

# Strategic Thinking

In matters of divorce, custody and other areas of family law, Williams Family Law P.C. takes a proactive approach to helping each client achieve the best possible outcome

by BILL DONAHUE | photography by ALLURE WEST STUDIOS



## When “happily ever after”

turns into anything but and a marriage reaches its end, having an experienced, skilled and compassionate attorney is essential to being in a good position to move on with one’s life when the proverbial smoke finally clears. With Williams Family Law P.C., a premier family law firm based in Doylestown, clients benefit from the knowledge and expertise of not one but a team of five seasoned family law attorneys that will likely grow sometime later this year.

“Two heads are better than one,” says Jeffrey M. Williams, the firm’s founder and managing partner—and, one would think, five or six are far better than two.

Prior to establishing Williams Family Law, Williams was a partner in an established Bucks County firm, where two of his partners went on to become judges. By following four core principles—experienced guidance, compassionate advice, powerful advocacy and strong knowledge of the local courts and counsel—Williams Family Law has grown into one of the largest and most experienced family law firms in the region and, specifically, the largest family law practice in Bucks County. The firm helps clients navigate the often tricky terrain of divorce and other family law issues that range from alimony, matrimonial taxation and child custody and support, to equitable distribution and prenuptial and postnuptial agreements. In addition, each Williams Family Law attorney is a devoted and passionate advocate for each client.

“When it comes down to it, we’re very good at what we do—it’s that simple,” says Williams. “We have five lawyers who do nothing but family law here. We also like what we do, we work very hard at what we do, and we’re proactive in everything we do on the client’s behalf.”

An example of how the team collaborates to benefit each client is the “pop quiz” that has become a common in-office occurrence. Members of the team meet on a daily basis—15 minutes or so per “quiz”—to lay out the facts of an existing case and then discuss how to best proceed. Each attorney brings a unique perspective to the matter at hand, thereby providing a balanced and informed perspective.

Such commitment to family law has helped the firm achieve a strong track record of success, both in and out of the



courtroom. As a result, the firm has gained attention from organizations such as *U.S. News & World Report*, which recently named Williams Family Law a “Best Law Firm” for 2015. The firm achieved a Tier 1 ranking for family law in the Philadelphia metropolitan area—the highest honor possible—based on an overall evaluation of the firm, which is derived from a combination of client feedback and peer reviews. A law firm must have at least one lawyer included in “The Best Lawyers in America” to be eligible for a Best Law Firm ranking, though Williams Family Law had two family law attorneys—Williams and Hillary J. Moonay—selected for inclusion in the 2015 edition of Best Lawyers.

As part of the many honors and leadership positions he has held within the community, Williams has been named the Best Lawyers 2015 Family Law “Lawyer of the Year” for the Philadelphia metro area. Only a single lawyer in each area of practice in a designated metropolitan area is named Lawyer of the Year, making it a great honor. In addition, Williams is currently a member of the executive committee for the Pennsylvania Bar Association Family Law Section, having previously served the association as the secretary, first vice president and chair. He is also a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, Pennsylvania



Williams Family Law has grown into one of the largest and most experienced family law firms in the region. Specifically, it is the largest family law practice in Bucks County, including attorneys Jeffrey M. Williams, who founded the firm, and Hillary J. Moonay, who was recently named partner.

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and *Intelligencer*. Robert J. Salzer continued working toward earning his LL.M in taxation to add more value to the firm and its clients. Adam H. Tanker has had many opportunities to lecture to fellow attorneys and most recently lectured at a Pennsylvania Bar Association Family Law Section event.

The fact that the firm has accrued such accolades in an area of the law known for taking a heavy emotional toll on the attorneys who practice it is even more remarkable. “I know some very good attorneys who started their careers in family law, but many of them were not able to manage the stress,” Williams says. “It can be difficult sometimes, and it means your pain tolerance has to be higher [than if you were practicing in another area of law]. To some extent it can be a matter of telling a particular client, ‘Let’s not fight this fight; it’s not worth it.’ You always have to put some common sense into your advice, because every case has many aspects—divorce, custody, support, etc.—and if you do something in one aspect of the case, it can affect another aspect



The firm’s team of five attorneys, which includes (left to right) Robert J. Salzer, Elizabeth J. Fineman and Adam H. Tanker, helps clients navigate the often tricky terrain of divorce and other family law issues.

down the line. We are playing chess here, not checkers, where we have to think more strategically about how every move will affect what may or may not happen next.”

At the same time, each of the firm’s attorneys is sympathetic to the emotional turmoil a client may be experiencing in the lead up to a divorce, a custody dispute or a related family law matter.

“If you’re a matrimonial attorney, you had better be prepared to be a shoulder to cry on,” Williams says. “You’re an attorney at law, but in some cases you also have to be a counselor at law. The emotional element—being there for your client in what is probably one of the most difficult times of their life—has not changed, and that’s something we pride ourselves on, because we genuinely care about our clients.”

Even considering all that Williams Family Law has achieved, the firm is not finished yet. Williams suggests the firm will look to expand its legal team later this year.

“If you practice family law correctly, you can really help people, and that’s our primary goal,” he says. “We have five attorneys like that here and an extremely dedicated and experienced staff that is a vital key to the success of Williams Family Law. We have attorneys and staff who just want to help our clients move on with their lives.” ■

Chapter (AAML-PA) and is the only AAML Fellow with a primary office in Bucks County. Williams has also marked his five years as a Diplomat of the elite American College of Family Trial Lawyers (a select group of only 100 family law trial lawyers from across the United States). One of the accomplishments he is most proud of is his work on the Cus-

tody Act as chair of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Family Law Section in 2010.

Other members of the team have had equally impressive successes. Moonay was named a partner of the firm. Elizabeth J. Fineman was named among Bucks County’s “Forty under 40” Class of 2014 by the *Bucks County Courier Times*