



Kyle Stephen Willems

BASSFORD REMELE

If you're the one whose forehead first gets slashed by a commercial delivery drone's blades, you might consider making Bassford Remele associate Kyle Willems your first call.

Just six years a lawyer, the University of St. Thomas School of Law alum already has abundant experience working insurance defense, construction defect, wrongful death and other business-related litigation. But he is making his reputation as an innovator on little-explored tort turf — things like sports concussions, autonomous cars and trucks, even e-scooters.

Transportation technology, in particular, is a rapidly changing area of law that fascinates Willems. Take e-scooters: They can be parked anywhere, including a sidewalk. If someone going out to dinner gets hurt tripping over one in the dark, he said, suddenly the restaurateur faces a brand new kind of transportation-related liability.

Or take this nightmare scenario that Willems dreamed up: Say an entire fleet of autonomous commercial vehicles gets a software upgrade that contains malware. What happens when all those trucks crash at once?

"Tort litigation has been based on the same type of motor vehicle accident for 100 years now," he said. "We're in the first major disruption of the transportation and general tort marketplace."

Willems explores such matters both as a lawyer and as writer for Bench & Bar and other publications. If his ambitions are realized, Willems said, he will become a leading authority on technological innovations in the tort marketplace, whether through trial work or as a writer and consultant. Already he has been contacted by Capitol aides exploring tech-law legislation.

"What I'm trying to do by raising these issues to the forefront," Willems said, "is help the law catch up through awareness."

—Kevin Featherly

