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Despite her many achievements and accolades, attorney **Marina Kats** stays true to her roots by remaining fiercely devoted to fighting for those in need.

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AN UNSTOPPABLE FORCE

by **MATT COSENTINO**
photos by **JODY ROBINSON**

Despite her many achievements and accolades, attorney **Marina Kats** stays true to her roots by remaining fiercely devoted to fighting for those in need.

The story of Marina Kats' rise from immigrant to highly respected attorney and influential community leader reads like a true fairy tale. While it is true that she beat long odds to become as successful as she has, her success is no fluke; rather, hard work and determination have accompanied every step of her journey.

"I never think of myself as an underdog," Kats says. "I just think of myself as a fighter." Indeed, Kats was just a month past her 18th birthday—which, fittingly, she celebrates on July 4th—when she arrived in the United States with her parents as political refugees

of the Soviet Union. Born in Ukraine, she did not speak a word of English at the time, but soon went about achieving her own version of the American Dream.

She worked two jobs to put herself through community college, and with her improved language skills, she moved on to Temple University. Her original goal was to become a doctor. After getting in a car accident as a student, however, the world of personal injury law came into her orbit.

"I realized how accidents can change people's lives in a split second," she says. "I am very empathetic to anyone who goes through that experience. I realized that personal injury requires the understanding of medicine and an ability to achieve some fairness in the world, so that injured people can get compensated for their pain and suffering."

With that new focus in mind, Kats continued at Temple for her undergraduate degree, followed by Temple Law School and her L.L.M. in Trial Advocacy. The L.L.M. in Trial Advocacy is a rare degree earned by less than 1 percent of lawyers in Pennsylvania.

In 1995, she founded the firm of Kats, Jamison & Associates, which has evolved into a renowned litigation practice with offices in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. Its team of attorneys can handle matters involving personal injury, criminal defense, family law, immigration, workers' compensation, real estate, and wills and estates.

Kats, however, has maintained her focus on personal injury and assisting clients injured in car accidents, slip and falls, or through the negligence of others. She strives to act as both an advocate and counselor for her clients. Furthermore, she promises to give each case her full attention, regardless of the potential for financial reward.

"My philosophy is that every case is a big case for somebody, and that's important for lawyers not to lose sight of," she says. "It's nice to have multimillion-dollar cases, which we do, but at the end of the day, behind every case is a human being. Whether it's a million-dollar case or on the smaller side, it matters to the person who was involved in that accident."

Kats sets the tone for the entire firm with her commitment to each client and the amount of hours she devotes. She doesn't leave the office for the day until every phone call has been returned, and she doesn't go to sleep at night until every email has been answered.

"I am a big believer that owning your own practice gives you one thing: the ability to work as hard as you want for as many hours as you can," she says. "There is no glory, just hard work."



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—MARINA KATS, SHOWN WITH NINA BUSHMAN, HEAD OF LITIGATION FOR KATS, JAMISON & ASSOCIATES

results for a client going through a challenging time. "All of these accolades are earned, and they are meaningful to me," she says. "At the end of the day, the most important aspect is how you change someone's life by A, giving them confidence that it's going to be OK at the end, and B, by actually delivering the results that make all that suffering more bearable. I think that's crucial."

The law firm is accepting new cases and welcomes new clients. All the personal injury

work is done on a contingency basis, which means if there is no recovery, no fees are charged. The firm's interests are completely aligned with the interest of the client. ■

As someone who knows what it's like to face a language barrier, she is also proud to have a multilingual staff. Kats speaks Russian and Ukrainian in addition to English, while other members of the team speak Georgian, Spanish, Laotian, and Italian.

"We all have the ability to relate to the clients in their own language," she says. "Sometimes, even if you've been in this country for a while, there are nuances that are easier to be explained in your own language than translated into English." Kats displays that same kind of compassion outside of the office as well. The war in Ukraine obviously hit home for her, so she has been active in supplying humanitarian aid to her homeland, while supporting refugees who come to the United States with food, shelter, and pro bono legal assistance. She recently received a gold medal for philanthropy from the Archdiocese of Ukraine.

She loves to give back to her alma mater, Temple University. She is a Trustee of the university, a position she has served proudly since 2018. She is also a Trustee of the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a Trustee of Einstein Hospital, and president of the Eurasian-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia. In 2008, Kats was the first immigrant from the Soviet Union and the first Ukrainian-born person to run for U.S. Congress. She has not ruled out pursuing political office in the future. Also, in 1997 she was honored by former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge as one of the top 50 Best Businesswomen in the Commonwealth.

Among the many honors she has received, Kats was inducted into the Women's Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame by the Temple University League for Entrepreneurial Women and was named Woman of the Year by the Bucks County YMCA. The biggest reward for her, however, will always be delivering



Kats, Jamison & Associates

1 Bustleton Pike
Feasterville, PA 19053

(215) 396-9001

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