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Testa & Pagnanelli LLC's legal team includes (clockwise from top left) Rebecca Kolsky, Erin Nease, Enrico J. Pagnanelli, and Maria N. Testa. Not pictured: Brendan McGuigan.



perfect partners

Testa & Pagnanelli LLC, a thriving firm led by twin siblings Maria N. Testa and Enrico J. Pagnanelli, extends its reach to guide more clients through life-changing experiences such as divorce and criminal matters.

by **Matt Cosentino**
photography by **Jody Robinson**

Choosing the right business partner can be one of life's most difficult and important decisions. Not only do you want someone with a skill set that complements your own and who you feel comfortable collaborating with, but you also need to know this individual will always have your back, through all of the ups and downs that are bound to come with the venture.

For Maria N. Testa and Enrico J. Pagnanelli, there was never any question they could check off all of those boxes when bringing their talents together. After all, they have been each other's biggest supporters for as long as they can remember.

"We're complete opposites, but we have always been close," Pagnanelli says of his sister. "We have always worked together well, so it's nice that we've been able to work together in our careers. We definitely have a different approach and a different style, but we're both very well-liked by our clients and that's why we're doing well."

For nearly a decade, the twin siblings have translated their natural,

lifelong partnership into their legal careers at Testa & Pagnanelli LLC. The firm has been focused on family law from the outset, with its attorneys acting as trusted advisors for clients enduring any type of family matter, including divorce, domestic violence, custody issues, alimony and support, estate planning, and more.

The firm recently added criminal defense to its areas of expertise, and it has also expanded its physical footprint. In addition to its original location in Center City, Testa & Pagnanelli now has

offices in Norristown and Radnor, and is active in all five counties of the region: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia.

Testa has specialized in family law from the beginning of her career and founded the firm in 2009. She has established herself as a brilliant orator and a tenacious defender of her clients in court, but she is also easily approachable, accessible, and empathetic for the life-changing experiences her clients are going through.

"She's a fantastic attorney," Pagnanelli adds. "She's really popular among the family bar and almost has like a cult following from her clients. She's highly revered, she relates well to clients, she's known for her zealous advocacy, and she's very well-liked by judges and practitioners alike."

Pagnanelli began his career in corporate law with a focus on mergers and acquisitions, as well as commercial litigation. He felt his talents were being wasted and eventually felt the pull to practice in family law. He joined forces with Testa in 2013.

"As a corporate attorney, you're sitting behind closed doors all day or negotiating a deal," he says. "As a trial lawyer you have to think on your feet, you have to interact with people, and you have to tell a story when you go to court, and I really enjoy that."

Pagnanelli's background also helps him stand out among family law attorneys, most of whom do not have the business acumen and transactional background he brings from his prior work experience. In complex divorce cases, particularly those involving high-net-worth individuals or business owners, Pagnanelli's background gives him an edge in understanding the valuation of complex business assets and income for purposes of support.

"Since we began working together in 2013, Enrico has built a strong reputation for being a fierce advocate for his clients," Testa adds. "This approach, coupled with his expansive knowledge regarding complex property and financial issues, has made him one of the top family law attorneys in the area for intricate and cumbersome divorces."

Although Testa and Pagnanelli have different strengths, they both prioritize listening to clients and developing a gameplan that is catered to each client's specific needs.

"Everyone has their priorities, and your strategy in approaching a divorce has to be customized to the client and what they want," he says. "Some people want it to be quick and painless, and we try to make it as quick, painless, and efficient as possible. For other people, it's not about the money; it's about not wanting to concede on certain issues or principles."

Both experienced trial lawyers, Testa and Pagnanelli enjoy that aspect of family law and prepare tirelessly with the expectation that every case will end up in court. Even so, they are certainly amenable to quick, amicable agreements that serve the best interests of their clients, and both are certified mediators to provide an alternative resolution.

"Our first approach is to attempt to resolve a case, as that is best for the clients and best for the children, if the custody is at issue," Testa explains. "I will begin all cases by asking myself how this can be resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible."



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"Mediation is great because it does not need to be adversarial," Pagnanelli adds. "Our goal is to help people reach an agreement and save them from the emotional and financial turmoil that comes with a divorce. The goal is to have two people leaving and feeling like they've gotten a fair deal. We use our experience as practitioners, having litigated hundreds of cases, to provide a fair and reasonable outlook on what may happen if they litigate."

Rebecca Kolsky, another partner, joined in 2020 and has been a tremendous asset to the practice with her decade of experience in family law and robust list of loyal clients, while Erin Nease has been a valued associate for nearly a decade. The firm recently added partner Brendan McGuigan, who has extensive experience not only in family law but also in criminal defense, having tried more than 40 jury trials and hundreds of bench trials. His presence has expanded the practice areas to assault, drug possession and sale, DUI, and theft; those issues may come into play in divorce cases as well.

Testa and Pagnanelli are quite confident in the team in place but are always looking to expand, and forecast further growth in the near future. No matter what, the attorneys will always strive to deliver close personal attention for each client.

"We're known for great customer service and responsiveness, and just being really competent in court," Pagnanelli says.

"What separates us from a larger firm is we're more flexible, yet we still have the depth of resources. We have five attorneys and a wonderful support staff, and we have the ability to handle very large, complex cases at a more efficient cost than a larger firm." ■



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