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**Yulianna Yagoudaeva**  
uses legal savvy, verve, and  
cross-cultural understanding  
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clear path forward.

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# EMPATHETIC Advocacy



As a personal injury and family law attorney, **Yulianna Yagoudaeva** uses legal savvy, verve, and cross-cultural understanding to help her clients forge a clear path forward. *by MATT COSENTINO*

**"Every single family has their own story, their own dramas," says Yulianna Yagoudaeva, founder of Yagoudaeva Law Group P.C., based in Huntingdon Valley. "We are all dealt a hand."**

For Yagoudaeva, the hand of fate brought her to Philadelphia eight years ago by way of Queens, New York, and Uzbekistan before that. Her family emigrated to the United States when she was just four years old. "From daycare through law school, I was in New York," she says.

Growing up in a cultural hub proved excellent preparation for Yagoudaeva, who focuses on practice areas including family law and more recently, civil litigation matters such as personal injury, for clients throughout Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

"I worked so hard in New York," she says. "I made connections and was clerking for the New York Family Court and the New York Supreme Court. I anticipated working there, but life threw me so many different opportunities, I had to see what was out there."

With matters as weighty as personal injury and family law, it is no wonder Yagoudaeva says many clients come to her feeling as if their world has been turned upside down.

"I see people at their worst, emotionally," she continues. "People feel like their life is ending, but a chapter is closing. I tell clients to focus on healing, and let me get them through the maze."

As a mother of three children, Yagoudaeva considers reassuring her clients that better days ahead an integral part of her job.

"I've seen families fall apart, and I've seen how unfortunate it is when an attorney is incompetent and cares more about a paycheck than a family," she says. "There's a reason why attorneys are counselors at law. You have to create an almost therapeutic setting, and you need to have that connection with a client."

"I'm such a loudmouth," she jokes, noting with a greater degree of seriousness, "I'm not going to sue someone *just because*. I'd always rather be honest with people."

Yagoudaeva says parallels abound between personal injury and family law. Both deal with intense emotions.

"If a client comes to me with a personal injury matter, their life has been upended," she observes. "Whether they need therapy, or a loan, or the best doctors, I've built a powerful network of people that I can recommend to my clients who will take care of them superbly."

"With family law," she continues, "I understand what it's like to come from a culture that makes demands upon you, that has expectations on you, and will damn you if you screw up. Divorce is still taboo in so many cultures."

Yagoudaeva says she herself grew up with strict parents and empathizes with the pressure of living up to the standards set by long-established traditions.

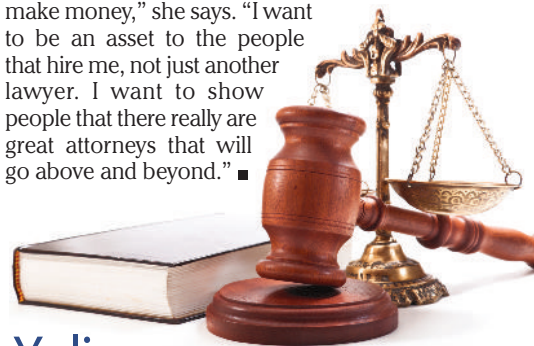
"I treasure cultural values," she shares. "It's my job to find the fine line between law and culture, and to move cases along smoothly and get through any misunderstandings. I explain that you cannot just cut someone out of your life because you think their family is bad news, or that someone is not a 'clean' woman. I show respect to elders, and explain how things in this country work."

Yagoudaeva, who is multilingual, speaks Russian fluently, is learning Ukrainian, and has a background in Farsi. Having grown up surrounded by vibrant cultures from across the globe, Yagoudaeva has a keen appreciation for not just the role of law but also the role of cultural traditions and norms in family law matters.

"I have individuals coming to me from cultures I'm not part of, that I grew up knowing nothing about, but good lord, we are all exactly the same," she continues. "We're all the same at the core."

For her, practicing law is her calling. She sees herself as serving a higher power, not just her clients.

"I'm not just going to do something to make money," she says. "I want to be an asset to the people that hire me, not just another lawyer. I want to show people that there really are great attorneys that will go above and beyond." ■



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