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People
of the
Year
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For the attorneys of Bucks
County-based **Kardos,
Rickles & Hand P.C.**, effective
legal representation involves
much more than a desirable
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Engaged, Prepared, Responsive

Kardos, Rickles & Hand's attorneys include (clockwise from top left) Mel Kardos, Marc I. Rickles, Marisa M. Perini, Kevin L. Hand, and, the newest addition to the legal team, Heather Hines.



For Kevin L. Hand and his fellow attorneys from Bucks County-based **Kardos, Rickles & Hand P.C.**, effective legal representation involves much more than a desirable outcome.

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

Kevin L. Hand believes that a capable attorney should possess traits such as preparedness, tenacity, and a bit of grit, as well as a genuine passion for the work they do. He also suggests another key ingredient to the mix: responsiveness.

“Our clients drive our business, so it’s to our advantage to be responsive to their needs; it’s also the right thing to do,” says Hand, a partner and attorney with Kardos, Rickles & Hand P.C. in Newtown. “We have a few hard-and-fast rules—among them, call everyone back within 24 hours, return emails promptly, and do your best to establish realistic expectations. It’s hard for people to be told



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—KEVIN L. HAND OF
KARDOS, RICKLES & HAND P.C.

happily married. I think one of the best things you can do is to wake up every day and approach it like a great adventure. But if the marriage has gotten to a point where it's beyond saving, then it's time to come and see someone like me."

If and when that happens, Hand is ready to help his clients through the difficult process of disentangling themselves from their spouses and putting themselves in a

position to move forward with their lives.

The process begins with a conversation. Whereas some attorneys like to acquire an in-depth understanding of a client's financial picture early on, Hand takes a simpler approach.

"All I want you to do when you come to see me for the first time is to have questions," he says. "I tend to have a long initial interview [with prospective clients]. I'm going to ask you plenty of questions, but I also want people to walk out of my office like they learned something that's going to help them.

"For someone who has questions about custody," he continues, "I want to know where you work and what kind of hours you work, but the most important thing is that you come away from the conversation with a good idea of what to expect based on the facts that you've shared with me. I can give most clients an idea of what schedule they can expect, with the caveat that there are a lot of unknowns with custody. I do everything in my power to control as much as I can."

No matter the content of the case, Hand believes honesty is paramount. He uses the following example to illustrate his point: a prospective client who wants shared custody of his two teenage sons, but who also commutes from Bucks County to New York every day.

something that will be difficult to hear. But you do no favors by sugarcoating the truth."

Along with fellow partners Mel Kardos and Marc I. Rickles, KRH is a firm that's devoted to "doing right by the client." The same commitment extends to associate attorney Marisa M. Perini, as well as the newest addition to the legal team, Heather Hines.

Hand has spent the past 30 years honing his skills as an attorney, focusing his practice on family and criminal law. Although he spends much of his time helping clients through divorces, custody, and other often-contentious family matters, both in and out of the courtroom, he believes a good marriage is worth fighting for.

"I've been married for 40 years, and I happen to think that if you've found the right partner, the marriage should last forever," he says. "Recently I had a person come to me and tell me about their situation, and I asked them, 'Do you *want* to get divorced?' The person said, 'I'm not sure.' So I said, 'Then I would work like hell to maintain the integrity of the marriage and resolve the issues you're dealing with.'

"A marriage is always changing," he continues. "There are some traumatic changes, like sickness or the death of a family member, that can cause a marriage to change in challenging ways, and hopefully you can overcome that change and stay

"This gentleman leaves the house at 5:30 a.m. and returns home at 7 p.m. every night," he says. "Why would a judge give you shared custody if you're never going to be there for the kids? Some lawyers will say, 'That's no big deal; I can get you shared custody.' In reality, the chances of that happening given this work schedule are not good at all."

Apart from the work he does for current and prospective clients, Hand enjoys traveling with his wife, and spending quality time with his adult children and grandchildren. He also devotes his free time to biking, reading, and attending sporting events—soccer, baseball, wrestling—for his athletic grandchildren.

His legal work, however, is never far from his mind, because he knows how much the outcome of each case weighs on a client's mind. Even after 30 years, he still enjoys the challenge and appreciates the trust his clients have placed in him and the firm. He also savors the feeling that comes from knowing his efforts have made a tangible difference in someone's life, especially when there are children involved.

"I know I've done my job well when, at the end of a case, the client gives me a hug and thanks me," he says. "Most of my clients refer their friends and family to KRH. I'm also getting referrals from spouses on the opposite side of divorce cases because I treated them with respect. It's important to fight for your client, but it's just as important to be a gentleman. We're going to do right by our clients, and we're also going to treat everyone with the respect and fairness they deserve." ■

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