

# suburban life

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**Maselli, Mills  
& Fornal, P.C.**, a  
boutique law firm  
celebrating 25 years  
in practice, delivers  
proactive,  
cost-effective, and  
sophisticated legal  
solutions to business  
owners and financial  
institutions

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Members of the legal team based in the Princeton office include (standing, left to right) David Fornal and Shawn D. Edwards, as well as (sitting, left to right) Melissa Nelson, James Kilduff, and Nicholas J. Loiodice.



# Business

# as Usual

by **BILL DONAHUE**  
photos by **ALISON DUNLAP**

**MASELLI, MILLS & FORNAL, P.C.**, A BOUTIQUE LAW FIRM CELEBRATING 25 YEARS IN PRACTICE, DELIVERS PROACTIVE, COST-EFFECTIVE, AND SOPHISTICATED LEGAL SOLUTIONS TO BUSINESS OWNERS AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.



**Even the most brilliant and hardest-working business owner needs help getting to the proverbial top of the mountain. In order to sustain their success, an owner must enlist the talents of people who excel in key areas, such as operations, marketing, and customer service.** They will also need an expert legal team capable of resolving, if not avoiding, any issues that arise.

Enter Maselli, Mills & Fornal, P.C., a law firm devoted to serving the legal needs



**We have created an environment in which some truly exceptional attorneys have decided to build their careers and their lives with our firm.”**

—PAUL J. MASELLI, MASELLI, MILLS & FORNAL, P.C.

of businesses and financial institutions through sound legal strategy, professional skill, and a thorough understanding of each client’s needs. With offices in Princeton and across the river in Bucks County, the firm serves clients throughout New Jersey and southeastern Pennsylvania.

Maselli, Mills & Fornal has flourished in both size and scope since 1998, when Paul J. Maselli and Perry S. Warren founded the firm as Maselli Warren, P.C. What began as a small firm in Princeton has since become a highly regarded boutique firm staffed by skilled attorneys who represent clients in complex matters with the same finesse as the region’s largest and best-known law firms.

“We don’t do high-volume work,” says Maselli, the firm’s managing shareholder. “We are fully conversant with what’s happening with our clients, and we are here to help them solve problems. If you surveyed all our clients and asked whether they had the sense that our attorneys really cared about their matters, and focused on developing the best strategies to help them in their case, I think you would get a yes on every front.

“When Perry and I first started the firm,” he continues, “we wanted to service existing clients we had acquired over the years [at a prior firm] and see where it goes. We have since become a team of about 10 attorneys, and our business has grown principally because of the attorneys we have hired. We have added some real gems, and they have helped to build the firm through the acquisition of new clients and [the provision of] excellent legal service.”

Maselli cites the examples of Brian Mills and David Fornal, two of the firm’s longest-tenured attorneys.

Mills, a Bucks County native based in the firm’s Newtown office, is chair of the firm’s business organizations and transactions group. In his practice, he focuses on representing clients in mergers and acquisitions, corporate and partnership structuring, and business financing. He also provides guidance in matters involving succession planning, corporate governance, and commercial real estate, among others.

“By their nature, entrepreneurs are risk takers, and most of them are not interested in us giving them advice that is more academic in nature,” Mills says. “Their primary motivation is to make money and not get in trouble. We are here to help them manage risk. Some business owners want to know all the many layers of possible risk before they make a decision, but most just want to know the answer to questions like, ‘What do I need to do to move forward?’ and ‘What do I really need to worry about?’”

Mills often acts as a second set of eyes and ears to help a business owner avoid situations that could disrupt or hurt the business. He cites one client for whom he helped close a \$15 million credit facility with a particular lender. A year or two later, when the client had to move its inventory to a new distribution center in an emergency situation and on short notice after the now prior warehouse’s lender locked the doors in a dispute with the owner, Mills reminded the client of its duty to notify the lender of the looming change. As a result, the client avoided a default of its credit facility, which prohibited moving the inventory without notice to the lender.

“Sometimes business owners become so singularly focused on an immediate issue that they don’t give thought to other



In the firm's Newtown office, (left to right) attorneys Barbara J. Boyd, Brian Mills, and Nicholas J. Loiodice collaborate on a case.

**The work we do today is more sophisticated and much higher stakes than we were doing when I joined the firm, and that has made us able to attract some very talented lawyers.”**

—BRIAN MILLS,  
MASELLI, MILLS & FORNAL, P.C.

aspects of the business,” he adds. “They appreciate the personal attention that we give and the fact that, as we get to know them and grow with them, we bring institutional knowledge about their organization based on other work we have done for them.”

He adds that, while the firm is focused squarely on the needs of businesses and banks, its attorneys also service the personal needs of those clients—i.e., preparing wills, administering estates, or assisting with other legal matters in need of swift resolution.

Mills joined the firm in 2003, so he has had a ground-level view of its steady evo-

lution. He describes the firm's current roster of attorneys as "the best team I've ever worked with."

"In the last year, I have handled at least half a dozen eight-figure transactions, and the attorneys on the other end were managing partners from big Philadelphia-area law firms," he says. "The work we do today is more sophisticated and much higher stakes than we were doing when I joined the firm, and that has made us able to attract some very talented lawyers."

### Overcoming Obstacles

As someone who has "always liked helping people and solving problems," Fornal gets to check both boxes on a daily basis as chair of the firm's financial institutions and creditor rights group. He represents national and community banks, institutional and private lenders, investors, and other parties in all manner of litigation, workouts, foreclosures, dispute resolution, and bankruptcy proceedings.

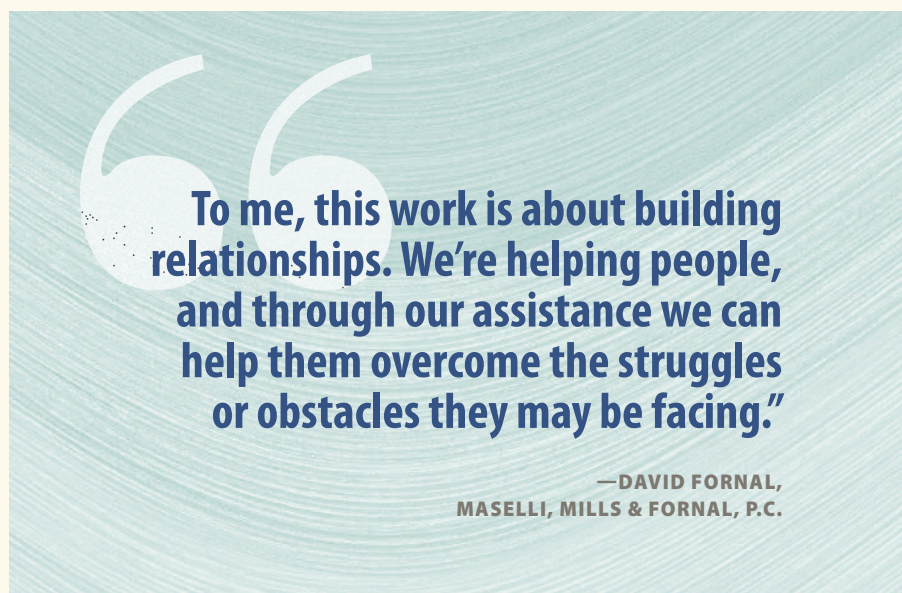
His commercial collections practice involves issues regarding the rights of mortgagees and mortgagors, the validity and priority of liens, and the rights of parties to repossess, protect, or retain collateral in foreclosures, receiverships, bankruptcies, and assignments for the benefit of creditors. He also represents clients in litigation involving intellectual property rights, employment disputes, and contract rights.

"I really enjoy working with the decision makers of closely held companies, and helping them grow their businesses," says Fornal, a native of nearby Hamilton, New Jersey, who joined the firm in 2006. "I get to assist in resolving problem assets or distressed loans through workouts and negotiated settlements. I also participate in our business litigation group in the event that our business clients get into disputes with vendors, or face issues involving restrictive covenants, cases involving proprietary information, or situations where someone is unlawfully seeking to compete with our client."

Fornal finds the work incredibly rewarding, in part because of the collaborative environment among attorneys and support staff.

"I'm collaborating with our other attorneys on a daily basis," he adds. "We also have the benefit of having someone like Paul Maselli, who has many years of experience in different areas of practice. To me, this work is about building relationships. We're helping people, and through our assistance we can help them overcome the struggles or obstacles they may be facing."

In addition to Fornal and Mills, the firm's legal team includes Shawn D. Edwards and James Kilduff, recently ele-



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—DAVID FORNAL,  
MASELLI, MILLS & FORNAL, P.C.

vated to shareholders, as well as Liza Sherman and Barbara J. Boyd. The firm has continued to grow with the welcome additions of Melissa Nelson and Nicholas J. Loiodice. Yet another attorney is expected to join the firm later this year.

As for Maselli, the firm's expansion and addition of new talent has helped his practice evolve, too.

"About 2010 or 2011, I was referred to a client who had a legal malpractice case in a business setting," he says. "At that point I had enough experience to feel comfortable undertaking a case in which a business owner was seeking redress from an attorney who had messed up. I had success with that first case, and since then I've built a good practice representing business owners in matters of legal malpractice and accounting malpractice."

Maselli understands that some people may have a negative view of the legal profession, a perception he considers unfair. In fact, he tends to tell the balance of prospective clients who seek him out in matters of alleged legal or accounting malpractice that they do not have a strong case.

"In my experience, most attorneys and accountants are top-notch people who are charitable, results-oriented, and just want to do their jobs well," he adds. "When I do take on a [malpractice] case, it's because I'm confident we will prevail and I can help redress a client who may have lost faith in the legal system."

As he reflects on the firm's first 25 years in practice, Maselli is proud and bullish. He believes the building blocks that he and Perry Warren—since transitioned to "of counsel," after being elected to a fourth term as a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives over-

seeing the interests of District 31 (Newtown, Yardley, Lower Makefield, and Upper Makefield)—have put in place will help the firm thrive well into the future.

"What I'm most pleased with is that we have created an environment in which some truly exceptional attorneys have decided to build their careers and their lives with our firm," Maselli says. "I'm thrilled they have dedicated themselves to the firm's growth, and that we have been able to provide that opportunity and environment for them. Going forward, I see a healthy business arising from the firm, with the hopes that we continue to add clients and our team of highly competent attorneys.

"It's all about mindset," he continues. "We want all our attorneys to spend time growing. That's why we've placed such an emphasis on training; adding to their understanding of the business environment and banking industry will better serve the client. As someone with 30-plus years of experience, I will continue to impart whatever knowledge I have acquired. That's good for them, that's good for the firm, and ultimately that's good for our clients." ■

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