from case to case (and also depending on the ALJ); however, it is safe to say that it can last anywhere from 30-45 minutes. It is unlikely that the ALJ will have a ruling at the end of the hearing and generally takes 60-90 days to issue a decision assuming all the evidence is in the file at the time of your hearing - which is why it's important to keep us updated on your medical treatment. We want a complete record before we go before the judge so they can issue a quick decision!

Unlike what you see on television, these hearings are much more informal. You do not dress in a suit or

formal clothing. We typically recommend our clients to dress as if they are going to the doctor's office; jeans and a t-shirt will do just fine. But we do ask that you cover up any tattoos and do not wear a hat.

We know that it can still be very intimidating, so please feel free to contact us with any concerns you may have.

## *In Remembrance of 9/11: ...a day that still haunts us.*



It was a day that changed the course of our day to day lives, our history, and the way we viewed the world. Many that survived suffered physical and emotional trauma. Those who lost family and friends suffered such trauma as well. We've had the opportunity to serve clients who suffered PTSD and other trauma as a result of 9/11. While we can only imagine what they have gone through, we're honored to have been able to help in one small way.

As we honor the 15 year anniversary of the tragedy of 9/11, we remember those who were lost and those who sacrificed their lives saving those trapped in the twin towers. If you lost someone that day,

our hearts are with you.

## *Attorney Sara Khaki was published in the Georgia Trial Lawyers Magazine, The Verdict*



Our very own Sara Khaki was published in Spring 2016 edition of **The Verdict**. This magazine is published by the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association (GTLA) and features the states' top litigators. We are excited that Sara was recognized by the Magazine and GTLA as the "go to attorney" on Social Security and published her in their most recent edition. Sara's article provides the nuts and bolts of SSDI/SSI practice for new attorneys who may have an interest in practicing disability law.

[Click here](#) to read Sara's article in **The Verdict**.

## *Administrative Announcements* **Quarterly Survey**



It's that time of year again. If you are a current client, please keep an eye on your email for our quarterly survey coming in the next week. Your continued feedback always helps us better our services!

Happy Birthday!

**Attorney Tina Thapar**



Happy Birthday to our Associate Attorney, Tina! We wish you the best of celebrations and lots of joy.

### *Fall Is In The Air!*

### Health Tips For Managing Fall Allergies

As of September 22nd, Fall is officially here and with it comes seasonal allergies for many people. Here are 5 good tips on managing your allergies.



- 1.) **Eat Colorful Vegetables:** These help deliver nutrients you need like Vitamin A, C and quercetin. Green and orange vegetables are especially good.
- 2.) **Keep Allergens Off You:** Take off your outdoor clothes as soon as you walk in the door so you don't track it all house. Shower before bed, wash your cloths, bedsheets, and towels frequently.
- 3.) **Take a Daily Probiotic:** This will help keep your immune system strong and defenses high.
- 4.) **Use a Dehumidifier:** This will be especially helpful for those with indoor allergies. It will help with dust and mold. Use a hypoallergenic filter.
- 5.) **Take an Over The Counter Antihistamine:** Make sure it's long lasting and non-drowsy, but this may be the easiest and most effective solution to dealing with allergy season.

### *Calendar of Events:*

### September 2016

- September 1st: In Court, Columbus, GA
- September 5th: Happy Labor Day!
- September 6th: In Court, Atlanta, GA
- September 11th: In Remembrance of 9/11
- September 12th: In Court, Albany, GA
- September 13th: In Court, Atlanta, GA
- September 15th: In Court, Atlanta, GA
- September 16th: Happy Birthday Tina!
- September 20th: In Court, Atlanta, GA
- September 23rd: In Court, Atlanta, GA  
In Court, Covington, GA
- September 27th: In Court, Atlanta, GA
- September 28th: In Court, Atlanta, GA

September 2016						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

## Contact Us!

### The Khaki Law Firm

Main Office: 3510 Old Milton Parkway  
Alpharetta, GA 30005

By Appointment Only: Buckhead & Marietta

Local (678) 228-8688  
Toll Free 1 (866) 394-4925  
[TheKhakiLawFirm.com](http://TheKhakiLawFirm.com)



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