

# suburban life

At Materese Family Law, members of a growing legal team take a collaborative approach to guiding clients through some of life's most chaotic moments.

page 69

**+**  
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by **Matt Cosentino**  
photos by **Jody Robinson**



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# Strength in Numbers

**B**etween running a thriving law firm, mentoring other professionals through the Pennsylvania Bar Association, and raising two young sons, Inna Materese doesn't have much downtime. If pressed to take a moment to reflect on her career's many successes, particularly in the nearly three years since she opened her own firm, she focuses not on herself but on the people around her—namely, her team.

"We've just come out of a busy litigation season, so the time for reflection is unfortunately short, but I am very, very proud of how far we've come," she says. "We were recently recognized by Best Lawyers as one of the top regional firms in the practice area of family law just over two years into becoming a firm. To be recognized as a team rather than just me as an individual is really meaningful because this is truly a team effort."

*Team* is a word that Materese uses often. A collaborative spirit forms the backbone of her Fort Washington-based firm, Materese Family Law, which handles the complex issues surrounding divorce, child custody, adoption, and more for clients in Montgomery, Bucks, Chester, and Philadelphia counties.

With referrals from professional colleagues and satisfied clients alike coming in constantly, it's no wonder that her staff has grown in such a short time. The firm has added a second attorney (and a third on the way) along with a second paralegal to meet the demand. The firm also moved into a larger office space, all of which surprises Materese.

"I had hoped that perhaps at some point we would grow and be able to add other attorneys and fill out the team, but I certainly didn't envision it happening so quickly," she says. "But it did happen—both intentionally and organically—and it's allowed us to build out our firm culture and redefine what this firm's approach to client service really is."

Associate attorney Gabriella ("Gabi") Lacitignola previously served as an assistant district attorney in the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office—where she prosecuted child sexual abuse and domestic violence cases—before transitioning into family law. Lacitignola and Materese had met years ago during a proceeding before reconnecting at a professional conference and hitting it off.

Materese describes her as "a phenomenal litigator and a strong advocate who brings knowledge of the criminal system and how to navigate the system." For Lacitignola, the transition to family law has enabled her to continue fighting for those who need a trusted advocate in their corner.

"When I left the DA's office I wanted to redirect and refocus my attention on achieving justice for individuals who were harmed in family-centric crimes—adults and children—in a different way," she says. "When I reconnected with Inna, it was a perfect fit in the sense that I could channel my passion for helping these individuals who are at really low points

in their lives. ... I felt that my professional background, experiences, and skills as a litigator would help aid in my ultimate goal of achieving justice for these people."

Rounding out the group are paralegals Jenn Echikson and Jen Kozlowski, who share a longtime friendship in addition to a similar first name. Echikson has 20 years of experience in family law and has been with the firm since its inception. Kozlowski, who joined in May 2024, has a diverse background that includes expertise in real estate; her experience has become a valuable asset in the firm's divorce cases.

All of those individuals know the details about each case the firm handles, using their complementary skills—and varying billing rates for

cost-effectiveness—to produce the best outcome for the clients.

"We are constantly thinking about how we can take something off our clients' plate or make a decision easier," Materese says. "We probably hold their hands more than most firms do and we try to give them as much information as we can so that they can make educated choices for themselves. We try to do things in a way that allows our clients to feel like their best selves, even when they're not their best selves."

With a full plate that includes leadership roles in both the Montgomery County Bar Association and Pennsylvania Bar Association in addition to her busy day-to-day schedule, Materese doesn't have much time to think about exactly what comes next for her firm. She just knows that whatever happens, she and her team will handle it together.

"We do have another attorney joining us in the summer," she says. "If the practice grows beyond that in the future, we'll take that as it comes. But I think we have the perfect team right now to provide really personal client service, expertise, and teamwork at its best, so that's where we're focused at the moment." ■



## Materese Family Law

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