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SCARLET PROFILES

A Champion for Burn Victims

By Shelby Vittek GSC'16

Since graduating from Rutgers Law School in Camden, Samuel Davis has represented thousands of clients over the course of his career as a civil trial lawyer, but he hasn't forgotten his first case—a young girl who suffered serious burns after a waitress spilled hot tea on her chest and shoulder. Davis RLAW'77 won the case, but two years later he learned the girl was still hurting. “She had become isolated and depressed,” Davis said.

Davis recognized that litigation could provide financial resources for medical care and economic needs of burn survivors, but their psychosocial needs were not always met. He also witnessed caretakers of pediatric burn victims suffer an emotional toll. Eager to help, he began taking his burn clients to camps—known as “burn camps”—which offered support that transformed them in the presence of other young burn survivors.

Davis lives in Tenafly, New Jersey, and maintains an active case list at the

law firm Davis, Saperstein & Salomon, where he is an original founding partner. In 2008, he founded the Burn Advocates Network (BAN), a nonprofit that supports burn survivors and operates three pediatric burn camps. The first, Camp Sababa, was founded in Israel in 2009, making it the first and only burn camp in the Middle East. More recently, BAN opened Camp Karma in India and Camp Samba in Brazil, and has ambitions to expand to other countries. This fall, BAN plans to open the Israel Pediatric Aesthetic & Reconstruction Laser Surgery (I-PEARLS) Center where children attending Camp Sababa can receive laser treatment to aid in healing their burn scars. “Our mission is to restore the spirit and heal the scars of these children,” said Davis, who dedicates his personal time to visiting burn survivors at the camps, where the children affectionately call him Uncle Sam. “We want to turn burn victims into burn survivors. It's tremendously satisfying work and now I understand suffering in a different way.”

