



# The Mottley Law Firm

8001 Franklin Farms Drive, Suite 125  
Richmond, Virginia 23229

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## The Ultimate Empty Nester Road Trips

The empty nest stage marks a new chapter for parents, eliciting wide-ranging emotions, from grief or nostalgia to a thirst for adventure. But one common impulse unites many empty nesters: the desire to hit the open road in search of freedom, a relaxing break, or a fresh perspective. Here are three ideas for great road trips to rekindle an empty nester's zest for life.

### SOUTHERN BARBECUE AND MUSIC

If you are no longer acting as Mom or Dad every day, could you be ... a country music star?



This road-trip favorite follows the Americana Music Triangle from New Orleans to Nashville, encompassing the birthplace of the country's greatest jazz, blues, and rock 'n' roll traditions. Savor New Orleans' jazz and Cajun cuisine, roll on to Memphis for blues, soul, and rock 'n' roll, and finish up in Nashville, the home of honky-tonk and country. Take in cultural landmarks along the way, and feast on the savory barbecue defining each region!

### A NOSTALGIA TRIP

Hungry for a glimpse of history, one mom trekked south with her husband after selling their Massachusetts home. Blogging as the Preppy Empty Nester, she and her spouse visited historic lodgings, including the Homestead Resort in Virginia's Allegheny Mountains, a beautiful vacation destination for the past 250 years. Winding her way farther south, this mom gave the Read House, an iconic Jazz-era hotel in Chattanooga, a glowing review. A bastion of Southern hospitality, the Read House even has its own haunted room, No. 311,

where a female guest was reportedly beheaded in a bathtub in 1927. Refreshed by their road trip, the couple arrived at their destination, Dallas, ready to start a new chapter.

### EXPLORE THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL

Curious about the cosmos? Explore the mysteries of UFO lore by driving the Extraterrestrial Highway, a unique 100-mile stretch of Nevada Route 375 named in 1996 for its rumored alien sightings. It has since become a magnet for anyone interested in UFOs or government secrets. Prepare for alien murals and kitschy roadside attractions like the Little A'Le'Inn motel. The town's lone postal drop is a gathering place for UFO seekers. Also, Route 375 skirts the perimeter of Area 51, a top-secret, highly classified U.S. Air Force facility that has long intrigued paranormal enthusiasts.

Other great road trips abound, from the Pacific Coast Highway in California and Oregon to Route 66, an adventure in Americana from Illinois to California. Whatever your empty-nest state of mind, there's a road trip for you!



# THE MOTTLEY CREW REVIEW

12/25

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## MILESTONES AND MOMENTUM

### THOUGHTS ON A MONUMENTAL YEAR

Of all the articles I've written this year, this is the one I've been most eager to share.

We've finally reached another December. Naturally, this is the time of year when we all reflect on our accomplishments and challenges since the start of January. Like everyone, I had hoped for the very best when 2025 began, but I could never have imagined how my firm, and my life, would end the year.

Without question, the past 12 months have been the best and most successful ones in The Mottley Law Firm's 16-year history. We resolved two very large cases this year, an achievement largely due to our referral relationships. Word of mouth is helpful to any business, but it has truly accelerated growth in our favor recently. I'm grateful to all our past clients, friends in the community, and fellow attorneys who have referred people in need to us. The fact that so many people believe in us means more to me than words could ever express.

**"I GIVE MY DEEPEST THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTS OUR FIRM, READS THIS NEWSLETTER, AND TRUSTS IN WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO."**

Our accomplishments in 2025 have provided us with an excellent foundation from which to look forward to what lies ahead with excitement and audacious plans. For the firm, this means continuing and expanding our focus on catastrophic injury cases and fighting on behalf of those who have suffered as a result of someone else's negligence. It also means considering ways to scale our practice and broaden our client base in Richmond and throughout the state. We're also exploring the possibility of expanding both our team and the types of cases we handle. Please stay tuned to this newsletter for updates as our plans unfold. I can't wait to share more great news with you in 2026!

Work wasn't the only area of my life that underwent considerable change this year, as Tricia and I officially became empty nesters. Our son, Andrew, was the third and last of our children to fly the coop, a goal he achieved as his career gained momentum and as he moved into an apartment (house) with a friend. Catherine is away studying nursing in South Carolina, while Sarah Ann is pursuing a master's degree in architecture all the way out in Berkeley, California.



As proud as we are of our children, and as excited as we are to start this next chapter of our lives, I'd be lying if I said Tricia and I haven't been a little sad to have the house all to ourselves. It's interesting how much the kids' absence affects even the simplest things, such as the food we buy at the grocery store (less than before) or how many times a week we eat out (more than before)! It's bittersweet to now see the big pots of chili I love to make last longer than ever before, and every day brings a new reminder that things are very different in the Mottley household now.

If you're around my age and have raised adult children, you know *exactly* what I'm talking about. If you're still a young parent, trust me, you'll understand completely someday. That said, it's a wonderful feeling to know that Andrew, Sarah Ann, and Catherine have grown and succeeded so much in life that they can leave and go on to great things. We know their adult lives will be nothing short of extraordinary.

I give my deepest thanks to everyone who supports our firm, reads this newsletter, and trusts in who we are and what we do. You've helped me have an unforgettable 2025, and I hope you wrap up the year on a similarly strong and positive note and are thrilled for what's to come for you and yours.

*—Kevin Mottley*



# FESTIVE FUN MADE EASY

## Traditions That Won't Cost a Fortune

The holidays have a way of sneaking up on us. Suddenly, the calendar is full, stores are packed, and wallets feel too light. But here's the truth: The most memorable moments don't come from expensive gifts or elaborate trips. We spark them from laughter, creativity, and time spent together.

Whether you're looking for cozy nights in or adventures out in the crisp winter air, here are fun, low-cost holiday activities for the whole family.

### FESTIVE FUN AT HOME

Let's turn home into holiday central! You can wrap your front door like a giant present, or craft homemade ornaments from everyday supplies. Popcorn and cranberry garlands, paper chains with gratitude notes, and handmade snowflakes instantly transform your space into a festive wonderland. For extra coziness, plan a movie night complete with blankets, popcorn, and your family's favorite holiday classics.

### CREATIVE CRAFTS AND TASTY TREATS

You don't need to buy pricey kits when you can create your own fun. Build a gingerbread house from scratch, or whip up batches of cookies and let everyone go wild with frosting and sprinkles. If you're looking for something outdoorsy, make birdseed ornaments from pinecones and peanut butter, then watch the backyard come alive with feathered guests.

### OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Bundle up and take a nighttime drive (or stroll) to admire the best light displays in your town. It's a free way to soak up the magic of the season together. If you're lucky enough to get snow, the options are endless: snowmen, forts, snow angels, or even a friendly snowball fight. And when it's too chilly to stay outside, warm up with hot cocoa by the fire.

### SHARE THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

The season feels even brighter when you spread joy beyond your own home. Go caroling in your neighborhood or at a local



nursing home, attend a school holiday concert, or deliver handmade cards to friends and neighbors. These simple gestures leave lasting impressions and remind everyone what the holidays are truly about.

### COZY TRADITIONS THAT LAST

For a touch of nostalgia, start a new tradition like sleeping under the Christmas tree one night, creating a DIY advent calendar, or hosting a family game night with holiday music playing in the background. These small rituals are the ones kids and adults both look forward to each year.



# SLIP SMARTS

## FALL-RELATED FUNDAMENTALS FOR LEGAL RECOVERY

As an attorney who often represents clients who have suffered traumatic brain injuries, I'm keenly aware of the dangers of slips and falls, especially during the winter months. Although our season is typically mild compared to some other parts of the country, these risks and dangers still exist. Here are a few essential tips to remember if you're injured in an accident of this nature.

### DRESS WELL FOR THE BEST DEFENSE.

A touch of unpredictability always exists when it comes to the weather, and you can go from enjoying a sunny afternoon one day to traipsing through a dusting of snow the next. To stay safer this season, make it a point to winterize your wardrobe. Check the soles of your footwear and replace worn-out boots or sneakers. Also, ensure any gloves you wear are water-resistant and strong enough to maintain a good grip on handrails and other objects you use to keep your balance. While these are obvious suggestions, remember that the little things sometimes make the biggest difference.

### CAPTURE EVIDENCE TO BUILD YOUR CLAIM.

If you're injured in a slip-and-fall incident, you must go into *reporter* mode as quickly as possible. If you're physically able, use your phone to take videos or photos of where you fell and anything visible (such as a cracked sidewalk, unsalted ice, or poor lighting) that may help prove another party's negligence. Most importantly, you should seek immediate medical attention for any injury, even if it seems minor. Involving a doctor or hospital will help strengthen your documentation if you pursue legal remedies.

### STAY SILENT TO SAVE YOUR SETTLEMENT.

As with all personal injuries, your chances of succeeding in a slip-and-fall suit are greater the less you say about it. Although many enjoy chronicling their lives on social media, it's best to be wary of sharing too much information about your injury online. Sometimes, a traumatic brain injury or another medical issue caused by a slip and fall may take weeks or even months to be fully realized. Immediately telling your social media followers you're physically fine after your incident may draw negative attention from the opposing side if you later attempt to recover damages after symptoms of a serious injury appear over time.

—Kevin Mottley

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# SUDOKU



## Classic Italian Tiramisu

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup Dutch-processed cocoa powder, plus more for dusting
- 1 cup brewed espresso
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 5 large egg yolks, cold
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/4 tsp kosher salt
- 16 oz mascarpone cheese, chilled
- 1 3/4 cups heavy cream, chilled
- 28 hard ladyfinger cookies

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a bowl, whisk together cocoa powder, espresso, and vanilla and set aside.
2. In a mixer, beat egg yolks and sugar until pale and thick, about 5 minutes.
3. Add salt and mascarpone cheese, and continue to whip.
4. Add the chilled heavy cream and continue to whip until light and smooth.
5. Dunk each ladyfinger in the espresso mixture to absorb the liquid and line a 7x11-inch oval baking dish with the cookies.
6. Top the first layer of cookies with half the whipped mascarpone mixture and spread it into an even layer. Dust with cocoa powder.
7. Repeat for another layer and then finish by dusting with cocoa powder on top.
8. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for at least 2 hours before serving.

Inspired by WhatsGabyCooking.com

# Curbside Conflicts

## Who's to Blame for Pedestrian Hits?



Who's responsible when you're struck by a moving vehicle while walking? The answer isn't as clear-cut as you think.

As drivers, we're encouraged to always yield to pedestrians. When traveling on foot, we may believe we'd automatically win a case if a driver hits us while in a crosswalk. In reality, neither scenario is true in Virginia.

Just as motorists must perform certain duties legally and competently on the road, pedestrians have legal responsibilities to fulfill. Under state laws, pedestrians are required to do the following:

- Look out for motor vehicles when crossing.
- Refrain from disregarding approaching traffic when entering or crossing a street.
- Step to a place of safety when reasonably necessary to avoid danger.
- Use a sidewalk if one is available.
- Walk on the "extreme left side or edge" of a roadway when no sidewalk is available or there is no shoulder "of sufficient width" on the right side.
- Refrain from stepping into a roadway "at any point between intersections where he would

be obscured from the vision of a driver of an approaching vehicle."

- Use "the most direct route" when crossing a street between intersections.
- Refrain from crossing against a "Don't Walk" signal.

Regarding protections under the law, pedestrians always have the right of way at crosswalks. This protection also applies when no sidewalk exists, such as at the end of a block. However, this right of way is granted only if the pedestrian doesn't violate any of their duties. Violating these obligations will likely prevent a plaintiff from recovering damages in a personal injury lawsuit. Additionally, the injured plaintiff won't receive compensation if it's determined that both parties' negligence caused the incident.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for more information on how pedestrian-accident cases are handled in Virginia, and please remember this article the next time you stroll on our streets.

—Kevin Mottley