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ULMERLAW: 25 Years of Advocacy

The Bucks County-based family law firm led by **Karen Ulmer** has undergone a remarkable transformation in the quarter-century since its founding. by **BILL DONAHUE** photos by **NINA LEA PHOTOGRAPHY**

Attorney Karen Ulmer founded her own law firm in Bucks County in 2000. While her devotion to helping clients solve complex legal problems remains the same, particularly those pertaining to divorce or other aspects of family law, almost everything else about the firm has evolved in the nearly 25 years since the firm's creation.

"Family law is still the crux of our practice, but we have expanded into other areas to better serve our clients," says Ulmer, the founding partner of Karen Ann Ulmer P.C., better known as Ulmerlaw, which is headquartered in Langhorne. "In a lot of cases, the work we do in other practice areas—wills and estates, real estate—is complementary to family law."

While Ulmerlaw remains firmly rooted in Bucks County, the firm has expanded its reach with offices in Phoenixville, Doylestown, and Jenkintown. The use of Zoom as an integral tool in its practice has

also expanded its reach to outlying counties—Berks, Lancaster, Lehigh, Schuylkill, etc.—and across the river into New Jersey, where Terrance Annese concentrates in New Jersey family law. Remote-meeting technology has facilitated Ulmerlaw's growth, but Ulmer credits the firm's success to its skilled legal team, as well as a resourceful group of paralegals who are all committed to the clients and ensuring their success.

No matter the need, Ulmerlaw is eager to help. The firm currently offers a free consultation to guide prospective clients so they can make informed decisions about their next steps.

"What I like most about this work is talking to people and counseling them," Ulmer says. "Sometimes I'm surprised by what people believe [about the law], either because they misunderstand or because someone has fed them misinformation. I like being able to educate them about what comes next, whether they decide divorce

is their best option or if they are better off staying in their relationship. I want to help them find hope."

If a prospective client decides to move forward, he or she will benefit from the wisdom and experience of a collaborative team. Ulmer says clients appreciate the fact that all the attorneys on her team are well versed in family law and are able to offer different perspectives and experiences.

"We're going to look at a client's goals, give them options, and educate them on what they can expect going forward," she says. "We respect our clients, which is why we educate them so they can make the best choice for them. We also try to conserve their money. We will certainly litigate if litigation is the best option, but we do try to settle a lot of cases out of court as it benefits the client both economically and emotionally. Going to court is taxing on a person's psyche as well as their wallet. We operate from a belief system that we must try to

settle every case out of court, if possible, but are prepared if we need to litigate.

"With one recent client," she continues, "we settled a case at 7 a.m. so the client didn't have to go to court at 9 a.m. That scenario benefits the client, because it saves them money, but it also benefits the court, because it's one less case they have to hear so maybe they can devote more time to cases that have to be litigated. In that case, it takes two attorneys with a similar mindset, and I am very grateful when there is an attorney on the other side of the case who also works hard to settle cases."

"Family law is still the crux of our practice, but we have expanded into other areas to better serve our clients." —Karen Ulmer, Ulmerlaw

For anyone considering a divorce, Ulmer shares some advice honed from years of personal and professional experience: "Get your financials in order and make sure you are aware of what you have and how it will be impacted. Try to really understand why you want to get divorced and visualize if getting divorced is actually going to make life better or worse for you before you make that choice. Divorce is something

that you need to think about carefully, not enter into lightly, which is why the court requires at least a 90-day 'cooling off' period for every divorce in Pennsylvania."

"Part of our responsibility is to set expectations," she adds. "Divorce won't change everything. Everyone has different reasons for wanting to get divorced. What will your life look like, post-divorce? Educate yourself as much as possible before you make decisions that will alter your life. No one goes into a divorce wanting their life to be worse after the fact. Is it going to be better? We can help them get a good idea

of what the future might hold, but only they can decide.

"We often will file divorces for people who may have consulted with us a year or two prior to when they actually file," she continues. "For others, they are certain and file right away. Being in business now for 25 years, we have established relationships with families and are ready to help them whenever anything shows up in their life

where they need a lawyer. If it is an area of law we don't handle, we direct them to someone who can help them. If they need a counselor, we will recommend that as well."

As Ulmer looks ahead, she sees the potential for more growth on the horizon. She's continually scouting for highly qualified attorneys and paralegals to join her legal team, including those who might have expertise in new practice areas to better serve clients. She's also open to the idea of expanding the firm's presence in New Jersey. In addition, Ulmer has become more open-minded in that more than half of her staff is virtual and works 100 percent remotely—as far away as Florida. Ulmer believes the quality of work is most important, and that kind of focus and discipline enable her team to work effectively from anywhere. Ulmerlaw has fully embraced technology—the firm has even gone paperless—and members of her team are continually educating themselves on the latest technology and advances in law. ■

➔ **Karen Ann Ulmer P.C.'s main office is located at 174 Middletown Blvd., Suite 300, in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, and the firm also has offices in Doylestown, Jenkintown, and Phoenixville as well as virtually. For more information, call (215) 752-6200 or visit ulmerlaw.com.**

GETTING INVOLVED

The attorneys of Ulmerlaw are devoted to uplifting the community apart from their efforts to help clients solve complex legal problems. Community involvement is an essential part of the firm's DNA.

For Karen Ulmer's part, she has served on the boards of several nonprofit organizations, including the Peace Center in Langhorne, the Lower Bucks YWCA, Bucks4Kids, the Bucks County Bar Foundation, and the Bucks County Women's Advocacy Coalition. She currently serves on the boards of the Bucks County Bar Foundation, the Newtown Business Association, and the Widener University Delaware Law School Alumni Association. She is also active in local youth sports; a former coach, she is now the treasurer of the CRUSA FC Bucks Cobras soccer team.

In addition, Ulmer is a member of the Bucks County Bar Association, the Montgomery County Bar Association, the New Jersey State Bar Association, and the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA). Since 1997 she has been actively involved in the PBA's Mock Trial Competition for high school students. She has served as the regional coordinator of the competition for Bucks, Chester, and Delaware counties since 1998.

