

Making a Difference



Attorney Jennifer Courtney balances advocacy with skill, experience and compassion.

by **PETE CROATTO** photography by **PAUL NEILL**

It has been 22 years since Jennifer Courtney founded what is now her boutique family law firm in Bucks County, one dedicated exclusively to divorce and issues relating to divorce such as custody, property division, support and alimony.

The experience and the accolades have accumulated. The passion remains.

Each divorce, Courtney says, is different because everyone has different goals. She has handled thousands of divorces, but there is no “playbook.” Every client receives a new plan. The common theme, she adds, is that people need focus in a time of crisis. Compassion matters, but, as Courtney says, “They also need sound legal advice. I give them realistic expectations.” In other words, they need a skilled legal advocate.

“What energizes me is listening to what [issue] a client has and devising a plan and guiding them: This is how we can get what you want. This is how we’re going to achieve your goals so you can move on,” Courtney says.

Clients also get a skilled negotiator, so they can truly get what is best for their own situation.

“You need to be experienced and respected, and I am both,” Courtney says. “That helps me negotiate with other attorneys. I know the law. I listen to the clients. I can evaluate the case: I know how the case should resolve. Everyone attempts to resolve in an out-of-court manner, but I’m not going to let my client make too many concessions. Sometimes, you just can’t settle. If that’s the case, then we’ll just go to court. I don’t shy away from litigation. I take my role as an advocate very seriously.

“I am excellent at evaluating cases and predicting how a case will likely resolve in court. I don’t know if a lot of attorneys are

good at doing that. Some cases that end up in court don’t necessarily have to,” she continues. “Then you also have lawyers who don’t know how to negotiate effectively, so they have to go to court. I think I balance those skill sets well.

“I do look at cost-benefit a lot, and I try to educate the clients so they can make informed decisions too,” she says. Courtney lays out the possible financial toll as well as the emotional toll. “People have kids. I remind them: ‘You’re going to have sit on a bleacher together for many years to come, for graduation and family events.’”

It is all part of Courtney’s hands-on approach, which includes always being available. “When I get an email where I can tell a client needs a response, I don’t wait until the next day,” says Courtney, who went through a divorce herself in 2004. “There’s really no excuse. I



Attorney Jennifer Courtney



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just try to think: If I sat on the other side of this desk, how would I feel? ” Sometimes, she adds, just hearing that it is going to be OK is all that is needed.

One of Courtney’s clients visited her recently. His divorce took three years and the decree had finally come through. “I was all over the place,” he told her. “Now, I don’t even know how I was all over the place. Thank God you came up with a plan. Even if I didn’t know it was the right plan, I just trusted you. Thank you.”

There is the happy epilogue to the sad affair, when the case concludes.

Mary Smith (name changed to protect privacy) hired Courtney for what turned to be a high-



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conflict divorce and custody case in early 2015. Mary’s case resolved in 2016 and Mary wrote the following testimonial.

During one of the most difficult times of my life, selecting Jennifer Courtney as my attorney was one of the best decisions I ever made. Jennifer guided me through the divorce process with incredible expertise and compassion. Her extensive knowledge of the legal system coupled with her many years of experience provided me with the steady guidance I needed to navigate my divorce. Jennifer knew what I was entitled to and fought tirelessly to see that I received it. In doing so, she provided me with a realistic view of what I could expect, sound advice on how to creatively negotiate, honest feedback on when compromise was necessary on my part, and an understanding of the emotional toll divorce takes on all parties involved. Jennifer communicates in an extremely timely manner and always makes herself available for further conversation. Jennifer is the consummate professional. I truly can’t imagine a more honest, supportive and qualified divorce attorney than Jennifer Courtney.

Courtney is privileged to work with so many special people and takes great pride in the thousands of clients she has represented in her two decades in practice.

“I just love what I do,” she says. “[When] I have a person in my office or on the telephone or on the other side of a computer who needs something, that does get me excited—that I’m doing something good.”

Courtney’s unwavering passion grows with each new client.

“When I look at someone square in the eye and say I’m going to do right by them, I think they believe it—and they see that I do,” Courtney says. It’s about giving clear, “bottom-line” advice, shredding the academic, composed façade and being an actual human being.

Much has changed for Jennifer Courtney since she founded her firm 22 years ago. Her practice has grown, as has her courtroom savvy and reputation. What has not? She’s still about connecting with people simply and effectively.

“I care,” she says. ■