

# A Pragmatic Problem Solver (and Teacher) in Family Law

## JEFFREY P. WEINSTEIN ON BUILDING HIS SOPHISTICATED FAMILY LAW PRACTICE

Over his 40-plus-year career, family law attorney Jeffrey P. Weinstein has represented thousands of clients, arguing innumerable cases before the trial and appellate courts of the State of New Jersey. It should come as no surprise, then, that in 2014, Weinstein was recognized for his expertise by his peers, who selected him as *Best Lawyers' Lawyer of the Year* in the metropolitan New Jersey area for family law. Weinstein practices family law throughout northern New Jersey, from Bergen County to Burlington County.

"I couldn't ask for a higher accolade than being honored by my fellow attorneys," says Weinstein, who is also a past-chair of the New Jersey State Bar Association's Family Law Section and a current fellow of both the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. "To have other leading lawyers recognize me is a great personal achievement, and I'm humbled by it."

Weinstein came to the area of family law after working as a law clerk for a criminal court judge in New Jersey's Morris County. Following that experience, he was convinced that he wanted to become a prosecutor or public defender; but when Weinstein started handling divorce matters, he soon changed his mind. "Very early in my career I was working for a law firm that did a tremendous amount of divorce law, and I liked the idea of getting involved in an area where you're dealing with good people in tough situations," he says.

It also helped that Weinstein, through a series of significant cases, was building a name for himself in the family law arena. In one of these early cases, Weinstein was able to obtain a restraining order to prevent his client's husband from returning to their home, at a time when the law protecting an abused spouse was case law-driven instead of statutorily-driven. "This was long before the passage of the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act in 1991," Weinstein notes, "so that made for a much more challenging case."

Weinstein's adversary in the case was an older practitioner who was so impressed by Weinstein's work that he later referred him a matter in which Weinstein was able to obtain alimony for a man against his wife. That case cemented Weinstein's reputation as being at the

forefront of his field, as he became the first attorney in New Jersey and probably the United States to obtain alimony for a man. "There was some publicity around that case," Weinstein says, "and as a result, that led to a certain amount of growth in my practice."

With his practice expanding, Weinstein founded his current firm—now known as Weinstein Lindemann & Weinstein—around 1993. At the time, he was joined by only a legal assistant and an office administrator, but since then, his firm has grown into a successful boutique family law practice. Indeed, the firm now comprises 10 attorneys, including his partners, Cynthia Borsella Lindemann, Donald Schumacher, and Evan R. Weinstein, as well as

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Judge Melvin S. Whitken, a former Presiding Family Court Judge.

Weinstein believes no client should be compelled to litigate but every client should be well represented and prepared for trial. According to Weinstein, "It is the responsibility of every attorney in our office to prepare thoroughly and thoughtfully for litigation, because that is the best way to negotiate or mediate. The people in my office, from those who have been here for just a year to my partners, are all extremely capable; I'm really proud of what each of them has been able to accomplish, and since we have some younger attorneys here as well, it's only going to get



Standing left to right: Donald Schumacher, Cynthia Borsella Lindemann  
Seated left to right: Evan R. Weinstein, Jeffrey P. Weinstein

better for our firm."

For Weinstein, working with his son, Evan, over the past 13 years stands out as one of the most rewarding parts of his practice: "My wife and I decided that if Evan ever became a lawyer we wouldn't push him into family law, because that might push him out of it," he says. "So it was a real high for me when he declared his interest in practicing family law, and that high has only escalated."

"If there's something that I'm most proud of, it's my ability to teach young, bright people how to be effective family law practitioners," he says. "We have a lot of those people in our office now, not the least of whom are my son and my other partners; I hope that I've been somewhat instrumental in them becoming the virtuoso attorneys they are today. I might add that I am probably not as good a teacher as my son Michael, who teaches English at Essex County College."

The members of Weinstein Lindemann & Weinstein are known for their expertise in all matters relating to divorce, from negotiating and drafting settlement and premarital agreements, to litigating contested issues at the trial and appellate levels. They are also particularly adept at handling complicated custody and financial situations, and Weinstein attributes this proficiency to the firm's emphasis on developing talent. ■