ATTORNEY BROOKE A. HALLISEY, ESQ.

Divorce Readiness Guide

Schaffer
FAMILY LAW GROUP

What led you to choose family law within your profession?
Going into law school, I thought I wanted to practice criminal defense. I am passionate about helping people through difficult times and wanted to be a litigator. Eventually, I realized criminal defense was not the field for me. I joined my law school's family law clinic and that is where I fell in love with the practice of family law.

What importance is there in choosing a law firm with family law as their sole focus?
Family law is an entirely separate practice from general civil law. It takes time, attention, and focus on this specific, nuanced area of the law to best represent a client in a family law matter. Choosing a firm that only practices family law gives you access to multiple family law experts, as the attorneys often help one another with their matters.

In choosing a path toward resolution, what role can mediation play in the process?
Mediation is a great option. It often allows the matter to move towards resolution more quickly, as a private mediator can bring the parties in for mediation much sooner than they would be able to get a court date. Mediation allows the parties to work together towards a peaceful, amicable resolution with more say in the outcome than if they went to Court.

Is child custody or division of assets the more difficult issue to resolve?
It depends on the facts and circumstances of each case as every case is different. What is most important to the client and the client's end goals are paramount.

What impact does community property law have on the division of marital assets?
The laws of community property control how assets and debts are divided in a divorce. Property is either classified as community property or separate property. Community property is subject to equal division between the parties, while separate property is not, so classification of property has a huge impact on how the parties leave the marriage.

What level of disclosure is required of spouses regarding their assets?
Full disclosure of all assets and debts, whether believed to be community or separate property, is required by each party during a divorce, so we know what property there is to divide. Failure to disclose all assets and debts subjects a party to court ordered monetary sanctions.

What options are there to gain access to financial records being held back?
If a spouse is thought not to have fully disclosed all assets and debts, discovery requests can be issued that include demanding the production of certain documents, asking your spouse to answer questions under oath, or to either admit or deny certain facts.

Are there first steps to take when a spouse sees a divorce forthcoming?
Talk to a family law attorney! The family law attorney will ensure that you have all the information you need to protect yourself and get through this process in the best way possible.

What sets your firm apart from others within the field?
Experience, collaboration, and empathetic, compassionate representation. Schaffer Family Law Group understands that this can be one of the most difficult times in our client's lives. We truly care about each one of our clients, take the time to understand them and their desires, and take the time to communicate with our clients to ensure they feel they can trust us. We use our legal knowledge and our experienced support staff to keep every client's matter on track and fight for our client's best interests.

BROOKE A. HALLISEY, ESQ. is an associate attorney with Schaffer Family Law Group, APC, a full-service family law firm known for effective legal representation and compassionate client service. For more information, please visit www.schafferfamilylaw.com.